

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 10 May 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Cree asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the roll out of the Victims and Survivors Service.

(AQO 3833/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) is now well established.

The VSS aims to provide a high quality service to victims and survivors based on individual assessed needs. It aims to accomplish this through the funding of victim/survivor support groups and service providers, the direct commissioning of interventions, and the delivery of financial assistance to individuals in need.

The Service opened in April 2012. Since then, the following objectives have been accomplished:

- The VSS successfully launched the Victim Support Programme (VSP) in early November 2012. The VSP will provide approximately £20 million of funding for victims and survivors over the period 2013-2015.
- The VSS appointed an Independent Panel to assess applications to the VSP from more than 50 service providers in the victim/survivor sector. This assessment process was completed on schedule, by February 2013.
- The VSS has allocated the VSP funds (on the basis of the Independent Panel's assessments) and issued Letters of Offer to successful applicant organisations at the end of March 2013. The VSS is currently working closely with each organisation to develop agreed workplans and budget breakdowns for the funded period.
- We recently agreed the details of the new Individual Needs Programme (formerly administered by the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund). The VSS has developed guidance for individuals seeking to access the new Programme. As of 15 April 2013, the VSS has been communicating both directly with individuals and with funded organisations to encourage victims and survivors to access the new Programme.
- All of the staff members identified for transfer from the Community Relations Council (victims unit) and the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund have successfully taken up their posts in the VSS.
- As noted previously, the VSS has already begun the process of speaking directly with individual victims and survivors to work with them in identifying their needs. To date, over 400 individuals have availed of an Individual Needs Review with a VSS Assessor. Many of these individuals have been referred for specific interventions, or signposted to resources and support within the network of organisations funded by our Department.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Horse Passport System

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, following the BBC Spotlight programme on 5 March 2013, whether she has confidence in her Department's horse passport system. (AQW 20670/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): It is a legal requirement for all horses and ponies (and other forms of equidae) within the EU to have a passport identifying the animal. The Horse Passports Regulations (NI) 2010, on the identification of equidae, have been in operation since March 2010. These Regulations implement Commission Regulation (EC) No. 504/2008 in the north of Ireland.

In order to protect the food chain, my Department enforces these Regulations at point of slaughter and at import / export at ports in the north and I am confident in the operation of these procedures. My Department is currently reviewing its enforcement policy with regard to passports, given the current issues raised and will enhance controls as considered appropriate and proportionate within the current legal framework.

My officials are working with colleagues in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and with the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and the Marine in Dublin on improving the quality of horse passports and I have also agreed that the Equine Council for NI should work with my officials to see how the operation of the horse passports could be improved locally.

Food Produce: Locally Sourced

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures are in place, and are planned, to ensure that food produce, especially fresh meat, served at departmental premises, including CAFRE Colleges is locally sourced; and what proportion of products is locally sourced compared with those imported.

(AQW 21080/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department provides catering services in CAFRE and in Dundonald House through contracts tendered by Central Procurement Directorate in the Department of Finance and Personnel.

In February, I wrote to the Minister for Finance and Personnel asking for a review of public procurement of food with the intention of increasing the sourcing of local ingredients in such contracts, including beef. I understand that the Central Procurement Directorate is progressing a review of specifications for food and for catering services. The review will consider assurance measures and opportunities to highlight produce from the north. Additionally, the Central Procurement Directorate is progressing a review of the Procurement Guidance Note 01/08 – Procurement of Food and Catering Services. It is also making arrangements for networking events, which will bring together Centres of Procurement Excellence, catering services, contractors and food sector bodies and suppliers. I have written to the Minister for Finance and Personnel to ask about the amount of locally sourced produce in catering services, and if this can be increased. I have also asked that Central Procurement Directorate consider a policy derogation to require produce from the north as first choice in catering services provided for my Department only.

Axis 3 Funding

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the progress of Axis 3 funding in each regional network. (AQW 22083/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I take your reference to each regional network to mean the seven Local Action Groups delivering Axis 3 of the NIRD on behalf of my Department. Each cluster has been given an indicative allocation of funds rather than actual funds. To 31st March 2013 the clusters have spent against their programme allocation as follows:

Cluster	Allocation	Project Spend	Admin Spend
GROW	8,890,899	3,037,405	832,656
NER	13,181,300	5,006,187	1,342,925
LRP	8,691,556	3,006,793	959,996
DRAP	13,498,066	3,447,032	1,241,593
SOAR	16,731,839	5,480,205	1,646,506
ARC	18,484,112	6,659,504	2,008,342
SWARD	20,522,227	7,947,312	2,207,804
Total	99,999,999	34,584,438	10,239,823

Agri-Food Enforcement Legislation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how agri-food enforcement legislation has changed in relation to inspections, over the last five years.

(AQW 22109/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There have been no substantive changes to primary agri-food enforcement legislation used by my Department to discharge our official controls, such as inspection and sampling programmes, in the last five years.

As you would expect some of this legislation, such as The Food Hygiene Regulations (NI) 2006, the Official Feed and Food Controls Regulations (NI) 2005, and the Plant Health Order (NI) 2006 has been subject to amendment during this period. None of these amendments have significantly altered the way in which my Department plans and implements its programme of inspections or discharges its enforcement responsibilities.

You will be aware of my Departments 'Better Regulation' policy and the efforts that have been made towards reducing the burden on the agri-food industry in terms of risk based inspection regimes, earned recognition, and streamlining/combining inspection visits.

Farm Modernisation Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will consider a positive weighting in the next tranche of the Farm Modernisation Scheme, for farmers affected by the recent snow crisis.

(AQW 22145/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have yet to decide on whether there will be another tranche of the Farm Modernisation Programme.

The selection criteria for any future funding under the Farm Modernisation Programme (FMP) would be determined when the proposals for any further tranche are developed and would be subject to consultation with stakeholders.

Following the recent snow storm, I have obtained Executive agreement to immediate 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 is paying 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.

I hope to release details of the scheme and how to apply as soon as possible.

Ashton Park, Belfast Flood Risks

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the study undertaken on providing a water basin behind Ashton Park, Belfast to mitigate the local flood risk.

(AQO 3923/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Investigatory work associated with an initial study improved the flooding situation by removing a number of blockages, and further investigations of the drainage system have commenced. These will provide additional information to enable a review of options to reduce the risk of flooding, including the potential to create a storage pond to the rear of Ashton Park. As flooding is linked to a number of sources, this review will also take account of input from NI Water and Belfast City Council.

Single Farm Payments

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the amount paid in each of the top one hundred single farm payments that also received funding under Tranche 3 of the Farm Modernisation Scheme.

(AQW 22167/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Of the 100 farm businesses that applied for and held the highest value Single Farm Payments (SFP) in 2012, there are 15 farm businesses that also received Letters of Offer under Tranche 3 of the Farm Modernisation Programme. The values of the SFP entitlements held and amounts offered under the FMS for these 15 businesses are listed in the table below.

Farm Business	Value of Single Farm Entitlements Held in 2012 (£)	Farm Modernisation Scheme (Tranche 3) Letter of Offer Amount (£)
A	133,173.28	3,983.00
B	118,307.02	4,000.00
C	107,283.94	3,703.00
D	93,657.89	4,000.00
E	91,030.22	3,993.00
F	87,584.99	4,000.00
G	85,466.84	2,035.00
H	80,723.87	3,945.00
I	79,288.06	3,993.00
J	77,665.44	3,996.00
K	77,297.02	4,000.00
L	76,354.89	3,920.00
M	76,167.19	662.64
N	76,028.45	3,042.00
O	75,342.19	3,996.00

Farmers: Average Age

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline how her Department calculates the average age of a farmer and whether a cut-off age is applied in relation to those surveyed.

(AQW 22171/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on farmers' ages is derived from the EU Farm Structure Survey which is conducted every 3-4 years and relates to the principal owner occupier. Due to the nature of the question asked it is not possible to calculate the mean age from the data collected, but the median age from the 2010 survey was 57 years. There is no upper limit on the age of farmers surveyed.

Agri-Food Inspection Branch

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many staff are employed in Agri-Food Inspection Branch, and of these, how many are inspectors.

(AQW 22182/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As at 29 April 2013 there are 70.4 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff in Post employed in the Department's Agri-food Inspection Branch. Of these, 58.2 FTEs are in the Professional & Technical discipline and involved in the management and delivery of inspection and sampling programmes required to implement a range of legislation.

Bovine TB

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) for an update on the number of positive tests of Bovine TB; (ii) how this compares with (a) 3; (b) 6; (c) 9; and (d) 12 months ago; and (iii) to outline the reasons for the change in these figures.

(AQW 22220/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) & (ii)

The number of positive reactors found at live animal TB surveillance (tuberculin skin and interferon gamma blood (IFNG)) tests is tabulated below. There is an unavoidable 2 month time lag on statistics while laboratory tests are completed. Therefore the current figures for TB reactor numbers refer to February 2013.

February 2013	915
November 2012	1,237
August 2012	963
May 2012	1,178
February 2012	869

(iii) The reasons for the wide variations reflect the fact that monthly figures will alter due to both the disease level and the rate of testing during that month. The volume of live cattle testing is greater during the winter housing period than during the summer grazing season.

Using the 12 month moving average incidence to monitor disease levels allows for a clearer picture of the disease trend. There was a significant rise in the 12 month moving average herd and animal incidence measures from August 2011 (4.99% & 0.425%) to October 2012 (7.46% & 0.666% respectively). Despite extensive ongoing investigations, no single causal factor for this rise has yet been identified.

The TB herd and animal incidence has reduced in recent months and were 7.1% and 0.657% respectively in the 12 months ending 28 February 2013.

Bovine TB Tests: Liver Fluke

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what impact liver fluke has on the accuracy of the (i) skin; and (ii) blood tests for Bovine TB.

(AQW 22221/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Recent experimental evidence showed that cattle infected with both liver fluke and bovine TB had significantly reduced reactions to the tuberculin skin test when compared to cattle infected only with bovine TB. An additional study, which was based on dairy herds in England and Wales, suggested that herds with evidence of high levels of liver fluke infestation were more likely to test negative compared to other herds, and that TB in these circumstances was estimated as being potentially under-detected by about one-third.

The impact of liver fluke on the gamma interferon blood test for bovine TB is similar to that for the tuberculin skin test in that co-infection reduces the magnitude of the gamma-interferon test response.

The impact of fluke co-infection on bovine TB diagnosis in the north remains unmeasured and it is unclear what effect liver fluke intervention might have on bovine TB diagnostic tests here.

However, I can advise you that the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) have recently been commissioned to conduct research into the role of endemic diseases and other factors in the occurrence of bovine TB here.

Test and Vaccinate or Remove Research Scheme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Test and Vaccinate or Remove research scheme, including its commencement date and when the first results will be collated.

(AQW 22222/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I announced on 3 July 2012 that I had requested officials to design a "test and vaccinate or remove (TVR)" wildlife intervention research. TVR commands broad spectrum support from farmer, veterinary and environmental stakeholders.

Since then good progress has been made on the preparatory phases of TVR, which are vital to inform the design of the main phase. The Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) was commissioned to undertake computerised mathematical modelling to provide information to help design and cost a TVR study. The FERA modelling analysed local farm business, TB herd history and badger population data. The FERA results indicate that the TVR areas should be at least 100km² and be located in an area of high badger density, high cattle herd density and with high levels of confirmed TB.

I announced on 29 January 2013 that the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) had been commissioned to commence a badger sett survey in a 100km² area between Banbridge and Rathfriland in Co. Down as soon as permissions from local farmers were obtained. I further announced, on 7 March 2013, that sett surveying would begin in a second 100km² area near Castlewellan in Co. Down. To date we have received permission to survey just over 75% of land in the Banbridge area and just over 55% in the Castlewellan area, with permission slips still being returned on a daily basis. The actual badger sett survey work is progressing very well and will continue as long as possible until the growth of vegetation will make surveying difficult. Any farm which cannot be surveyed in coming weeks will be scheduled for surveying next winter when cattle are rehoused and vegetation has died back.

Advice from FERA also advocates that ecological baseline monitoring should be conducted in the TVR areas and AFBI was commissioned on 17 April 2013 to develop proposals to conduct this. It is anticipated that this phase of the TVR project will commence in the summer of 2013.

Information from these fieldwork phases are important as it will help finalise the TVR project design and provide detailed information for the Outline Business Case, which has to be submitted to the Department of Personnel and Finance for their approval. In addition, prior NI Environment Agency and DHSSPS Animals Scientific Procedures Act license approval will also be needed before any main

TVR interventions can begin in mid 2014. NIEA do not issue licenses in respect of the period from December to June as, during that period, pregnant badgers and female badgers with dependent young, are underground.

Tuberculin Test Supplier

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) when her Department changed the tuberculin supplier for the tuberculin test; (ii) how this change was implemented and over what period of time; and (iii) how this changed the sensitivity of the tuberculin test.

(AQW 22223/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The Department changed supplier of tuberculin on 1st April 2007, as the previous supply was no longer available. The supplier is now the same for Ireland and Britain.
- (ii) From that date, all TB tests here were required to be conducted solely using the new supply of tuberculin.
- (iii) Tuberculin is produced to approved EU and international standards. Analysis in Britain indicates slightly decreased sensitivity and slightly increased specificity.

Retiring Farmers

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what her Department is doing to assist farmers who are contemplating retirement and passing on their farm to family members.

(AQW 22224/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Farm Family Options (FFO) Business Mentoring Programme, which is funded under Axis 1 of the NI Rural Development Programme, is a programme of support designed to encourage farmers and farm family members to identify and consider opportunities for both their own future and that of the farm.

The Programme assists farmers and family members, with the support of an experienced agricultural business mentor, to discuss and consider the farm business' current position, address the main issues, opportunities and concerns, and develop a focused Action Plan for the future. This includes advice on succession planning and signposting to other sources of support and assistance. There is also the opportunity to avail of £250 financial support to seek legal or financial advice in relation to succession planning.

In the winter of 2012/13 CAFRE, in association with the FFO Business Mentoring Programme, organised 10 well attended Taxation and Succession Planning seminars across the country. Important issues such as personal and capital allowances, inheritance tax, and succession planning were covered.

The FFO Mentoring programme is open to all farmers and to date over 1,800 farm families have applied to the programme with almost 900 Action Plans completed.

Agri-Food Branch Inspectors

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what are the projected costs of the enforcement training for Agri-Food Branch inspectors for the 2013/14 financial year.

(AQW 22233/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department's Agri-food Inspection Branch implements a range of local and EU legislation relating to food & feed safety, plant health, bee health, beef classification & price reporting, product certification and marketing standards. This is achieved through a number of specialist teams of professional staff with expertise in food technology, agriculture and horticulture. It is necessary where non-compliance with legislation is identified that the most appropriate action is taken. This can on occasion require formal enforcement action and it is considered essential that inspection staff within the Branch are appropriately trained.

The training is accredited to Level 4 through the Open College Network and lasts for 6.5 days. Delivery costs associated with this training amount to approximately £3,000 per course. One course is planned for the 13/14 financial year.

Rural Broadband Services

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 21414/11-15, whether there is a timescale by which the £5m must be spent.

(AQW 22258/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I understand that the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) project, which is the vehicle for delivering my Departments £5m funding in rural areas, must be in place by the end of March 2015.

Rural Broadband Services

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department will fund individual rural broadband projects through rural partnerships.

(AQW 22259/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am interpreting rural partnerships to mean the Local Action Groups who deliver Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme. Under Axis 3 an applicant could apply to purchase equipment to gain access broadband. However this would have to be used by a rural business in its day to day operations or could be to set up a service that they would maintain and run as a business or community project for a minimum of 5 years from the date of any grant payment. They would have to apply to a competitive open call for applications in the Local Action Group area covering their location, a list of these can be found at

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/rural-development/rdp-campaign/rdp-campaign-development-funding-schemes-and-programmes/rdp-campaign-development-rural-life/rdp-development-local-action-group-contacts.htm> .

Protection for Landowners

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she plans to introduce legislation to protect landowners from incurring costs as a result of animals being abandoned on their land.

(AQW 22313/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Section 14 of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 makes it an offence to abandon an animal for which that person is responsible for, irrespective of whether the animal suffers or not. My Department enforces the Act in relation to farmed animals and Councils who enforce the legislation in relation to non-farmed animals will take action against persons known to have abandoned an animal.

I understand that the Animals Order 1976, which is not the responsibility of my Department, provides any landowner on whose land animals have been abandoned with powers to either sell or retain the abandoned animals, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in the 1976 Order. This may certainly assist landowners in recouping associated costs.

Farmers and landowners are advised to take action to secure the gates to their land, particularly gates directly on the roadside, to ensure that as far as possible horses and other animals are not abandoned on their land.

I have no plans to introduce legislation for the protection of landowners from incurring costs as a result of animals being abandoned on their land.

Scrapie Monitored Flock Scheme

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the reasons for compulsory participation in the Scrapie Monitored Flock Scheme for farmers who wish to maintain a

breeding flock or herd for intra-community trade purposes; and (ii) whether she will consider removing such a prerequisite to enable sheep farmers to increase trade with the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 22354/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) The Scrapie Monitored Flocks Scheme (SMFS) is a voluntary scheme for sheep and goat owners. The Scheme provides members with health assurance for their breeding flocks that enables them to obtain an Intra Trade Animal Health Certificate (ITAHC) for the export of their animals to the south and other Member States. This certification is an EU requirement under Regulation (EC) 999/2001 and Council Directive 91/68/EEC. Without the SMFS, DARD would be unable to provide the necessary veterinary support certification that facilitates completion of the ITAHC by an Authorised Veterinary Inspector. A similar scheme (also called the Scrapie Monitored Flocks Scheme) operates in the south.

- (ii) Like many farmers, I would prefer a situation where there is free movement of sheep and other animals on the island of Ireland as is envisaged under the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy, which was agreed by the North South Ministerial Council Ministers in March 2010. The new EU Animal Health Law (AHL), due to be published by the EU Commission in May 2013, aims to reduce administrative burdens and costs including relaxation of conditions relating to the movement of animals between member states, whilst ensuring risk-based controls are in place to reduce the incidence and impact of animal disease. The new AHL therefore represents a key opportunity for the free movement of animals on the island of Ireland, and may provide an opportunity to frame legislation in a way that could help attain this objective.

Following the publication of the EU AHL, formal negotiations will take place in regard to delegated and implementing acts so it is unlikely that changes to domestic legislation will come into effect for at least another two years. In the meantime, as is required under EU intra-community trade rules, the SMFS will continue to operate in order to facilitate the trade in breeding sheep on this island.

Agri-Food Inspection Branch

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the cost of enforcement training provided for staff from the Agri-Food Inspection Branch in 2012/13; (ii) the location of the training; (iii) the duration of the training; and (iv) the accreditation provided on completion.

(AQW 22359/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The cost of enforcement training provided to Agri-food Inspection Branch Staff during 2012/13 amounts to approximately £6,000. This covers the cost of two courses run on 7 January and 21 January 2013 which trained 16 staff and 12 staff respectively. Each course lasts for 6½ days. The first course took place at the College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise's (CAFRE) Greenmount Campus and the second at their Loughry Campus.

The course is accredited by the National Open College Network to the equivalent of NVQ level 4 and is known as Farm and Food Industry Regulation: Investigation, Compliance and Enforcement. Participants will receive a certificate if they successfully complete the course and associated assessments.

Agri-Food Inspection Enforcement Legislation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how agri-food inspection enforcement legislation has changed in the last five years.

(AQW 22360/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I refer the member to my previous answer AQW 22109/11-15.

Common Agricultural Policy Proposals

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to Single Farm Payment, to provide an estimate of the difference between what farmers currently receive compared to what they will receive under Common Agricultural Policy proposals in each constituency.
(AQW 22387/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: It is not possible to provide this information as future payments in each constituency will depend on a range of factors which are not yet known, such as the regional allocations of CAP monies, the payment model used to adjust payments towards a flat rate per hectare and the areas claimed by farmers each year. Intense negotiations are on-going in Brussels between the EU Commission, Council and Parliament aimed at arriving at a CAP reform agreement by the end of June 2013. It is only after this agreement has been reached that DARD can start to consider, in close consultation with stakeholders, the most appropriate farm support framework within the regional flexibilities that will be available to us.

Regeneration of Rural Villages

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what funding opportunities are available for the regeneration of rural villages.
(AQW 22431/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under Measure 3.5 Village Renewal of Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, a budget of £12 million has been made available to the seven Joint council Committees (JCCs) implementing the Axis on the Departments behalf. Of this £11.5m has been committed to Village Renewal projects.

The main purpose of the measure is to enable and encourage residents of villages and surrounding areas to create an integrated action plan to ensure the full potential of such areas is achieved and to support integrated village initiatives.

The programme is delivered by the seven Local Action Groups using the LEADER approach. The village renewal measure is open to all rural groups representing villages in the North, regardless of size and capacity.

Hardship Funding Applications

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether there is a timeframe for when hardship funding applications will be processed.
(AQW 22437/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I intend to bring details of the hardship scheme to the Executive for agreement very shortly. The scheme, based on EU de minimis Rules, capped at €7,500, will be framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of losses, which we have been building as farmers had stock removed and disposed of by the approved renderers.

The scheme will be brought forward as quickly as possible and I hope to release details in the very near future.

Pesticides containing Neonicotinoids

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she intends to lobby her counterparts in the UK and the Republic of Ireland about a restriction on the use of pesticides containing neonicotinoids on crops that do not attract bees or other pollinators.
(AQW 22499/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I recognise that there are a range of environmental and economic concerns relating to neonicotinoid insecticides. A proportionate and evidence-based approach should be taken to this issue, considering all of the many factors that affect bee populations.

It is important to note that the vast majority of neonicotinoids are used for the treatment of seeds and their use here in the north is relatively limited. Pesticide usage statistics from 2010, provided by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, indicate that the neonicotinoids were used for seed treatment on 0.6% of the agricultural land area in the north of Ireland.

Field trials recently commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the impact of neonicotinoids on bees were inconclusive, but considered that while the possibility of adverse impacts are a concern, doubts remain about actual exposure in the field. Further research is, however justified to strengthen the evidence available.

The European Commission has indicated that it will shortly prohibit the use of 3 neonicotinoids for seed treatment, soil application and foliar treatment on bee attractive crops. The sale of these neonicotinoids to amateur growers will also be prohibited.

It is very clear that bees and pollinators face many problems unrelated to neonicotinoids and it is vital to understand them and take all the evidence into account. Restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids on crops that do not attract bees or pollinators would not be a proportionate response to the evidence we have available.

I will continue to look at bee health in the round and take whatever action is appropriate to safeguard these valuable creatures.

Single Farm Payment Applications

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the outcome of the A5 road scheme, to outline the implications for farmers who had their land vested and will now be including it again on their Single Farm Payment application.

(AQW 22516/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware that the vesting of this land has affected its use in a number of different ways and that some of these (for example, if the land has been bulldozed) may have implications for Single Farm Payment (SFP).

To claim 2013 SFP, the land must be at the farmer's disposal on 15 May 2013, they must be undertaking agricultural activity on it and it must be in an eligible use throughout the year. If the land has been returned to the farmer in April 2013, then it is unlikely that these requirements can be met. However, under the force majeure provisions it may still be possible to use this land to support a 2013 SFP claim. For force majeure to be considered, any land that has been temporarily removed from agricultural use must be returned to agricultural use within the calendar year in order to meet the SFP eligibility requirements.

My advice to any farmer who had their land vested as part of the A5 road scheme, and where that land is now available to the farmer again for agricultural use, is to include the land on their 2013 Single Application and, when submitting this application, attach a request for force majeure to be considered. Each request received under force majeure will be considered individually.

It must also be pointed out that completion of the A5 is an Executive commitment and that will continue in due course.

Hardship Fund for Farmers

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how the hardship fund for farmers affected by the adverse weather will be allocated.

(AQW 22574/11-15)

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 Payments 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 had livestock losses as a result of the snow storm and had fallen stock disposed of during the period 2 April – 19 April 2013 by approved renderers, will be eligible for the hardship funding.

I intend to bring details of the Hardship Payments Scheme to the Executive for agreement very shortly. The scheme will be framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of losses, which we have been building as farmers have had stock removed and disposed of by the approved renderers.

The scheme will be brought forward as quickly as possible and I hope to release details in the very near future.

Farm Buildings

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how eligible farmers can avail of Rural Development funding to improve farm sheds and buildings in Less Favoured Areas.

(AQO 3959/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Funding to improve farm sheds and buildings is not available under the Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013. Capital grant support to farm businesses is available under the Farm Modernisation Programme, which aims to improve the economic performance through better use of production including the introduction of new technologies and innovation. It also covers improving the environmental, occupational safety, hygiene and animal welfare of the agricultural holdings. However, it is a small scale capital grant scheme which covers plant, machinery and equipment only and does not provide for improvements or repairs to farm sheds and buildings. Support for upgrading or replacement of farm buildings may be supported under the next Rural Development Programme, which will go out for public consultation later in the year.

Farmers: Banking Facilities

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to meet with banks to ensure that there are adequate financial provisions, such as extra overdrafts, for those farmers that have found themselves in financial trouble as a result of the severe weather.

(AQO 3960/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Yes, I intend to meet with the banks again which is a follow on from my previous meetings. It is important that I do so due to the ongoing impact of the severe weather on farmers. I will seek to gain an assurance from the banks that they will provide farmers with the necessary support and financial flexibility to allow them to deal with the additional costs associated with the severe weather and the delay in the turnout of livestock to grass this spring due to the continuing unseasonal low temperatures.

You are aware I announced The Hardship Scheme which should support those farmers worst affected by the severe weather at the end of March.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on her efforts to tackle Chalara Fraxinea.

(AQO 3961/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As a result of general surveillance and trace-forward exercises to date, 56 premises have been confirmed positive for Chalara fraxinea; 53 in recently planted sites and 3 findings in nursery/retail/trade situations.

Statutory Plant Health Notices requiring destruction of affected ash saplings and plant debris have been issued. Forest Service has provided assistance to ensure the sites were dealt with swiftly.

We are co-operating closely with authorities in the South on a “Fortress Ireland” type approach and with the authorities in Britain on our response to this disease. We are currently considering views from stakeholders on our draft All-Ireland Chalara Control Strategy and hope to publish this shortly. This Strategy seeks to address the risk of the disease becoming established in the wider environment; support research around spread of disease and resistance; encourage stakeholder and public engagement; and plan for resilience should the disease become established.

As part of the Strategy, the Department is commencing its 2013 survey of Ash for any symptoms of the disease. We are adopting a risk-based; intelligence-led; targeted approach. The survey covers all of the North, including recently-planted sites of ash in public & private woodland; roadside plantings; established trees & hedgerows and nursery surveillance. Any suspect trees will be sampled and undergo laboratory testing for the pathogen.

The focus of our earlier winter survey was surveillance on plants and trees planted within the last 5 years. During this exercise, 1,045 premises were surveyed.

I am grateful for stakeholders’ co-operation as together we seek to tackle this disease. Stakeholder engagement has continued with the most recent event held on 25 April 2013. The event provided an overview of work to date; a research update; an overview of the All-Ireland Control Strategy; an outline of the 2013 Surveillance Plan; and ongoing plans for stakeholder and public engagement.

DARD: Headquarters

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she had with her departmental staff before announcing that her Department’s headquarters would move to Ballykelly. **(AQO 3962/11-15)**

Mrs O’Neill: My Department has consulted and continues to consult staff in Dundonald House and Hydebank in relation to the relocation of the headquarters. Under our agreed industrial relations mechanisms, known as the Whitley arrangements, a subcommittee of departmental and staff representatives was established, specifically to consult formally with NIPSA on all issues relating to relocation. The first meeting of the subcommittee was on January 2012 and the committee now meets on a monthly basis.

As I have outlined previously in this chamber, I am committed to keeping my Departmental staff fully informed of developments: this is achieved through regular monthly updates in the DARD staff magazine, regular notices to staff from my Permanent Secretary and recently my officials have developed a dedicated HQ Relocation Intranet site which contains all the key information for staff to access. This site also encourages staff to provide feedback and ask questions.

I would like to assure you that I remain committed to keeping staff fully informed and engaged throughout the programme both directly and through NIPSA. Engagement with NIPSA to date has been extensive and meaningful, and I intend to ensure that that continues.

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Loughgall

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline any plans for the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute at Loughgall, Co. Armagh. **(AQO 3963/11-15)**

Mrs O’Neill: The facilities at Loughgall represent one of six DARD owned sites currently occupied by AFBI. I have no plans at this point in time to make any changes to AFBI’s facilities at Loughgall.

Flood Alleviation: South Belfast

Mr Maskey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on flood alleviation measures in South Belfast.

(AQO 3964/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am very aware of the hardship and distress caused by flooding and I have visited South Belfast to see at first hand the work being undertaken by Rivers Agency to reduce the risk of further flooding.

Rivers Agency has completed a number of investigations, undertaken improvement works, identified further work and where further investigation is required. Areas investigated include Orchardville, Ashton, Sicily, Greystown, Stockmans Lane and Ormonde. In undertaking this work, Rivers Agency has continued to liaise with their counterparts in NI Water and Roads Service.

Works completed to date have included repairs to infrastructure and the removal of obstructions. Rivers Agency has also taken on the maintenance responsibility of watercourses, at public expense, to ensure free flow. Rivers Agency is also working with utility companies to remove services which are obstructing a number of watercourses in the area.

In relation to Ashton Park, further investigatory work is being undertaken to identify the location and condition of the privately owned sewer network. In relation to the Sicily Park and Greystown areas the Agency is liaising with NI Water who are undertaking a study to identify the most cost effective option to reduce the risk of flooding.

While there is further work to do I am reassured that the work done to date has already reduced the risk of further flooding and the future actions planned will further improve matters.

Social Clauses

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department is using social clauses in procurement contracts.

(AQO 3965/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since publication of the Programme for Government (PfG) commitment to include social clauses in all public procurement contracts for supplies, services and construction, my Department has entered into 37 contracts over the value of £30k, all of which included social clauses. The total value of these contracts was £23m.

These contracts included clauses on Equality, Health and Safety and Early Payment. Some also included clauses in relation to providing opportunities for the unemployed, apprentices and students; providing work experience or employment opportunities; and opportunities for employees to develop essential skills.

I will continue to seek to maximise all possible opportunities to incorporate social clauses in the Department's future contracts.

Severe Weather: Livestock Losses

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when she will confirm the final numbers of sheep and cattle lost because of the snow around Easter.

(AQO 3966/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The collection and disposal by my Department of sheep and cattle, lost because of the snow around Easter, concluded last week. This was a huge exercise for the Department, involving over 40,000 sheep, goats and cattle. The final exact figures are being ratified as part of the Hardship Funding Scheme, but the latest figures are 43558 sheep and 1,142 cattle.

Rural Childcare

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she is addressing the lack of rural childcare provision.

(AQO 3967/11-15)

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

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

OFMDFM launched their 'Towards a Childcare Strategy' for consultation in December 2012. The consultation period closed on 5 March 2013 and my officials have met with OFMDFM officials to discuss some of the emerging findings. Early indications are that there is a growing need for childcare provision, particularly in rural areas, for children of school age to enable parents to access employment, education and training.

I have asked my officials to work with OFMDFM to identify needs with the aim of bringing forward a childcare initiative to assist those living in rural areas who find it difficult to access childcare provision.

Single Farm Payments: Tree Felling

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether older trees are at risk of being felled during the mapping process in the calculation of entitlement to Single Farm Payment.

(AQO 3968/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At this stage, DARD has no evidence to suggest that older trees are at risk of being felled.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Improving Physical Fitness

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the targets set by her Department to improve people's physical fitness and the actions she is taking to meet the targets.

(AQW 22356/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Responsibility for improving people's physical fitness rests, in the first instance, with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Having said that, my Department's strategy for sport, Sport Matters, recognises the role that sport and physical recreation can play in improving public health and related fitness. For this reason, Sport Matters contains 11 targets that are specifically designed to increase participation in sport and physical recreation across the population. These participation targets are set out in the published Sport Matters strategy which is available on the DCAL website at:

http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/sport_matters.pdf

The targets themselves are also designed to be consistent with Chief Medical Officer recommendations in relation to healthy physical activity. The actions being taken to meet these targets are fully set out in the related Sport Matters Action Plan. This Action Plan has also been published and can be accessed on the Sport NI website at:

<http://www.sportni.net/about/SportMatters/Sport+Matters+Implementation>

Liofa 2015

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the Liofa 2015 initiative.
(AQO 3977/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since its launch in September 2011, over 3800 people have signed up to the Líofo campaign, so excellent progress has been made towards achieving the overall target of 5000 participants by 2015. These figures reflect the high level of interest in the campaign and the support it has received across the north of Ireland.

I have introduced a number of measures to provide practical support to Líofo participants. On 11th April I launched the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme making 100 places available to assist people who might otherwise not be able to afford to attend an Irish Language Gaeltacht course. Foras na Gaeilge in conjunction with DCAL will develop and implement a dedicated Líofo website as part of their all Ireland portal website. The website will enhance the learning experience for Líofo participants.

This year's Líofo birthday party will be held in Derry, as part of the City of Culture. The event will be held in early September and will provide a focus for individuals and Irish Language organisations with the aim of promoting and publicising the Irish Language to all.

My Department's Líofo Development Officer has met with East Belfast Mission to discuss how we can assist their work and provide practical support to encourage uptake to Líofo.

Sports Governing Bodies

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why there has been a delay in the funding for sports' governing bodies.
(AQO 3978/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have been informed by Sport NI that there has been no delay in the funding for sports' governing bodies in terms of recurrent costs. My Department is currently considering the detail of a business case that proposes additional funding to sports' governing bodies under the Athlete Investment Programme. That programme aims to bring improved athlete performance through providing opportunities for athletes to avail of appropriate training and competition programmes. It also aims to enable governing bodies of sport to support identified talented athletes to develop their full potential and achieve international sporting success.

Motorsport

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline her plans to improve facilities at motor sport tracks including Kirkistown, Bishopscourt and Nutts Corner.
(AQO 3979/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for improving facilities at motor sport tracks, including Kirkistown, Bishopscourt and Nutts Corner, rests in the first instance with the owners and operators of the circuits.

In 2009 my Department, through Sport NI, provided £2m to motorsport to help bring about health and safety improvements at a number of venues across the north of Ireland. This included improvement works at Kirkistown, Bishopscourt and Nutts Corner motor sport tracks.

I can confirm that Sport NI has recently awarded a further £338,000 funding to assist the development of motorsports generally across the north, including motorsports that use Kirkistown, Bishopscourt and Nutts Corner. Any bids for additional funding, should they materialise, would need to be considered in the context of my strategy for sport, Sport Matters, and my related priorities for promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion.

DCAL: Capital Projects

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of whether the £24.8 million overspend on the seven capital projects represents value for money.

(AQO 3980/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department has received the NIAO report, has accepted all the recommendations contained within it and is taking action where appropriate.

I cannot comment further at this point as the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee has indicated that it will consider all NIAO reports either by way of evidence session or by written correspondence. It is therefore important that any comments should not pre-empt or pre-judge any evidence that might be given at a subsequent PAC hearing or in correspondence with the Committee.

Casement Park

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the Casement Park stadium project following her recent meetings with stakeholders.

(AQO 3981/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: At the invitation of Paul Maskey, MP for West Belfast, I met with a number of representatives of community and resident groups with regard to the Casement Park redevelopment.

There is significant support within the wider community for this redevelopment, particularly with regard to the regenerative positive socio-economic impacts that will accrue.

I also met with representatives of the residents association and discussed with them initiatives which they feel will positively impact the final stadium delivery and also some concerns they may have.

I have asked my officials to review these suggestions and to revert to me as soon as possible with an update.

It is important for Ulster Council GAA and the wider area that this development goes ahead but it is also important that it has the support of the wider community and my Department is working closely with Ulster Council GAA, residents and community groups to ensure this happens.

Arts and Culture: East Belfast

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans her Department has to promote arts and culture in East Belfast.

(AQO 3982/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department, and its arms length bodies, work to promote arts and culture in East Belfast across a range of areas.

For example:

The Arts Council is working with the East Belfast Partnership Board in developing an arts and cultural strategy for East Belfast. The Arts Council provided £5k to the East Belfast Arts Festival in 2012 and is currently working with the festival organisers on funding for the 2013 Festival.

The Closing Ceremony for the World Police and Fire Games will be held on the Titanic Slipways on the 10th August 2013.

Foras na Gaeilge funds the Irish Language Officer post in East Belfast Mission. Irish language lessons are held regularly in East Belfast and the first ever intensive course (dianchúrsa) took place there in the East Belfast Mission in March.

National Museums engage with older people in East Belfast through its Live and Learn Programme. National Museums have used their collections to develop and deliver a cross community project with schools from East Belfast.

Libraries NI deliver an extensive programme of exhibitions, cultural events and activities in East Belfast each year e.g reading groups, writing groups, exhibitions by local arts clubs as well as special seasonal events, particularly for children.

Department of Education

Integrated Education

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to meet the rising demand for integrated education at both primary and post-primary level.

(AQW 21998/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): My Department takes its statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education very seriously.

In any year, the popularity of a school sector is most appropriately measured by the number of parents expressing a first preference on the application/transfer form for schools in that sector.

Within the integrated sector, the number of places available in both the primary and post-primary sectors slightly exceeds demand, although there may be pressure in particular areas, or for particular schools, due to parental preference.

Where pressure on places exists at a school, the Department will consider any request from a school for a temporary increase to its admission and/or enrolment numbers. Temporary variations will not be granted if there are other schools of the same sector within reasonable travelling distance with spaces available. Each case is considered on its own merits.

In the longer term, the Area Planning process aims to assess the demand for places in every sector based on robust and verifiable evidence. Where there is identified need the school managing authority will consider that need in the overall context of the area plan and if appropriate bring forward a Development Proposal to increase the number of places.

In addition, any existing grant-aided school, with the exception of a special school, may consider transforming to integrated status.

Centre of Procurement Expertise

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18559/11-15, on what basis the 3 percent saving has been calculated.

(AQW 22160/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The 3 percent saving referred to in AQW 18559/11-15 is based on initial discussions with the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). 3 percent savings should be achievable when CPD has been able to aggregate ESA's current and future requirements along with the NICS's current and existing demand.

Selection Process used to Appoint Commissioners

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education what criteria or selection process his Department implements when appointing commissioners to, or advisory groups for, panels, such as the Advancing Shared Education Panel.

(AQW 22205/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The panel members for the Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education were chosen and appointed by me, based on their experience of cultural and social issues facing our society.

Shared and Integrated Education

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to outline the differences between shared and integrated education.[R]

(AQW 22227/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Shared Education encompasses a number of different types of sharing, from projects and shared classes through to shared education models, such as those defined in the Bain report (eg: Federations/Confederations; Shared Campus and Shared Faith schools).

Under Article 64 (1) of The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, integrated education is defined as “the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils.”

The Terms of Reference for the Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education defined Shared Education as:

“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”.

By its nature, Shared Education involves more than one school type. This view has been endorsed by the Ministerial Advisory Group, which further refined the definition to “...involves two or more schools or other education institutions from different sectors working in collaboration...”

St Mary's Primary School, Annaclone

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education how many additional places were awarded to St Mary's Primary School, Annaclone; and the reasons for the permitted increase.

(AQW 22311/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department awarded one additional place to St Mary's Primary School on the basis that there is no other alternative maintained primary school within reasonable travelling distance of the child's home.

Drumcree College, Portadown

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education for an update on the position of Drumcree College, Portadown.

(AQW 22312/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As a maintained post-primary school it is the responsibility of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), in the first instance, to manage provision in the maintained schools' estate and to bring forward proposals to the Department of Education (DE). Any significant change to the schools' estate, such as a school closure, would require the publication of a statutory Development Proposal to support that intent.

I am aware that the SELB post-primary area plan indicates Drumcree College is not sustainable or viable in its current format and that a managed and phased closure is required. I understand that CCMS has now completed the business case to support this process and have been advised that consultation with stakeholders took place on Tuesday 30 April 2013.

To date a Development Proposal seeking the closure of Drumcree College has not been submitted to my Department.

Education and Skills Authority: Education Bill

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education how many items of correspondence he has received by mail, email or other means (i) supporting; and (ii) opposing the Education and Skills Authority since the introduction of the Education Bill.

(AQW 22335/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have received 61 letters regarding various elements of the Education Bill since its introduction on 2 October 2012.

School Curriculum: Sexual Orientation

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 21936/11-15, (i) why sexual orientation is not mainstreamed throughout all stages of learning; and (ii) why pupils do not learn about homophobia in the same way they learn about racism and sectarianism, given that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are two and a half times more likely to attempt suicide and are one and a half times more likely to suffer depression, anxiety disorders and dependence on alcohol and other substances.

(AQW 22337/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education (Curriculum Content) Order (NI) 2007 sets out the detailed requirements of what schools must teach under each Area of Learning within the revised curriculum at each key stage. There is no statutory requirement at any Key Stage for schools to teach about sexual orientation.

The Department's Guidance to schools does require schools to have in place a written policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), which has been subject to consultation with parents and endorsed by the Board of Governors. Guidance provided by the Department of Education states that RSE must be delivered in schools within a moral framework and taught in a sensitive manner that is in keeping with the ethos of the school and which is appropriate to the needs and maturity of their pupils. The Department's Guidance for Post-primary Schools on Relationships and Sexuality Education states that the issue of sexual orientation should be handled by schools in a sensitive, non-confrontational and reassuring way.

In developing or reviewing their RSE policy, schools have been advised to take account of guidance produced by the Equality Commission on eliminating sexual orientation discrimination. This guidance relates to the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006, which gives all pupils the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably on the grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

The Department recognises that young people face a range of pressures during their teenage years. Our focus is on promoting the positive emotional health and wellbeing of pupils. The "i-Matter" Programme recognises the significant role that schools can play in raising awareness of emotional health, developing the confidence and coping skills of pupils and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing stress.

The Programme is a vehicle to integrate a school's individual policies and support systems in a consistent and coherent way and was developed with the involvement of working groups made up of key people from other departments, professionals in the mental health field, schools and the voluntary sector.

One of the 'products' from the working groups which has been particularly successful is a range of diary inserts on topics of concern to young people such as self esteem, sexual identity, substance abuse and relationships.

In addition, the Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS) offers a professional counselling service to young people in post primary schools during difficult and vulnerable periods in their lives.

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Education what action he has taken, and intends to take, to generate interest among schools in supporting and visiting the proposed Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQW 22376/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I welcome the recent announcement about the proposed Peace Centre and the educational opportunities this will provide for schools. I believe it is important for pupils to have opportunities to explore social conflict, human rights and democracy and these are provided through Citizenship education which sits at the core of the curriculum and is included under compulsory areas of learning for pupils from Year 1 to Year 12.

The revised curriculum provides teachers with greater flexibility to decide on the educational resources and programmes they wish to use to enhance their teaching and to meet the needs of their pupils. In matters such as educational visits it would be up to individual schools to choose the venues they feel would most benefit their pupils.

When the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre is operational the Department of Education will disseminate any related educational materials to schools via the channels available over the C2k's Education Network service, for example the C2k Exchange. Video content could be stored in the Video on Demand service in Equella, the new digital repository for schools and the new online learning platform, Fronter, could be used to hold a wide variety of resources that teachers could use in the context of their own classroom needs.

Area Planning Coordinating Group: Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 21787/11-15, why the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools has two representatives on the Area Planning Coordinating Group.

(AQW 22411/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Area Planning Co-ordinating Group has been superseded by the Area Planning Steering Group (APSG), which has been established to support my Department in its work to co-ordinate and oversee the continued development of area planning.

I refer the Member to my answer to his previous question on the membership of this group AQW 21402/11-15, published in the Official Report on 12 April 2013. This indicates that CCMS has one representative on the APSG.

Taking Boys Seriously Report

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 21399/11-15, whether he has any plans to encourage the education system to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

(AQW 22413/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Taking Boys Seriously report was published in November 2012, at that stage my Department circulated it to schools, Education and Library Boards, the Education and Training Inspectorate and policy makers. The report was also given a wide distribution across the youth sector and was placed on the Department's website.

The authors of the report from the Centre for Young Men's Studies at the University of Ulster have presented their findings to my officials and those in the Department of Justice. I am aware that they have also engaged widely with a range of representative groups across the education sector, including making presentations to the National Association of Head Teachers (NI) and the National Union of Teachers.

While dissemination of the report's findings continues, I would encourage everyone in the education sector to read the report and consider what actions they can take to ensure that its recommendations lead to more positive outcomes for all our children and young people.

Primary School Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what assistance his Department is providing for parents who have yet to find a primary school place for their children.

(AQW 22441/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: 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 for September 2013.

Primary 1 and Nursery Pupils in East Antrim

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) primary 1; and (ii) nursery pupils for the 2013-14 intake in East Antrim who did not receive a place in their first choice school or nursery unit.

(AQW 22459/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board has advised me that the number of primary and nursery pupils for the 2013 intake who did not receive a place in their first choice school or nursery unit, are as provided in the tables below.

School Name	Number of children not selected at 1st Preference – Primary School
Eden Primary School, Carrickfergus	5
Greenisland Primary School	2
Woodlawn Primary School	1
Acorn Integrated Primary School	9

Name of Nursery Unit	Number of children not selected at 1st Preference- Nursery Unit
Acorn Nursery Unit	17
Oakfield Nursery Unit	19
Silverstream Nursery Unit	6

Nursery Places in East Antrim

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of nursery places available in East Antrim for 2013-14, broken down by unit.

(AQW 22460/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of primary 1 and nursery places available in East Antrim Constituency for 2013/14 are as detailed in the table below.

Constituency	School Name	Approved Nursery Enrolment Number 2013/14	Approved Primary School Enrolment Number 2013/14
East Antrim	Sunnylands Nursery School	104	
East Antrim	Monkstown Nursery School	78	
East Antrim	St Anthony's Nursery School	52	
East Antrim	Carnalbanagh Primary School		8

Constituency	School Name	Approved Nursery Enrolment Number 2013/14	Approved Primary School Enrolment Number 2013/14
East Antrim	Larne and Inver Primary School		34
East Antrim	Carrickfergus Model Primary School		58
East Antrim	Olderfleet Primary School		28
East Antrim	Woodburn Primary School		28
East Antrim	Mullaghdubh Primary School		11
East Antrim	Eden Primary School		30
East Antrim	Glynn Primary School		15
East Antrim	Ballycarry Primary School		17
East Antrim	Greenisland Primary School		57
East Antrim	Carrickfergus Central Primary School		33
East Antrim	Whiteabbey Primary School		59
East Antrim	Upper Ballyboley Primary School		14
East Antrim	Sunnylands Primary School		41
East Antrim	Moyle Primary School	52	46
East Antrim	Whitehead Primary School	52	56
East Antrim	Linn Primary School	52	54
East Antrim	Victoria Primary School	52	82
East Antrim	Toreagh Primary School		16
East Antrim	Silverstream Primary School	26	30
East Antrim	Hollybank Primary School		60
East Antrim	Woodlawn Primary School		44
East Antrim	Oakfield Primary School	52	53
East Antrim	Cairncastle Primary School		20
East Antrim	Glenann Primary School		9
East Antrim	St Mary's Primary School	52	30
East Antrim	Seaview Primary School		17
East Antrim	St Anthony's Primary School		60
East Antrim	St John's Primary School	52	27
East Antrim	St James' Primary School	78	55
East Antrim	St Patrick's Primary School		19
East Antrim	St Ciaran's Primary School		15
East Antrim	St Nicholas' Primary School		30
East Antrim	St Macnissi's Primary School		30

Constituency	School Name	Approved Nursery Enrolment Number 2013/14	Approved Primary School Enrolment Number 2013/14
East Antrim	Kilcoan Primary School		12
East Antrim	Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School		9
East Antrim	Corran Integrated Primary School	26	29
East Antrim	Acorn Integrated Primary School	26	29

Primary 1 Places in East Antrim

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of primary 1 places available in East Antrim for 2013-14, broken down by school.

(AQW 22461/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of primary 1 and nursery places available in East Antrim Constituency for 2013/14 are as detailed in the table below.

Constituency	School Name	Approved Nursery Enrolment Number 2013/14	Approved Primary School Enrolment Number 2013/14
East Antrim	Sunnylands Nursery School	104	
East Antrim	Monkstown Nursery School	78	
East Antrim	St Anthony's Nursery School	52	
East Antrim	Carnalbanagh Primary School		8
East Antrim	Larne and Inver Primary School		34
East Antrim	Carrickfergus Model Primary School		58
East Antrim	Olderfleet Primary School		28
East Antrim	Woodburn Primary School		28
East Antrim	Mullaghdubh Primary School		11
East Antrim	Eden Primary School		30
East Antrim	Glynn Primary School		15
East Antrim	Ballycarry Primary School		17
East Antrim	Greenisland Primary School		57
East Antrim	Carrickfergus Central Primary School		33
East Antrim	Whiteabbey Primary School		59
East Antrim	Upper Ballyboley Primary School		14
East Antrim	Sunnylands Primary School		41
East Antrim	Moyle Primary School	52	46
East Antrim	Whitehead Primary School	52	56
East Antrim	Linn Primary School	52	54

Constituency	School Name	Approved Nursery Enrolment Number 2013/14	Approved Primary School Enrolment Number 2013/14
East Antrim	Victoria Primary School	52	82
East Antrim	Toreagh Primary School		16
East Antrim	Silverstream Primary School	26	30
East Antrim	Hollybank Primary School		60
East Antrim	Woodlawn Primary School		44
East Antrim	Oakfield Primary School	52	53
East Antrim	Cairncastle Primary School		20
East Antrim	Glenann Primary School		9
East Antrim	St Mary's Primary School	52	30
East Antrim	Seaview Primary School		17
East Antrim	St Anthony's Primary School		60
East Antrim	St John's Primary School	52	27
East Antrim	St James' Primary School	78	55
East Antrim	St Patrick's Primary School		19
East Antrim	St Ciaran's Primary School		15
East Antrim	St Nicholas' Primary School		30
East Antrim	St Macnissi's Primary School		30
East Antrim	Kilcoan Primary School		12
East Antrim	Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School		9
East Antrim	Corran Integrated Primary School	26	29
East Antrim	Acorn Integrated Primary School	26	29

Catholic Certificate of Religious Education

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether an integrated school can require a Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies as a prerequisite qualification.

(AQW 22475/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There has never been a requirement to possess the Certificate in Religious Education to work in Integrated Primary Schools. However, Boards of Governors of Integrated Primary schools may decide to 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. In these instances, the Certificate would be required as a prerequisite qualification.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19802/11-15, on what date the report was completed.

(AQW 22486/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The paper detailing the transfer of the CoPE function for supplies and services to the Central Procurement Directorate was completed in April 2012.

Shared Education Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) schools which have participated, or are participating, in the Shared Education Programme referred to in the Report of The Ministerial Advisory Group; (ii) funding given to those schools for participation in the Shared Education exercise; and (iii) whether the source of this funding was from the public or private sector.

(AQW 22497/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Shared Education Programme referred to in the Ministerial Advisory Group report is funded by the International Fund for Ireland and, in line with the Fund's policy, any queries in relation to this programme should be directed to the Chair of the Fund.

Grammar Schools: Academic Selection

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education under what rationale the Report of the Ministerial Advisory Group breached its Terms of Reference by recommending that academic selection to grammar schools be made illegal.

(AQW 22498/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education did not breach its Terms of Reference.

The Terms of Reference tasked the Group with taking account of 'any barriers to the advancement of shared education'.

Based on their research, the Ministerial Advisory Group concluded that, in their view, academic selection is one such barrier to advancing shared education.

Gallagher and Smith Main Report

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to place in the Assembly library a copy of the book referred to in footnotes 4, 9, 10 and 87 of the Gallagher and Smith Main Report, published by his Department in 2000.

(AQW 22500/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am not aware of any recent references that the Department has made specifically to the publication referred to in footnotes 4, 9, 10 and 87 of the Gallagher and Smith Main Report on the Effects of the Selective System of Secondary Education here. The Department does not hold a copy of this publication and it appears to be out of print. It will therefore not be possible to place a copy in the Assembly library.

Gallagher and Smith Main Report

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education why his Department continues to reference the book cited in footnotes 4, 9, 10 and 87 of the Gallagher and Smith Main Report on the Selective System of Secondary Education published by his Department in 2000.

(AQW 22502/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am not aware of any recent references that the Department has made specifically to the publication referred to in footnotes 4, 9, 10 and 87 of the Gallagher and Smith Main Report on the Effects of the Selective System of Secondary Education here. The Department does not hold a copy of this publication and it appears to be out of print. It will therefore not be possible to place a copy in the Assembly library.

A2 Level Moderators

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of A2 Level moderators employed by the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment in the last five years; (ii) the percentage of those A2 Level moderators who were selected from the Grammar School sector, including retired people; and (iii) the percentage of those A2 Level moderators selected from the non-Grammar sector, including retired people.

(AQW 22530/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: CCEA does not select moderators on the basis of the sector in which they teach. Statistics provided in the table below are based on an interpretation of 'non-grammar' to include:

- Non-grammar post-primary school
- Integrated; and
- Training organisations

CCEA records do not hold data about previous places of employment for retired moderators or those employed by CCEA who did not have other permanent employment at the time of their employment with CCEA as a moderator. They are categorised below as 'other'.

Year	Number of A2 moderators employed by CCEA	Percentage employed from grammar sectors	Percentage employed from non-grammar sectors	Other
2008-09	101	40%	23%	37%
2009-10	91	44%	26%	30%
2010-11	84	39%	31%	30%
2011-12	96	32%	41%	27%
2012-13	92	34%	41%	25%

Funded and Non-Funded Pre-School Places in North Antrim

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) funded; and (ii) non-funded pre-school places in North Antrim.

(AQW 22539/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In 2012/13, there are 1,338 funded pre-school education places in the North Antrim constituency area: 770 in statutory settings and 568 in voluntary and private settings.

The Department does not hold details of non-funded places in voluntary and private settings.

Primary School Places in North Antrim

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of primary one places in North Antrim.

(AQW 22540/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are a total of 1628 primary 1 places in North Antrim for 2013/14. The table below details each school's approved admissions number.

School Name	Approved Admissions Number 2013/14 School Year
Longstone Primary School	10
Carrowreagh Primary School	15

School Name	Approved Admissions Number 2013/14 School Year
Garryduff Primary School	10
Buick Memorial Primary School	60
Dunseverick Primary School	24
Kirkinriola Primary School	14
Harryville Primary School	30
Lislagan Primary School	16
Gracehill Primary School	58
Landhead Primary School	9
Eden Primary School	15
Straidbilly Primary School	15
Moorfields Primary School	30
Carnaghts Primary School	17
The Diamond Primary School	20
Clough Primary School	23
Kells & Connor Primary School	29
The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Primary School	23
Bushmills Primary School	30
Ballymena Primary School	53
Kilmoyle Primary School	18
Fourtowns Primary School	41
Knockahollet Primary School	15
Broughshane Primary School	46
Ballykeel Primary School	58
Camphill Primary School	58
Leaney Primary School	46
Armoy Primary School	17
Dunclug Primary School	37
Rasharkin Primary School	24
Carniny Primary School	40
Cloughmills Primary School	20
Portglenone Primary School	29
Hazelbank Primary School	17
Balnamore Primary School	16

School Name	Approved Admissions Number 2013/14 School Year
Bushvalley Primary School	25
Millquarter Primary School	21
St Mary's Primary School	4
St Mary's Primary School	29
St Mary's Primary School Glenravel	18
St Olcan's Primary School	14
Barnish Primary School	16
St Brigid's Primary School	15
St Anne's Primary School	13
Glenravel Primary School	23
St Patrick's Primary School	39
St Brigid's Primary School	44
St Patrick's Primary School	30
St Joseph's Primary School	43
St Patrick's & St Brigid's Primary School	58
St Colmcille's Primary School	46
St Brigid's Primary School	46
St Paul's Primary School	12
Gaelscoil an Chaistil	17
Ballymoney Controlled Integrated Primary School	59
Ballycastle Integrated Primary School	23
Braidside Integrated Primary School	50

Special Educational Needs

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 21050/11-15, to detail the number of statements that specify, in Part 3 of the statement, the number of classroom assistant hours allocated, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 22546/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that detailing the number of statements that specify classroom assistant hours would be cost prohibitive.

Primary 1 Places in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the first choice applications for primary 1 places in each primary school in North Down for the 2013/14 academic year.

(AQW 22588/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following figures, provided by the South Eastern Education and Library Board, confirm the number of first choice applications by parents for admission for a primary 1 place, and the total number of applications for each primary school in North Down for the 2013/14 academic year:-

School Name	1st Preference (including reception)	Total number of applications (including reception)
Ballyholme Primary School	93	124
Ballymagee Primary School	67	104
Ballyvester Primary School	18	23
Bangor Central Integrated Primary School	81	104
Bloomfield Primary School	61	76
Clandeboye Primary School	32	47
Crawfordsburn Primary School	31	46
Donaghadee Primary School	58	63
Glencraig Primary School	45	53
Grange Park Primary School	69	93
Hollywood Primary School	63	81
Kilcooley Primary School	17	18
Kilmaine Primary School	104	133
Millisle Primary School	27	27
Rathmore Primary School	74	99
St Anne's Primary School, Donaghadee	5	6
St Comgall's Primary School, Bangor	57	62
St Malachy's Primary School, Bangor	56	68
St Patrick's Primary School, Hollywood	24	26
Towerview Primary School	53	78
Total	1,035	1,331

Notes:

1. The figures for first preference applications and total number of applications reflect the position as at the conclusion of the annual admissions procedure.
2. The figures exclude any children who are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs who are admitted over and above a schools' approved admissions number.
3. The figures for the total number of applications for primary 1 places, represent all applications considered by each school and include first, second and any other preference applications passed to them in the course of the process. Some of these applicants may therefore be included in the totals for more than one of the listed schools.

Primary 1 Places in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number of applications for primary 1 places for each primary school in North Down for 2013/14.

(AQW 22589/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following figures, provided by the South Eastern Education and Library Board, confirm the number of first choice applications by parents for admission for a primary 1 place, and the total number of applications for each primary school in North Down for the 2013/14 academic year:-

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Donaghadee Primary School	58	63
Glencraig Primary School	45	53
Grange Park Primary School	69	93
Hollywood Primary School	63	81
Kilcooley Primary School	17	18
Kilmaine Primary School	104	133
Millisle Primary School	27	27
Rathmore Primary School	74	99
St Anne's Primary School, Donaghadee	5	6
St Comgall's Primary School, Bangor	57	62
St Malachy's Primary School, Bangor	56	68
St Patrick's Primary School, Hollywood	24	26
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Total	1,035	1,331

Notes:

- The figures for first preference applications and total number of applications reflect the position as at the conclusion of the annual admissions procedure.
- The figures exclude any children who are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs who are admitted over and above a schools' approved admissions number.
- The figures for the total number of applications for primary 1 places, represent all applications considered by each school and include first, second and any other preference applications passed to them in the course of the process. Some of these applicants may therefore be included in the totals for more than one of the listed schools.

Teachers: Certificate of Religious Education

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education how many teachers have taken up a position in a Council for Catholic Maintained School without holding a Certificate of Religious Education.

(AQO 3987/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools has advised that there are currently no teachers employed in permanent positions in a Catholic Maintained Nursery or Primary School who do not hold a Certificate of Religious Education.

A teacher is not required to hold the Certificate to teach in a post-primary school.

It is not, however, a mandatory requirement that teachers would hold this Certificate in order to take up the offer of substitute employment in a Catholic Maintained Primary or Nursery School. In practice schools engage a wide range of substitute teachers, many of whom will not have obtained the Certificate.

Preschool Places: Foyle

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education, of the 1030 children who have remained unplaced after the first round of the allocation of pre-school places, to outline which pre-schools in the Foyle constituency are over-subscribed.

(AQO 3989/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At this stage of the process there are 67 target age children unplaced and 135 places available in the Foyle constituency. These include both statutory nursery and voluntary/private pre-school settings.

There are 43 Pre-School settings in the constituency. At the end of stage 1 of the pre-school admissions process, 23 were oversubscribed with applications from target aged children.

In 2 settings the applications matched the admission number. Places remain available in the other 18 settings.

The table below provides further details on the pre-school settings in the Foyle constituency which were oversubscribed at the end of stage 1 and those settings with places remaining.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR THE FOYLE CONSTITUENCY 2013/14 – POSITION AT END OF STAGE 1 OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Nursery Schools	Admission Numbers	Total Number of Preferences	Spaces Left
Belmont Nursery	78	162	0
Bligh's Lane Nursery	52	67	0
Carnhill Nursery	52	81	0
Galliagh Nursery	52	73	0
Lisnagelvin Nursery	78	135	0
Strathfoyle Nursery	52	60	0
The Academy Nursery	78	120	14(1)
Trench Road Nursery	52	62	0

1. afternoon session undersubscribed

Community Nursery Schools	Admission Numbers	Total Number of Preferences	Spaces Left
Ballyore	26	34	0
Eglinton	26	24	2

2. undersubscribed plus one place to be re-allocated due to withdrawal of child

Primary Schools with Nursery Units	Admission Numbers	Total Number of Preferences	Spaces Left
Ashlea	26	33	0
Ebrington	52	56	0
Fountain	26	22	4
Glendermott	26	16	10
Good Shepherd	52	63	0
Greenhaw	52	76	0
Hollybush	52	41	11
Holy Child	52	50	3(2)
Holy Family	52	83	0
Londonderry Model	26	58	0
Longtower	26	38	0
Naiscoil Dhoire	26	16	10
Naiscoil Eadain Mhoir	26	24	2
Nazareth House	26	41	0
Oakgrove Integrated	52	60	0
Rosemount	52	77	0
St Brigid's, Carnhill	26	42	0
St Eugene's	26	31	0
St Paul's, Slievemore	26	20	6
Steelstown	26	53	0

Playgroups	Admission Numbers	Total Number of Preferences	Spaces Left
Chapel Road Community	24	27	0
Craigbrack Pre School Group	16	8	8
Drumahoe Community	22	11	11
Eglinton Community Pre-School Centre	24	19	5

Playgroups	Admission Numbers	Total Number of Preferences	Spaces Left
Little Acorns Pre School	10	3	7
Little Diamonds Community	16	10	6
Mullabuoy Pre School Centre	17	10	7
Naiscoil na Daroige	13	13	0
Park Community	20	21	0
Rainbow Child and Family Centre	21	11	10
St Bernadette's	24	6	18
St Josephs Community	16	16	0
Straidarran Community	23	22	1

Schools: Common Funding Scheme

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education how he intends to support strategically important small schools in light of Sir Robert Salisbury's report on the Common Funding Formula recommending the removal of the Small Schools Support Factor.

(AQO 3990/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am currently considering all the recommendations in the independent report on the Review of the Common Funding Scheme and their potential impact on all schools, including small schools.

There is no doubt that fundamental changes are needed in the way schools are funded and I intend to address the current inequalities.

For example, the report raised concerns that small schools support is currently provided to all small schools, irrespective of circumstances.

It recognised that some schools receive £14,000 per pupil per year to keep them in a small school whereas others, often in more needy areas receive, only £2,400.

I have said many times that schools will not be closed simply because they fall below a particular threshold. Where there is evidence that a small school is needed, for example to serve an isolated rural community, it should be retained and supported appropriately to ensure that its pupils receive an appropriate quality of education.

The review recommended that funding for these strategically important small schools should be outside the formula. How we fund them is one of the areas I am still considering.

In the coming weeks, I will be making a statement to the Assembly setting out my response to the report and my proposals for reform of the Common Formula Scheme. This will be followed by a full consultation with key stakeholders, including schools.

Post-Primary Education: Selection

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to outline his proposals to improve the selection process for entry into post-primary education.

(AQO 3991/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has published guidance setting out a framework for the process of transfer from primary to post-primary school. This guidance has been in place since 2010, which was the first year that children were not subjected to a state-sponsored transfer test. The guidance strongly recommends that schools do not use criteria related to academic ability.

It goes on to recommend a menu of non-academic admissions criteria from which Boards of Governors of post-primary schools should draw in deciding their admissions criteria. This includes giving priority to children in receipt of free school meals, those with a sibling currently attending the school and applicants who are the eldest child. It also includes geographic criteria relating to feeder primary schools, or a named parish or catchment area, all to be used in conjunction with "nearest suitable school" to ensure that rural children are not disadvantaged.

It is my firm belief that the transfer process, as experienced by parents and children, would be greatly improved if all schools followed the Department's guidance and ceased the use of academic selection and rejection to gain entry into schools.

Primary Schools: Moy, County Tyrone

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposals for a shared campus for Moy Regional and St John's primary schools, Co Tyrone.

(AQO 3992/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As you will be aware from our meeting on 26 March with representatives of the schools, I am supportive in principle of any proposal to co-locate schools and share facilities. An objective included in the Terms of Reference for Area Planning is to "identify realistic, innovative and creative solutions to address need, including opportunities for shared schooling on a cross sectoral basis."

However, it is the responsibility of the school managing authorities in the first instance to manage provision in the schools' estate and to bring forward proposals to the Department to meet local demand, including any proposals to co-locate schools and share facilities.

In this instance the managing authorities are the SELB and CCMS and it would be for them and the School Trustees to agree the way forward on the issues of school management and building ownership. My Department would of course be happy to facilitate these discussions if requested.

The schools may also wish to examine whether the solution being sought could be achieved through an extension to an existing school building, which may enable a bid to be made to the new Schools Enhancement Programme.

To date, however, neither of the managing authorities has approached my Department in respect of the proposal to co-locate Moy Regional PS, St John's PS and Moy Area Playgroup.

Advancing Shared Education Report

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to outline any discussions that have taken place between his Department and the Department for Employment and Learning regarding the Advancing Shared Education report.

(AQO 3993/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am currently considering the Ministerial Advisory Group's report on shared education prior to determining the way forward. Consequently there have been no discussions to date with the Department for Employment and Learning.

However the references to further education colleges and teacher training with the Ministerial Advisory Group's report were brought to the attention of DEL officials on the day it was launched.

Early Years

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Education how he intends to address the apparent lack of provision for 0-3 year olds in the Early Years framework.

(AQO 3994/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I launched 'Learning to Learn - A Framework for Early Education and Learning' in December for focused consultation.

I have set out within the Framework key principles which will underpin the planning and delivery of early years education and learning services, and enhance collaborative working across a range of services and sectors outside the remit of the Department of Education. One of those principles is that education and learning begins at birth.

The Learning to Learn Framework already includes a number of important actions focused on the 0-3 age range including a review of the Sure Start Programme, the development of potential options for the expansion of a two year old programme and increasing support for parents as first educators.

It also proposes a number of actions aimed at collaborating with other departments to work towards a common goal of improving outcomes for children. These include closer integration with health and social services structures, as the main delivery mechanism for services for the 0-3 age range, and identifying opportunities for joint investment in family intervention and parenting programmes.

I am also working with Ministerial colleagues to explore the potential for enhanced co-operation around early years and early intervention under the Delivering Social Change Framework.

Schools: Financial Deficits

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Education how many primary and post-primary schools had a financial deficit on the last financial year.

(AQO 3995/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The latest financial year for which audited data is currently available is the year to 31 March 2012. At the 31 March 2012 there were 163 Primary Schools and 56 Post-Primary schools that had a cumulative delegated budgetary deficit.

Individual school data may be found in the Funding Authority Schools' Outturn Statements which have been deposited in the Assembly Library.

DE: Capital Investment

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Education to outline the minor and major works included in his capital investment programme.

(AQO 3996/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Over the past year I have announced that 40 new school building projects are to proceed, representing a potential investment of some £353million.

These major projects obviously generate a significant amount of interest and have a positive impact not only on those individual school communities but also on the local economy.

However, in addition to these more high profile projects it is important to note that there continues to be investment in the schools estate on an ongoing basis and I have committed to spend £52m on minor works in 2013/14

This work ranges from minor repairs to more significant refurbishment projects and extensions. Examples of the benefits to schools include refurbished science labs and IT suites, improved school meals accommodation and new nursery units.

The completion of these works will ultimately provide better facilities for our children and young people to learn in and an improved working environment for teachers and other school staff.

Lisanelly Shared Education Campus, Omagh

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Education for an update on the progress of the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus, Omagh.

(AQO 3997/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am pleased to report that tangible progress is being made on the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus project.

The School Authorities responsible for 5 schools in Omagh have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding, committing them to working together with the relevant authorities on the development and implementation of the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus as soon as practicable.

The Outline Planning Application has been referred to Omagh District Council by the Department of the Environment and I am hoping to achieve approval in the coming weeks.

And finally, work has begun on taking forward the procurement and construction of phase 1 of the Lisanelly project – a new building for Arvalee School & Resource Centre.

Department for Employment and Learning

Access to Work Scheme

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people currently avail of the Access to Work scheme, and of these, how many have a learning disability and no other disability.

(AQW 22113/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): There are currently 629 people with disabilities availing of the Access to Work scheme, 143 of these people have a learning disability and no other disability.

The Department also administers the Workable (NI) programme. This is another in-work support programme for people with a disability. Of the 419 employees being supported through Workable (NI), 230 have a learning disability as their primary health condition.

Belfast Metropolitan College: Registered Sign Language Interpreter Level 3 Students

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why there has been a delay in providing Registered Sign Language Interpreter Level 3 students at Belfast Metropolitan College with their results and certificates in respect of courses completed in June 2012.

(AQW 22117/11-15)

Dr Farry: As Belfast Metropolitan College has responsibility for the delivery of this course, including results and award of certificates, my officials have contacted the college directly for information related to this question.

The college has advised that the course is delivered as a two year programme, as planned and agreed in consultation with experienced sign language tutors. In the second year, students improve their sign language skills and gather evidence to be included in their portfolio. At the end of this year, students submit completed portfolios for accreditation. Achievement of the qualification is when all quality assurance processes are complete and the results are ratified by the awarding organisation, in this instance Signature.

All dates for visits by the awarding organisation's external verifier visits, the time between visits, and the notification of final award outcomes are at the discretion of the awarding organisation, and are beyond the college's control.

This can cause a delay in certification release, but the college aim to keep this to a minimum. Each awarding organisation can operate in different ways, with some giving the centre approval to release qualifications/certificates on completion of internal verification, while others require colleges to await external verifier approval before release.

The time line of the process for the qualification in question is set out below.

- In May 2012, the NVQ level 3 students submitted their portfolios of evidence.
- The Internal Verifier carried out internal Quality Assurance checks of the portfolios which were completed June 2012.
- An External Verifier (EV) visit was requested from Signature in June, but did not take place until 6 September 2012.
- The College was informed by Signature, on 24th October 2012, that there was one piece of evidence missing in the sample selected. The students were contacted immediately and given a reasonable time to submit the further evidence requested.
- The Internal Verification process was then repeated to ensure that the new evidence presented by the students met the requirements.
- The College made a request for a return External Verifier visit during December 2012, which subsequently took place on 29 January 2013.
- The centre manager was notified on 25 March 2013 that results had been released and the students were informed immediately of the outcome.

The college considers the above to be within the normal process for quality assurance of qualification outcomes set by this awarding organisation.

Registered Sign Language Courses

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people are currently enrolled on Registered Sign Language Courses and at what level are they studying.

(AQW 22118/11-15)

Dr Farry: Analysis of 2011/12 (latest full year available) Further Education data show that there were 645 student enrolments on Professional and Technical courses related to Registered Sign Language courses. The majority, 515, were enrolled at level 1 and entry level, 105 were enrolled at level 2, there were 10 enrolments at level 3, and a further 15 enrolments at Higher Education level at the Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges.

Cost of a Certificate of Religious Education

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the cost of a Certificate of Religious Education as part of the Bachelor of Education course at St Mary's University College.

(AQW 22119/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Certificate in Religious Education is not part of the Bachelor of Education course. There is no cost to my Department for the provision of the separate course leading to the certificate at St Mary's University College as the College does not receive any additional funding for it. However, the College estimates that the cost of providing the course, to those students who wish to avail of it, amounts to £188,000 per annum.

Regional Colleges: Formal Written Complaints

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many formal written complaints were lodged by staff at each of the Regional Colleges in 2012.

(AQW 22141/11-15)

Dr Farry: Each Further Education college, in its capacity as an employing authority, is responsible for all employment-related matters. Consequently, my Department does not hold the information requested.

I have asked the directors of each of the six Further Education colleges to respond to the Member directly on this matter.

Emergency Service Workers

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the rights of workers in the emergency services to strike.

(AQW 22147/11-15)

Dr Farry: Industrial action, which includes strike action, is 'official' if it is formally backed by a trade union, and members of that trade union are taking part in it. Members of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, and HM Coastguard are entitled to join trade unions and are therefore eligible to take industrial action, and be protected against dismissal for industrial action, provided the union follows the correct procedures when organising such action.

Members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland are prohibited from trade union membership by section 35 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. Police officers may join the Police Federation NI, which is a representative body similar to a trade union, but without the right to undertake industrial action.

Further Education Colleges and Higher Education Institutions: Complaints

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the number of complaints, relating to a personal grievance, received by the campus of each (i) Further Education College; and (ii) Higher Education Institution, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 22158/11-15)

Dr Farry: All Higher Education institutions and Further Education colleges are employing authorities in their own right and are responsible for all matters relating to staff, including the application of grievance procedures. Therefore, my Department does not collate information on the number of personal grievances raised in each institution or colleges.

I have asked the respective Higher Education institutions and Further Education colleges to respond to the Member directly on this matter.

Stranmillis University College, Belfast: Certificate of Religious Education

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department will consider funding the current cost of £480 for teachers to obtain the Certificate of Religious Education through distance learning with Stranmillis University College, Belfast.

(AQW 22169/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department already funds the cost of student teachers at Stranmillis University College obtaining the Certificate in Religious Education through distance learning. This arrangement has been in place since 2005.

New Package of Measures to Revitalise the Economy

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the input he has had into the discussions with the Secretary of State regarding a new package of measures to revitalise the economy.

(AQW 22208/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have met with the Secretary of State to discuss proposals to develop a further package of economic measures for Northern Ireland in partnership with the UK Government. I will support fully any efforts designed to boost the local economy. While I recognise that the work required to develop this additional package is ongoing, I can assure you that my Department is engaged fully in this process

and has made a number of proposals. My Department's engagement reflects the central importance of skills, innovation and employment to Northern Ireland's future economic success and to a shared future.

Not in Education, Employment, or Training: Developing Skills

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) how many families have taken part in the pilot intervention to support those deemed Not in Education, Employment, or Training, in developing skills, and linking them to the employment market; (ii) what structured programmes and projects have been used; and (iii) the number of jobs created as a result.

(AQW 22209/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) 47 families have participated in the Community Family Support Programme pilot since it began in January 2013.
- (ii) The programme includes a structured Strengthen Families component designed to help address issues that families are faced with in their daily lives, including for example family values, changing behaviour, anger management, drug and alcohol misuse, speaking and listening. This is a compulsory module which all family members attend. In addition to this, 13 individual family members have elected to enter education and training, and a further 20 family members have availed of specialist provision such as drug and alcohol counselling, debt management and disability services. Family members have also engaged in motivational activities such as goals training and those of working age have been concentrating on increasing their employability skills. Activities such as volunteering, walking and daily exercise have also being encouraged.
- (iii) The programme is primarily designed to support families identify and address health, social, economic and employment issues and barriers and ultimately support family members move into education, training and employment. Many of these issues are complex and will take time to address; therefore none of the current participants have yet progressed into employment.

Further Education Students

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he would consider introducing accredited courses, for further education students, on understanding and supporting fellow students with disabilities, encouraging their inclusion in peer groups and general comprehension of welfare, care and respect.

(AQW 22232/11-15)

Dr Farry: While my Department sets the strategic direction for the Further Education Sector in Northern Ireland, it is the responsibility of individual colleges to design and deliver curriculum which meets the needs of learners and employers in their areas. However, I can confirm that there are already accredited qualifications available to further education colleges, and other providers, at Level 2 and 3 providing courses in "Supporting Individuals with Learning Difficulties".

In addition, all further education colleges are designated as public authorities, and under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 they are obliged to promote equality of opportunity between people with a disability and those without a disability.

Further education colleges have a range of formal policies and procedures in place to help students to understand and support fellow students, including those with disabilities. Colleges also aim to promote social inclusion, respect and dignity within the student body, as well as equality of opportunity. This information is made readily available, and all students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the policies during the induction process. As part of the colleges' admissions processes, all potential students are made aware of colleges' strategies to promote welfare, care and respect through pre-entry advice and guidance sessions.

Colleges also offer a wide range of support designed to help with the transition to further education for students with disabilities.

Youth Employment Scheme: North Antrim

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of employers in North Antrim that have signed agreements for the youth employment scheme since its introduction in 2012, broken down by council area.

(AQW 22273/11-15)

Dr Farry: In the North Antrim area, serviced by Ballymena and Ballymoney Jobs & Benefits office, a total of 83 employer agreements have been signed since I launched the Youth Employment Scheme in July 2012. Employers have made 108 opportunities available and to date 43 young people have availed of a placement, 19 of these having secured subsidised employment.

My Department is actively working with employers to source as many opportunities as possible across Northern Ireland. I have been encouraged by the response of employers so far (more than 1,000 have signed up to the scheme) and I expect many more to come forward to offer opportunities for young people in the coming months.

The focus of the Youth Employment Scheme is on early intervention for young people aged 18 to 24 with the specific aim of helping this group gain work experience, develop additional skills and achieve recognised relevant qualifications needed by those sectors that have the potential for future growth. This scheme is specifically designed to help those young people claiming Jobseekers Allowance and who are almost job ready move into employment.

I appreciate your interest in the Youth Employment Scheme and would ask you to encourage employers and young people in your constituency to become involved.

Adult Students with Special Needs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many adults aged over nineteen with special needs are enrolled as students, broken down by educational facility.

(AQW 22317/11-15)

Dr Farry: In answering this question the term 'Special Needs' has been defined as the number of students aged 19 and over who reported a disability. Figures are presented separately for the Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Colleges and Training providers in 2011/12. These have been placed in the Assembly Library and on my department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises: Advice and Information

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the measures in place to ensure that relevant advice and information will be provided directly to small and medium sized enterprises, micro businesses, universities, colleges and other stakeholders to maximise the benefits from Horizon 2020 and other relevant EU funding streams; (ii) how advice and information measures are to be provided using collaboration with other Departments; and (iii) the departmental co-operation used to date.

(AQW 22381/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department plays a full part in the Barroso Task Force arrangements introduced by the Northern Ireland Executive, particularly those pertaining to the European Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development; both the current programme ("FP7") and its successor ("Horizon 2020").

Under the Task Force, Northern Ireland is committed to increasing its drawdown of competitive European funding by 20% by 2015 and it is anticipated that the Northern Ireland Executive will set a target for Horizon 2020, which at least doubles the €50 million target for FP7.

As you may be aware, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI), as the policy lead in the Executive, has recently published a highly specific "Horizon 2020 Action Plan for Northern Ireland

(2013)” which encompasses the work of all relevant Departments, including DEL, and details a series of key actions to be undertaken during 2013 that will ensure that NI researchers across academia, industry and the public sector have the necessary levels of support to be successful in Horizon 2020.

The actions have been agreed with all key stakeholders who have been involved in FP7 and builds on the progressive work which has already been undertaken following the DETI-led review of FP7 support mechanisms.

The actions identified in the 2013 Plan will be delivered by both the public and private sector and reflect the requirement for a more coordinated approach to Horizon 2020, so that we can align our support to the needs of all applicants in this highly competitive programme. Progress on delivery of these actions will be overseen by the NI Horizon 2020 Steering Group, of which this Department is a key member, along with other Executive Departments, the two universities, CollegesNI, the CBI, InterTradelreland, Matrix, the Northern Ireland Science Park and both Belfast and Derry City Councils.

Having been responsible to date for approximately 75% of the total Northern Ireland drawdown under FP7, clearly the two universities will play a critical role in achieving the challenging targets for Horizon 2020. Therefore, one of the key actions under the Action Plan has been the establishment, jointly by myself and Minister Foster, of a new “Higher Education - EU Support Fund” which will provide Queen’s University Belfast and the University of Ulster with significant financial support to assist them to develop and implement a strategic approach to becoming more successful in FP7 and, particularly, Horizon 2020.

Specifically, the fund will support the employment of seven “Northern Ireland Horizon 2020 Contact Points” to be known as NICPs. They will provide specialist advice and assistance to academics and businesses across areas of economic relevance to Northern Ireland and of priority to the European Commission. This will include areas such as energy, advanced materials and transport technologies, information and communication technologies, and connected health.

The NICP network, which will be coordinated by a Northern Ireland Horizon 2020 Manager based in DETI, will be supplemented by Invest NI, which will assume the role of NICP for SMEs, and also by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development which is to appoint a dedicated Contact Point for the agri-food sector to be based within the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI). These experts will provide direct support to potential Horizon 2020 applicants across all sectors and interested parties in Northern Ireland, through activities such as workshops on specific areas of the scheme. This Network will complement the ongoing support provided by Invest NI, as well as by InterTradelreland who will continue to support and encourage collaborative applications with the Republic of Ireland.

However, as well as promoting the mainstream opportunities under Horizon 2020, the NICP network will also be seeking to maximise the opportunities under related research and technology programmes such as those which will be available through the European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Curie Actions.

This approach reflects the emphasis attached in the Action Plan to the “Excellent Science” Pillar of Horizon 2020 and hence the requirement for specific strategies in relation to the accessing of these two very important schemes.

This collaborative, coordinated and inclusive approach to targeting all aspects of Horizon 2020 is something which I strongly endorse as engagement with Horizon 2020, will be about much more than just the receipt of funding but also about the collaborative links that can be made across the EU. It will help raise the profile of Northern Ireland research and innovation capabilities, providing access to potential new markets and customers and provide invaluable opportunities for our researchers to work with world class research organisations and global companies where it would not otherwise be possible.

I believe that, in particular, the new NICP network is an excellent example of joined-up Government across the Northern Ireland Executive and reflects the long-term, strategic and coordinated approach we must adopt to meet the challenging targets set for Northern Ireland under the Barroso Task Force.

Given the tenure of your question with its emphasis on the need for collaboration and inclusivity, I am confident that I can count on your support as I work with my Executive colleagues to ensure that the maximum possible benefit accrues to Northern Ireland from Horizon 2020 and that, equally importantly, Northern Ireland is seen to contribute meaningfully to the Commission's research agenda.

University Library Fines

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much universities received from students in library fines, in the last 12 months.

(AQW 22412/11-15)

Dr Farry: This information requested is not held by my department. The universities are autonomous bodies and this is not a matter for my department. I would suggest that you approach each university and request the information from them.

Support Staff for Students with Special Needs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many support staff are available for students with special needs, broken down by Further Education College.

(AQW 22434/11-15)

Dr Farry: There are currently of 351 full-time and part-time support staff available for students with special needs, in the Further Education (FE) sector. The table overleaf details the number of support staff available in each FE college.

Further Education College	Number of Support Staff
North West Regional College	66
South Eastern Regional College	76
South West College	34
Northern Regional College	86
Belfast Metropolitan College	23
Southern Regional College	66

Employment of Highly-Skilled Workers by Recruitment Agencies

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what his Department is doing to stop the employment of highly-skilled workers, such as nurses and social workers, by recruitment agencies paying significantly less than would be paid for the same job in the public sector.

(AQW 22547/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's role in regulating the private recruitment sector is limited to the provisions of the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, and the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. This legislation does not address rates of pay, other than to ensure that workers receive at least the National Minimum Wage.

My Department did introduce the Agency Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 in December 2011. Under these regulations, an agency worker should, after a 12-week qualifying period, generally be paid the same rate of pay as a comparable worker. Where this is not the case, the worker may be entitled to bring a claim to an industrial tribunal.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Motor Home Tourism

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assessment has been carried out on the value of motor home tourism to the economy.

(AQW 21036/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The sample size and design of recent surveys does not specifically assess the value of motor home tourism. However, the proportion of Northern Ireland residents taking overnight domestic trips in 2011, whose main form of transport was a motorised caravan/camper/dormobile, was less than 1%. Also the proportion of visitors from Great Britain and overseas in 2011, whose main form of transport was a motorised caravan/camper/dormobile, and who exited through a Northern Ireland sea port, was less than 1%.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) specifically promotes Aires de Service (motorhome service points) in Northern Ireland on their consumer website discovernorthernireland.com/accomfinder.

On 18 October 2013 NITB met Waterways Ireland, at the invitation of the Northern Ireland Motorhome Association, to discuss supporting motorhome tourism using Waterways Ireland marinas as Aires de Service.

NITB continues to work with Northern Ireland Motorhome Association and local councils to promote motorhome tourism and maximising the motorhome tourism opportunities in Northern Ireland.

Patton Group

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the (i) number; and (ii) names of companies that are now insolvent and owed money by the Patton Group.

(AQW 22014/11-15)

Mrs Foster: We do not hold the information requested. The administrator Tom Keenan of Keenan CF, Arthur House, Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GB should be able to provide a list of creditors.

Belfast Welcome Centre

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why Belfast Welcome Centre is facilitating Republican tours of the Maze prison by providing the phone number of Coiste Political Tours.

(AQW 22174/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Belfast Welcome Centre is managed by The Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau. They operate as a separate entity with their own Board and on a membership basis.

Single Wind Turbines

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 17648/11-15, for an up-to-date breakdown of the number of (i) 0kW – 50kW; (ii) 50kW – 100kW; (iii) 100kW – 200kW; and (iv) 200kW – 250kW single wind turbines contributing to the current installed renewable energy capacity at small scale level.

(AQW 22284/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department only retains records of the number of generating stations, not single wind turbines; however a large majority of onshore wind generating stations up to 250kW would be single turbines.

Table 1: Accreditations for small scale onshore wind under the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation at 7 December 2012 (AQW 17648/11-15) and 26 May 2013.

LIVE AND PRELIMINARY ACCREDITATIONS UNDER THE NIRO

Installed Capacity	7 December 2012		26 April 2013	
	Number of stations	Total Capacity	Number of stations	Total Capacity
0 -50kW	377	3MW	379	3.1MW
51kW -100kW	20	1.6MW	24	2MW
101kW -200kW	13	1.7MW	14	2MW
201kW -250kW	28	6.6MW	36	8.4MW
Total	438	12.9Mw	453	15.5Mw

Source: Ofgem Renewables and CHP Register

Ballylumford B Station

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the closure of Ballylumford B generation station will effect the price of domestic gas supply in the Greater Larne area. **(AQW 22362/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: There should be no significant impact on gas prices from closure of the Ballylumford B station, as the B station tends to have a low operation rate compared to other gas fired generation.

Ballylumford Power Station

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the plans for power generation at Ballylumford Power Station after 2015; and when Trade Unions will be consulted regarding potential job losses.

(AQW 22363/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My officials have been engaging with the Utility Regulator and the system operator SONI to consider how best to ensure there is a sufficient future conventional generation capacity margin and therefore adequate security of electricity supply for Northern Ireland after 2015.

I have also agreed to meet with the unions representing Ballylumford power station employees on 8 May 2013 to understand their concerns.

Department of the Environment**Dog Control, Dog Fouling and Unlicensed Dogs**

Mr Ross asked the Minister of the Environment what guidance his Department has given to councils on the issues of dog control, dog fouling and unlicensed dogs.

(AQW 21815/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): District Councils were given new powers by Clean Neighbourhoods legislation to deal with irresponsible dog ownership by means of Dog Control Orders.

The Department issued guidance on such Dog Control Orders with effect from 1 April 2012.

Clean Neighbourhoods legislation provides for five offences which may be prescribed in a local council Dog Control Order, these are:-

- failing to remove dog faeces
- not keeping a dog on a lead

- not putting, and keeping, a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer;
- permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded, and
- taking more than a specified number of dogs onto land.

The penalty for committing an offence contained in a Dog Control Order is a maximum of £1,000. Alternatively, the opportunity to pay a fixed penalty may be offered in lieu of prosecution.

The guidance issued by the Department makes clear that district councils may make Dog Control Orders, provided that they are satisfied that an Order is justified, and they have followed the necessary procedures.

All dog owners have a responsibility to ensure the welfare of the dog in their care and to make sure that their dog does not become a problem to themselves or other people. The law on Dog Control Orders exist primarily to ensure that people and dogs can live happily and safely together.

The control of dogs is also legislated for here by the Dogs Order 1983. The Dogs Order provides for the licensing of dogs by Councils and other related enforcement matters. Following a comprehensive review of the dog control legislation, the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 was introduced.

The 2011 Act enhanced existing dog control measures by introducing: the compulsory microchipping of dogs; making it an offence to allow a dog to attack and injure any animal owned by another person; a system of control conditions for problem dogs, which enables Dog Wardens to impose controls on a dog licence, where a breach of the Dogs Order has occurred; an increase in the dog licence fee (with concessions for certain owners); and an increase in certain fines and fixed penalties. One of the aims of the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 was to increase the income to council dog warden services by increasing dog licence fees and also allowing councils to retain any fees from the increased fixed penalties.

DARD issued guidance to Council Dog Wardens following the introduction of the 2011 Act. The guidance for enforcers is intended to be used as a reference document to aid understanding of the new provisions of the 2011 Act and to ensure consistent enforcement across all Council areas. The guidance is intended to be read in conjunction with the legislation. Whilst the guidance is designed to be as helpful as possible, ultimately, the interpretation of the wording of the law is for the Courts to determine. Therefore where difficulties arise Councils are advised to take advice from their own legal services. DARD officials also engage with the Councils' Dog Advisory Group (NIDAG) on a regular basis.

National Park: Glens and Causeway Areas

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment (i) when consultation will take place on a national park in the Glens and Causeway areas; (ii) what has been the cost of producing promotional material on National Parks in these areas; and (iii) what budget his Department has allocated for the necessary economic appraisals.

(AQW 21830/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have repeatedly said, I am consulting and will continue to consult with a wide range of people and groups on where DOE should go on the issue of a national park. This is done to identify how to positively develop the wonderful heritage assets of NI. When others complain about potential initiatives and fail to come forward with innovative proposals, given the scale of youth unemployment and rural worklessness and the economic threats we all face, I do not consider their approach responsible. The challenges we that are emerging need to be faced up to, those who make worst fear arguments and exploit concerns should reflect on their approach. All should join in my consultation and work out how to best proceed.

Long-Term Curation of Archives and Artefacts

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of the Environment what action has been taken to secure the long-term curation of archives and artefacts from developer-led excavations and other sources.

(AQW 21855/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Following a joint Assembly Committee motion tabled for debate on 2 July 2012, NIEA was tasked with undertaking a baseline quantification survey of the archival material held by archaeological practices who had undertaken excavations in Northern Ireland. The survey was undertaken in order to provide a base from which solutions could be identified and developed.

The NIEA baseline quantification survey has been completed and a draft report submitted.

That draft report was supplied to our professional colleagues in the National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI). It formed the basis of discussion in a meeting between NMNI and NIEA on 28 March 2013.

The draft report proposes a number of questions to guide further debate and recommendations to promote immediate and future action.

I am meeting with officials shortly to identify how to move forward and then update the Environment Committee and the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee.

Excavation of Drumclay Crannog

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the time allocated for the excavation of Drumclay Crannog.

(AQW 22025/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As I have outlined previously to the Environment Committee, the excavation at Drumclay Crannóg was an unprecedented archaeological project. Additional time for the excavation would have resulted in a fuller investigation of the site. However, in the event the archaeologists at the site were able to recover the maximum amount of information about the site during the excavation, including the earliest levels of the site. More time would have been useful. However, DRD has been helpful and positive in relation to the excavation over a long period of time.

The excavation has now been concluded, as of Monday 15 April 2013, and road-building has restarted at the site. Officials are currently providing for me recommendations for the necessary post excavation works, which are likely to last for some years.

Officials from the Department of the Environment and the Department for Regional Development had ongoing discussions, throughout the project, about the time allocated for the excavations. Discussion of timetables formed a core part of their discussions from June 2013 onwards. As a result of those discussions, and following briefing from my officials, I extended the time allocated for the excavations on several occasions. These extensions were necessary because the volume of material being uncovered at the site was unprecedented, and the emerging complexity of the remains meant that more time was needed in order to get the maximum information from the site. Throughout this period officials from both departments were in ongoing communication to achieve the archaeological excavation in the time available, and to re-programme the road-building works.

I have ordered a review of the history to this matter and recommendations for the future. I also believe that having given this excavation more time and significant monies, time and money is now needed to do properly the post excavation, to understand fully this unprecedented excavation.

Excavation of Drumclay Crannog

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any plans to extend the time allocated for the excavation of Drumclay Crannog.

(AQW 22026/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As I have outlined previously to the Environment Committee, the excavation at Drumclay Crannóg was an unprecedented archaeological project. Additional time for the excavation would have resulted in a fuller investigation of the site. However, in the event the archaeologists at the site were able to recover the maximum amount of information about the site during the excavation, including the earliest levels of the site. More time would have been useful. However, DRD has been helpful and positive in relation to the excavation over a long period of time.

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Excavation of Drumclay Crannog

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions his officials have had with their counterparts in the Department for Regional Development on the time allocated for the excavation of Drumclay Crannog.

(AQW 22027/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As I have outlined previously to the Environment Committee, the excavation at Drumclay Crannóg was an unprecedented archaeological project. Additional time for the excavation would have resulted in a fuller investigation of the site. However, in the event the archaeologists at the site were able to recover the maximum amount of information about the site during the excavation, including the earliest levels of the site. More time would have been useful. However, DRD has been helpful and positive in relation to the excavation over a long period of time.

The excavation has now been concluded, as of Monday 15 April 2013, and road-building has restarted at the site. Officials are currently providing for me recommendations for the necessary post excavation works, which are likely to last for some years.

Officials from the Department of the Environment and the Department for Regional Development had ongoing discussions, throughout the project, about the time allocated for the excavations. Discussion of timetables formed a core part of their discussions from June 2013 onwards. As a result of those discussions, and following briefing from my officials, I extended the time allocated for the excavations on several occasions. These extensions were necessary because the volume of material being uncovered at the site was unprecedented, and the emerging complexity of the remains meant that more time was needed in order to get the maximum information from the site. Throughout this period officials from both departments were in ongoing communication to achieve the archaeological excavation in the time available, and to re-programme the road-building works.

I have ordered a review of the history to this matter and recommendations for the future. I also believe that having given this excavation more time and significant monies, time and money is now needed to do properly the post excavation, to understand fully this unprecedented excavation.

Councillors Working on Newly Elected Shadow Councils

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether councillors, who are not MLAs, will be able to serve on their existing council as well as the newly elected shadow council.

(AQW 22028/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It is likely that many existing councillors will be elected to the new councils in 2014, and will thus hold a dual role during the shadow period. The intention is that new and re-elected councillors operating during the shadow period will build upon the work of the statutory transition committees and perform a limited number of functions for the purpose of enabling the new councils to discharge fully all of their functions from 1 April 2015.

During the shadow period, the 26 existing councils and their members will continue to be responsible for service delivery to the ratepayer (for example, waste collection; registration of births, deaths and marriages; leisure centres etc.). The newly elected members of the new councils will, during the shadow period, prepare themselves to adopt their full range of powers and responsibilities on 1 April 2015, by undertaking key preparatory tasks such as the striking of the rate for the first financial year of the new council and agreeing a corporate and business plan for the new council.

The forthcoming reorganisation Bill will create a statutory bar on MLA/MP/MEP councillor double jobbing and the allowance to councillors who are currently MLAs has been reduced by 5/6 over the last year.

Councillor Salaries

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether councillors who serve on their existing council and the newly elected shadow council will receive one salary.

(AQW 22029/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am in the process of establishing a panel, using the public appointments procedure, to conduct a review of councillors' remuneration and to advise me on the system and level of allowances appropriate for the new councils. The membership was confirmed on 1 May 2013.

The panel will also consider the allowances that should be paid during the shadow period following the local government elections in 2014. I will be asking the panel to make recommendations on remuneration that will fairly reflect the roles and responsibilities of councillors serving on existing councils and in the new councils, during the shadow period. I have made it clear that I do not consider that where there are double mandates there should be double incomes. Of course, it is for the remuneration committee to make recommendations

Vintage Car Owners

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment what action he plans to take to encourage vintage car owners to use their vehicles on public roads.

(AQW 22060/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Veteran or vintage car owners are free to use their vehicles as they wish, provided of course they do so in compliance with vehicle approval, licensing and testing requirements for road use.

I do plan, however, to make it less burdensome for those who own vintage cars manufactured before 1960 to operate their vehicle on public roads by exempting these vehicles from MOT testing. This follows a consultation which showed broad support for Northern Ireland to be brought in line with Britain, where this exemption has been operational since 18 November 2012.

I anticipate that legislation to bring this into effect will be introduced shortly and this exemption should be operational by the autumn.

Review of Public Administration: Staff Transfers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many staff in each Department will be transferring to the new councils under the Review of Public Administration; (ii) how the Civil Service grades they hold will be reflected in the new arrangements; and (iii) whether the transfers will be voluntary.

(AQW 22116/11-15)

Mr Attwood: When agreeing the transfer of functions package I announced in the Assembly on Monday 22 April 2103, the Executive also agreed that Ministers of transferring departments should, by 31 May 2013, provide me with the details of budget and staff to transfer with those functions. Staff will transfer to councils at an equivalent grade, however, further work has to be done through the implementation machinery I have put in place to determine how those staff will be integrated into the new council structures.

The information requested under parts (i) and (ii) of the question is therefore not yet available. The answer below to part (iii) of the question has been provided by the Minister for Finance and Personnel whose Department has responsibility for the terms and conditions of Northern Ireland civil servants including the terms of their transfer to new councils.

“(iii) Transfers will be compulsory and the contractual terms and conditions of affected staff will be protected in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). This is in keeping with the RPA Code of Practice (Staff Transfers) produced to give effect to the Public Service Commission’s 3rd and addendum to the 3rd Guiding Principle

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment when the final version of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan will be published.

(AQW 22138/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Work is ongoing and at an advanced stage in relation to the content of BMAP I always work towards creating certainty and avoiding doubt and that is the case for BMAP. I hope that the content of BMAP will be finalised shortly and the required processes completed quickly.

Tamboran Resources: Use of Chemicals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department, or any regulators under its remit, has ever indicated to Tamboran Resources that it would be obliged to use chemicals in any hydrocarbon exploration or extraction.

(AQW 22229/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Clearly, the Department has never indicated to Tamboran Resources that they would be obliged to use chemicals in any hydrocarbon exploration or extraction and the Department would want to know if it is being claimed otherwise.

The onus is on the company to explain the detailed methods of exploration and extraction and potential impacts on the environment. In terms of any planning application to extract hydrocarbons the issue would be considered through the Environmental Impact Assessment process. The Department’s role is to regulate the process by granting conditional planning permission and other environmental consents if that was considered appropriate after a full assessment of all the environmental impacts.

I again repeat that in making any assessment of Tamboran’s proposals, there will be a need to apply best science and deploy best practise if the project was ever to proceed. That is not currently the case.

Clause 2 of the Planning Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how he defines sustainable development in clause 2 of the Planning Bill.

(AQW 22281/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The most commonly used definition of sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. For the purposes of planning, Planning Policy Statement 1 General Principles sets out the Department’s current policy in relation to sustainable development. It explains that sustainable development seeks to deliver the objective of achieving, now and in the future, economic development to secure higher living standards while protecting and enhancing the environment.

I will elaborate on sustainable development in the forthcoming draft single Strategic Planning Policy Statement which will be out for public consultation towards the end of the year.

Council: Usable Reserves

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment how much each council held in usable reserves at 31 March 2013.

(AQW 22309/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department of the Environment does not hold this information at this time.

The twenty-six councils are required to submit uncertified accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 to the Department of the Environment by 30 June 2013. The uncertified accounts will show how much each council held in usable reserves at 31 March 2013.

The Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 require councils to publish their statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013, together with any certificate, opinion or report issued by the local government auditor, before 31 October 2013. Where no such opinion has been given, publication of the statement of accounts should proceed together with a declaration and explanation that the local government auditor has given no such opinion.

I firmly believe that usable Council reserves must be part of the family of funding of the costs of council reform together with low cost loans, the £47.8m Executive contribution and acceleration of sharing and collaboration. Reserves are the monies of the ratepayers and can be a vital element in ensuring the ratepayer does not pay for reform. This is the principle I work to.

Annual Accounts: Formal Sign-Off

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment to list the councils that are awaiting formal sign-off of their annual accounts by the Local Government Auditor; and why these accounts have not yet been signed off.

(AQW 22310/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As at 30 April 2013, only Craigavon Borough Council is awaiting formal sign-off of their 2011/2012 accounts. This is due to ongoing consideration of an objection received by the Local Government Auditor under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. I have asked for details of this matter which appear to have been “live” for approaching a year.

Drivers: Seat Belts

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment for an estimate of the percentage of drivers who do not wear seat belts.

(AQW 22445/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The percentage of car drivers who do not wear seat belts is available from the annual ‘Northern Ireland Survey of Seat Belt Wearing’ report. In 2012, the latest year for which estimates

are available, 2% of car drivers, 2% of front seat passengers and 6% of backseat passengers were recorded as not wearing a seat belt.

Driving: Alcohol Consumption

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the difference between driving under the influence of alcohol and being drunk in charge of a vehicle.

(AQW 22465/11-15)

Mr Attwood: 'Driving under the influence of alcohol' is an offence under Article 15(1) of the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995 and being 'drunk in charge of a vehicle' is an offence under Article 15(2), as set out below:

"Driving, or being in charge, when under the influence of drink or drugs

15(1) – A person who, when driving or attempting to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road or other public place, is unfit to drive through drink or drugs is guilty of an offence.

(2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a person who, when in charge of a mechanically propelled vehicle which is on a road or other public place, is unfit to drive through drink or drugs is guilty of an offence."

For both offences it must be proven that the person is 'unfit' to drive and a person is taken as being 'unfit' if his ability to drive properly is for the time being impaired. This is usually proved by evidence of the amount of alcohol taken by the person as revealed by a test of his breath, blood or urine. The main difference between the offences is in what is meant by 'driving' or being 'in charge of' a vehicle and this is often dependent on the facts of the individual case.

'Driving', given its ordinary and natural meaning, is fairly easily understood and it is generally held that the question is one of fact dependent on the degree and extent to which the person has control of the direction and movement of the vehicle, and this has been decided on a case by case basis.

The words 'in charge of' are not defined in legislation and again the meaning has been developed through case-law. In *DPP v Watkins* [1989] Lord Justice Taylor set out the following points that should be taken into account in determining such cases:

- whether and where the person was in the vehicle or how far he was from it;
- what he was doing at the relevant time;
- whether he was in possession of a key that fitted the ignition;
- whether there was evidence of an intention to take or assert control of the car by driving or otherwise;
- whether any person was in, at or near the vehicle and, if so, the like particulars in respect of that person.

It is then for a Court to consider all these factors with any others that might be relevant and to reach its decision as a matter of fact and degree. A statutory defence is provided in Article 15(3) which provides that a person shall be deemed not to have been 'in charge' of the vehicle if he proves that at the material time the circumstances were such that there was no likelihood of his driving it so long as he remained unfit through drink or drugs. This defence can be advanced in Court but the onus of proof is clearly on the person to show that there was no likelihood of him driving the vehicle.

The remaining difference between the offences is reflected in the penalties with 'driving' under the influence being viewed as the more serious with the person being liable to 6 months imprisonment or a fine of up to £5,000 or both, obligatory disqualification and between 3-11 penalty points. The 'in charge' offence attracts 3 months imprisonment or a fine of up to £2,500 or both, discretionary disqualification and 10 penalty points.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Northern Ireland Civil Service: Staff Officer Vacancies

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the current Staff Officer vacancies, including (i) Department; (ii) job role; and (iii) location within the Northern Ireland Civil Service based in the council areas of (a) Derry; (b) Strabane; and (c) Limavady.

(AQW 21789/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): At 16 April 2013, the Northern Ireland Civil Service had 1 Staff Officer vacancy based in the council areas of (a) Derry; (b) Strabane; and (c) Limavady. Details of job role and location are attached.

Job Role

Staff Officer - Policy and Legislation Unit in Corporate HR - Civil Service Pensions based in Londonderry.

Responsibility for reviewing current and emerging civil service pensions legislation arising out of decisions taken by the Westminster Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly in respect of pensions matters affecting all Northern Ireland public service pensions schemes, with specific responsibility for the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme. A key role for this post is to lead on the initial drafting of all documentation to progress the Public Service Pensions Bill through the Northern Ireland Assembly legislative process. This is an important post in a high profile policy and legislation area that will require the individual to be well organised and motivated with high levels of drive and determination to deliver required documentation to the highest degree of accuracy within extremely challenging timescales. Other key responsibilities would be to draft secondary legislation and scheme amendments, Policy Employer Pension Notices and Office Memos, Equality impact screenings, Explanatory Memorandums for Office of legislative Council and performing research to support the drafting of briefing and policy documents.

Vacancies in the Civil Service

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of vacancies in the Civil Service in the Derry City Council area, broken down by (i) grade; and (ii) Department.

(AQW 21827/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The number of vacancies in permanent Northern Ireland Civil Service posts, located in the Derry City Council area, in each of the Northern Ireland Departments including their Agencies at 17 April 2013, is set out in the table overleaf.

NICS VACANCIES (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) BASIS) IN THE DERRY CITY COUNCIL AREA, BROKEN DOWN BY GRADE AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT AT 17 APRIL 2013

	AA	AO	E02	E01	S0	DP	G7	Other		Total
								No.	Grade	
DARD	1		2	3			1			7
DE			2	1						3
DFP			2	2	1	2				7
DOE							1	1	Traffic Examiner 2 Professional & Technical Officer (PTO)	4
DRD								1	PTO Graphic Designer	1
DSD	2	3	11							16
Totals	3	3	17	6	1	2	2	4		38

Departments not shown in the table had no vacancies.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Sub-Economic Tendering

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 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 22017/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): I can confirm that my Department has experienced a trend of keen tender prices with building contracts over the last three years. This reflects the current depressed market conditions with fewer tender opportunities that are impacting on the local construction industry. I can advise that my Department has not been required to accept any tenders that we would consider to be abnormally low over this period.

I would also confirm that my Department, through Health Estates Investment Group in its role as Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE), has been working in collaboration with DFP's Central Procurement Directorate and the other CoPEs in the development of mechanisms to deal with many of the issues facing local contractors and their supply chains, e.g. procedures to be adopted on receipt of sub-economic/ abnormally low tenders. It is hoped that these procedures will be a deterrent and discourage this practice in the future.

Brooklands Antrim Health Centre: Intermediate Care Beds

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the providers and locations that were assessed in the business case to provide the 15 intermediate care beds that were commissioned by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust at Brooklands Antrim Health Centre.

(AQW 22047/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised that the business case for the 15 intermediate care beds did not outline any specific potential providers or locations, beyond that the home should be within the Northern Trust area. Following approval of the business case a competitive tendering exercise was carried out.

The Providers who submitted tenders were:

- Wilson Group for their Nursing Home in Whitehead;
- Four Seasons for Ballymena, Antrim and Ballymoney locations;
- The Conway Group, Antrim;
- Larne Private Nursing Home, Larne; and
- Drapersfield Private Nursing Home, Cookstown.

Health and Social Care Trust: Bereavement Midwives

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many bereavement midwives have been employed in each Health and Social Care Trust for the past five years.

(AQW 22103/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern HSC Trust has confirmed they have 1 (1.0 whole-time equivalent) dedicated specialist bereavement midwife. The other Trusts have confirmed they do not have distinct bereavement midwife roles.

Health and Social Care Trust: Bereavement Midwives

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services have been put in place within Health and Social Care Trusts that do not employ bereavement midwives, to ensure that mothers who have had still births receive adequate support.

(AQW 22107/11-15)

Mr Poots: All women and their partners who experience the death of a baby are supported initially by the midwifery staff and obstetric team responsible for care at the time of their loss. Further bereavement care and support is provided following discharge from hospital by the General Practitioner, Community Midwife and Health Visitor to whom the mother is referred for follow up care.

Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts work closely with SANDS, the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society, which provides memory boxes and information packs in Trust hospitals for all parents who have suffered stillbirth or neonatal death. There is a book of remembrance and an annual remembrance service for parents, families and friends bereaved of a baby or child.

All HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland have bereavement coordinators who work within Trusts to develop bereavement care, standards and training for all types of bereavement, including miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death. All midwives undergo bereavement training on how to support and care for grieving parents.

Causeway Hospital and Altnagelvin Area Hospital Integration

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what meetings officials from his Department have had with the Western Health and Social Care Trust to explore the integration of the Causeway Hospital and Altnagelvin Area Hospital; and (ii) what meetings have taken place between the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and the Western Health and Social Care Trust to explore greater co-operation between the Causeway Hospital and Altnagelvin Area Hospital, with a view to securing the future of the former.

(AQW 22121/11-15)

Mr Poots:

I can confirm that a meeting took place on 19 November 2012 with senior officials from my Department, the Health and Social Care Board and the Western Health and Social Care Trust which included an initial discussion of the proposed arrangements for the Causeway Hospital as presented in the 'Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action' consultation document.

While discussion around opportunities for co-operation between Causeway and Altnagelvin Area Hospitals is part of normal networking arrangements to support the delivery of joined up services, I understand there have no meetings to date between the Western and Northern Health and Social Care Trusts specifically on more formalised integrated working options between the two hospitals as set out in 'Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action'.

I made a Statement to the House on 19 March 2013, setting out the findings of the consultation and the way forward. In that Statement I indicated that officials will begin work on a detailed options appraisal on the future management arrangements for Causeway Hospital. This work will be taken forward with a view to completing the appraisal within six months.

Doctor and Nurse Recruitment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) doctors; and (ii) nurses have been recruited into hospitals in each of the last five years; and how many of these have been recruited locally.

(AQW 22128/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is shown in the tables below. It has been assumed that 'recruited locally' refers to staff from Northern Ireland; however, it is not possible to provide this. As an alternative, Trusts (excluding Northern HSC Trust) have provided the number of Non-European Union (non-EU) recruits. These figures were obtained from the HSC Trusts, and have not been validated by the Department.

I) NUMBER OF DOCTORS RECRUITED

Year	Total Recruits	Non-EU Recruits*
2012-2013	1917	108
2011-2012	1886	125
2010-2011	1771	114
2009-2010	1767	190
2008-2009	1785	246

*excluding Northern HSC Trust

II) NUMBER OF QUALIFIED NURSES RECRUITED

Year	Total Recruits	Non-EU Recruits*
2012-2013	1261	19
2011-2012	826	12
2010-2011	464	8
2009-2010	896	13
2008-2009	848	29

*excluding Northern HSC Trust

Source: Northern Ireland Health & Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 1 Bank staff are excluded.
- 2 Figures include rotational doctors in training who are recruited centrally by the Northern Ireland Medical & Dental Training Agency to work in Trusts.

Transforming Your Care

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the consultation on Transforming Your Care; and when the final plan will be published.

(AQW 22154/11-15)

Mr Poots: In my Statement to the House on 19 March 2013, I set out the outcome of the consultation exercise on the proposals contained in 'Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action'.

Full details of the findings of the consultation are set out in the post-consultation report which was produced by the Health and Social Care Board and which is available at: www.tyccoconsultation.hscni.net

A draft Strategic Implementation Plan was published when the consultation exercise was launched on 9 October 2012. The Plan is currently being updated to reflect the conclusions of the consultation exercise and it is anticipated the revisions will be completed later this month. It is now important that we move forward with the changes necessary to improve the quality of care in our community.

Young Adults with a Disability

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the same management and staff teams have responsibility for all areas of care and service provision for young adults with a disability within Armagh and Dungannon.

(AQW 22161/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust advise that some clarification is required on the definition of a young adult. Individuals below the age of 18 are cared for by the Trust's Childrens' Disability Team. Those over 18 are cared for by one of a number of teams depending on the nature of the individual's disability.

These teams can include the Mental Health Team, Learning Disability Team, Hearing Impaired Team, Visually Impaired Team or Physical Disability Team. In addition, a young adult with a disability may also have contact with a Transitions Worker, a Community Access Officer, or Daytime Opportunities staff.

In relation to Autism services, the Southern Trust has established a trans-generational model with collective responsibility between Children and Adult Directorates.

Smoking Cessation Services

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much his Department has spent on smoking cessation services in each of the last five years; (ii) what is the 'cost per quit' of smoking cessation services; and (iii) to detail the reduction in the proportion of the population that smokes over each of the last five years.

(AQW 22193/11-15)

Mr Poots: Smoking cessation interventions include the provision of brief opportunistic advice by a range of health professionals and specialist services delivered by trained practitioners, usually in the form of clinics or one-to-one sessions. There are over 600 specialist providers across Northern Ireland. The answers to questions (i) and (ii) relate to specialist cessation services only.

- (i) Information available on spend on smoking cessation services in each of the last five years is provided in the table below. These figures include the provisions of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) through community pharmacy cessation services.

Year	Spend
2008/09	£1.48m
2009/10	Information not available
2010/11	£3.4m
2011/12	£4.8m
2012/13	£4.5m

Information from the Public Health Agency(PHA) on spend on smoking cessation services for 2009/10 is not available as the financial systems were in transition during this period. In 2009/10, the PHA received £2.35m from the Department towards the overall tobacco control programme and NRT provision.

- (ii) There is no agreed formula for estimating the cost per quit across the UK. However, based on information available for 2011/12, taking into account the 20,229 people who had successfully quit after 4 weeks through smoking cessation services, the cost per quit can be estimated at £236.
- (iii) The proportion of smokers present in the Northern Ireland population has remained relatively constant over the past 5 years as presented in the following table:

Year	Smokers
2007/08	23.03%
2008/09	23.83%
2009/10	23.74%

Year	Smokers
2010/11	23.89%
2011/12	24.74%

The figures included in the table above are derived from the Health Survey Northern Ireland (10/11 and 11/12) and from the Continuous Household Survey (07/08, 08/09 and 09/10).

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department has spent on nicotine replacement therapy, prescribed through the E-lite system, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 22195/11-15)

Mr Poots: NRT is available on prescription in Northern Ireland and can also be prescribed by pharmacists to smokers who sign up for pharmacy-based smoking cessation services.

Elite Training and Consultancy Services Ltd provide the Department with data on the number of people receiving nicotine replacement therapy via smoking cessation services and the type of medication they are receiving. However, the data provided does not include associated costs. It is not possible to calculate the cost of nicotine replacement therapy from the information provided as the strength or amount of nicotine replacement products dispensed and the length of treatment time is not provided.

Information is also available for all NRT prescribed in Northern Ireland. These figures include NRT prescribed by GPs to smokers who may decide not to participate in smoking cessation services, as well as NRT prescribed through smoking cessation services in settings such as pharmacies or GP surgeries. These costs are currently only available by calendar year and are set out in the following table:

Year	Costs for all NRT prescribed in Northern Ireland
2008	£2,087,801
2009	£2,762,734
2010	£3,142,772
2011	£3,888,566
2012	£3,709,339

Dental Services

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is an arrangement between Health Service dental services and the private sector to facilitate necessary treatments which may not be otherwise available through the Health Service; and to provide details of this contract.

(AQW 22196/11-15)

Mr Poots: Dentists are expected to provide all treatments set out in the Statement of Dental Remuneration to their registered patients where it is clinically appropriate to do so and they are competent to carry out the treatment. Further more specialised services are available, on referral from their dentist, through some High Street specialists, the Community Dental Services, or the Hospital Dental Service.

There is no contract between my Department or the Health and Social Care Board and the private sector to facilitate treatments that fall outside these arrangements.

Smoking Related Ill-Health

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the annual cost of treating smoking related ill-health.

(AQW 22199/11-15)

Mr Poots: Whilst smoking is recognised as a major risk factor in a number of illnesses there is no universal consensus of those illnesses. By adapting a methodology devised by the Royal College of Physicians my Department has estimated the 2011/12 hospital costs of treating diseases, of which smoking could be a contributory factor, as £164m.

Smoking Cessation Courses

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to assess the effectiveness of smoking cessation courses by determining the number of participants who have stopped smoking at the end of the 12 weeks course.

(AQW 22200/11-15)

Mr Poots: The effectiveness of smoking cessation services is assessed by the quit rate of those enrolling. Service providers are required to assess a client's smoking status four weeks after their quit date as recommended by NHS service delivery and monitoring guidance. A client's quit date is usually set as a specific date during the 6-12 week course. In addition, service providers in Northern Ireland are also required to carry out a follow-up of a client's smoking status after 52 weeks.

An analysis report of data collected from the monitoring system including service uptake, four week quitting activity and 52 week quitting activity is usually completed in September each year.

I, therefore, have no plans to assess the effectiveness of smoking cessation courses by determining the number of participants who have stopped smoking at the end of the 12 weeks course.

Smoking Cessation Services

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what smoking cessation services are (i) provided by each Local Commissioning Group; and (ii) available in each constituency.

(AQW 22201/11-15)

Mr Poots: Specialist smoking cessation services are provided across Northern Ireland and are designed specifically for those smokers who are motivated, ready to quit and prepared to set a quit date. These services are offered in a range of local settings including GP practices, pharmacies, hospitals, and community based settings.

In relation to (i) the table below shows the total number of stop smoking service providers by Local Commissioning Group area;

HSCT	Provider type		
	GP Practice	Pharmacist	Other
Belfast LCG area	29	95	25
Northern LCG area	48	97	6
South Eastern LCG area	17	70	13
Southern LCG area	26	72	10
Western LCG area	12	84	3
Total	132	418	57

In relation to (ii) the numbers of stop smoking service providers in each constituency is set out in the table below;

HSCT	Provider type		
	GP Practice	Pharmacist	Other
Belfast East	9	22	4
Belfast North	5	22	10
Belfast South	10	27	8
Belfast West	6	25	4
East Antrim	6	15	0
East Londonderry	8	25	2
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	6	34	0
Foyle	0	30	3
Lagan Valley	7	21	2
Mid Ulster	7	20	1
Newry and Armagh	8	23	3
North Antrim	23	25	0
North Down	7	18	2
South Antrim	8	20	2
South Down	8	28	3
Strangford	4	17	4
Upper Bann	5	24	8
West Tyrone	5	22	0
Unknown / unable to link data to constituency	0	0	1
Total	132	418	57

Smoking Cessation Courses

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current method of assessing the effectiveness of a smoking cessation course.

(AQW 22202/11-15)

Mr Poots: The effectiveness of smoking cessation services commissioned by the Public Health Agency is assessed by the measuring quit rate of those enrolling. The proportion of smokers, based on the overall number of smokers in Northern Ireland, who access cessation services is also of importance. In addition to setting performance indicators for commissioned smoking cessation services, the Public Health Agency requires these services to comply with a number of Quality Standards.

Data on stop smoking services is collected by service providers and entered onto the ELITE electronic system. This information forms the basis of a smoking cessation report which my Department publishes annually.

A comparison of smoking cessation services between Northern Ireland and other UK countries shows that Northern Ireland is performing well both in terms of the estimated proportion of smoking population accessing services and in the four week self-reported quit rates.

Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department is funding research into congenital diaphragmatic hernia with a view to identifying prevention strategies and better treatment of the condition.

(AQW 22226/11-15)

Mr Poots: Research relevant to health and social care is undertaken in Northern Ireland with funding from a wide range of sources, including my own Department's HSC R&D Fund as well as local and national charities. As a very small region with only two universities and a limited number of researchers based within Trusts, we do not have research activity to cover the full spectrum of illnesses. No funding has been provided for research on congenital diaphragmatic hernia through our HSC R&D Fund and no relevant research is currently undertaken in any Northern Ireland HSC Trust.

However, good research that is undertaken anywhere in the world is reported in appropriate medical or scientific journals or at conferences. Any beneficial advances are then incorporated into clinical practice guidelines.

Thus clinicians locally are able to access the knowledge from research undertaken locally or globally to ensure that people in NI receive the best possible services and care.

Recruiting Carers in West Tyrone

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail the barriers to recruiting carers in West Tyrone; (ii) the impact this is having on the health and well-being of people who require care; and (iii) to outline his Department's action plan to overcome these barriers.

(AQW 22264/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Recruitment is a matter for individual Health and Social Care Trusts based on service needs and available resources. The Western HSC Trust has advised me that Trust Homecare staff turnover rates within West Tyrone were less than 2% for 2012, which would indicate a stable workforce. The Trust reports that where difficulties may arise occasionally in sourcing a domiciliary care service response from the range of providers, the Trust explores all options to resolve the matter as quickly and effectively as possible within the available resources.
- (ii) In recent years demand for homecare services across the Trust has been rising given the ageing population. This leads to pressures on the service and a requirement to prioritise by directing resources to those having the greatest need. The Trust is in discussion with the Local Commissioning Group to explore how this demographic growth pressure might be addressed.
- (iii) My Department is currently taking forward a three stage project to review and reform Adult Care and Support in Northern Ireland. Stage 1, a six month consultation on the discussion document "Who Cares?" The Future of Adult Care and Support in NI", concluded on 15 March 2013. A number of issues relating to workforce were highlighted during the consultation, including issues around recruitment and retention and training of care and support staff. These and other issues will be considered during the next stage of the reform process, which will involve developing a range of proposals for change.

Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any recent assessment has been made of public attitudes to the possible fluoridation of public water supplies.

(AQW 22268/11-15)

Mr Poots: I indicated on 25 April 2012 that it was appropriate that I should give consideration to fluoridation of the water supplies in Northern Ireland. I continue to consult with my Executive colleagues on the matter before coming to a decision.

I have received correspondence on this matter from members of the public and elected representatives. In terms of public opinion, this would appear to mainly relate to a relatively small number of people from an anti-fluoridationist perspective raising the issue directly and indirectly.

If a proposal to fluoridate the water supplies is made, the appropriate evidence from reputable scientific and medical sources will be considered, and we are required under, The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to consult, and ascertain, public opinion. Should such a consultation proceed, we would welcome the views of all interested parties, at that time.

Substance Abuse

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available in the Causeway coast area for the treatment of people under 17 years who have become addicted to substance abuse.

(AQW 22269/11-15)

Mr Poots: Through my Department's New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase Two, the Health & Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency commission alcohol and drug services (from education and prevention through to treatment and support) for children and young people that are provided across the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area, both by Statutory and Voluntary/Community sectors.

Services available across the Trust area include:

- Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre delivers a range of counselling, support and mentoring interventions for those aged 17 and under. Outreach clinics are provided in Ballycastle, Coleraine and Ballymoney. As appropriate, work is also undertaken with the young person's family.
- The NHSCT's generic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has been offering support to children and young people under the age of 18 who are addicted to substances and who are suffering from poor mental health. Through the support of the PHA, a specialist Substance Misuse Worker has been placed in the CAMHS team since April 2013, and they are developing a specialist service for this client group, with the aim of offering support to those with severe problems in relation to legal, prescription, or illicit drugs, and alcohol in connection with mental health problems.
- NHSCT in partnership with the Youth Justice Agency deliver a Criminal Justice early intervention, education and prevention service.
- The Hope Centre delivers a Family Support Service with fortnightly support groups established in Ballycastle, Larne and Carrickfergus.
- Causeway Rural and Urban Network (CRUN) delivers targeted education and prevention programmes throughout Moyle, Ballymoney and Coleraine council areas. These programmes are delivered through a personal development and lifestyle context and link to other risk behaviours including mental and emotional wellbeing, suicide prevention, unsafe sex and self harm.
- The Public Health Agency is in the final stages of commissioning a new One-Stop-Shop service for young people aged 11-25 in the Causeway area. When established this service will provide objective information about personal health and wellbeing issues, choices, where to find help and advice and how to access it.

There are also a number of related services, across the NHSCT area, that promote mental health and prevent suicide, including:

- Northern Area Young Men's Support Project (for ages 16-25years), delivered by the NEELB Youth Service. This initiative focuses on building resilience and coping skills with young men

- ZEST – Family Outreach Support for Self Harm
- Barnardo's - Children and Young People Bereaved by Suicide Support Project for under 18s.

Details of the full range of alcohol and drug services (for both young people and adults) in the Northern area can be found by accessing the following link:

http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/DrugsAlcohol_Directory_Northern_12_12.pdf

Impact of Fluoridation

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has investigated into the impact of fluoridation in water; and to detail his position on this matter.

(AQW 22271/11-15)

Mr Poots: I indicated on 25 April 2012 that it was appropriate that I should give consideration to fluoridation of the water supplies in Northern Ireland.

Fluoridation of the water supplies is internationally recognised as the most effective, cost-effective and equitable way of improving dental health. Many reputable health bodies including the World Health Organisation, the UK Health Departments, the Royal College of Physicians, the British Medical Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA) and the FDI World Dental Federation; have endorsed the effectiveness and safety of water fluoridation, having considered the findings of available published research. The European Commission's 'Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks' (SCHER) 2010 review of health and environmental risks of fluoride and fluoridation in reported "limited evidence from epidemiological studies points towards adverse health effects following systemic fluoride consumption e.g. carcinogenicity, developmental neurotoxicity and reproductive toxicity, but using a weight of evidence approach these observations cannot be substantiated". The SCHER report also found that the added risk of drinking water fluoridation to the environment should be considered negligible.

I continue to consult with my Executive colleagues on the matter before coming to a decision. If a proposal to fluoridate the water supplies is made, the appropriate evidence from reputable scientific and medical sources will be considered, and we are required under, The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to consult, and ascertain, public opinion. Should such a consultation proceed, we would welcome the views of all interested parties, at that time.

Antrim Area Hospital: Accident and Emergency Department

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to address the capacity issues at Antrim Area Hospital's Accident and Emergency department.

(AQW 22277/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to my answer to AQW 21876/11-15.

Antrim Area Hospital: Death of a Baby

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether an independent investigation has been ordered into the recent death of a baby in Antrim Area Hospital; and what is the timescale for any such investigation.

(AQW 22278/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed this refers to the recent case of a baby who was brought to Antrim Area Hospital emergency department, stabilised and transferred to the Royal Victoria Hospital but sadly later died. The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has initiated a full Serious Adverse Incident review into the child's care in Antrim Area Hospital. The review will be carried out by four professionals, three of whom are from outside the Northern Trust. The Trust expects to have the review completed by the end of June 2013.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service: Director of Planning Performance and Corporate Affairs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what investigation has been carried out into the offering of the post of Director of Planning Performance and Corporate Affairs in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service to one candidate, who verbally accepted the offer, but another candidate was subsequently appointed.

(AQW 22293/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following a complaint made by the unsuccessful candidate, NIFRS has been informed that the Northern Ireland Ombudsman is to investigate a claim of maladministration. Although the investigation has not yet commenced NIFRS has assured me it will co-operate fully with the Ombudsman's Office.

No appointment has been made.

Provision of Communication Devices

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why there is no regional service for the provision of communication devices to people who need them as a result serious injuries or the onset of voice-damaging diseases.

(AQW 22294/11-15)

Mr Poots: A Regional Communication Advice Centre is hosted by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust at Musgrave Park Hospital.

Referral into this centre is from speech and language therapists in each trust area. The local speech and language therapy department will assess the needs of those people who need communication devices as a result of serious injuries or the onset of voice-damaging diseases and will refer them to the Regional Communication Advice Centre if appropriate.

A range of less complex communication devices can be provided locally in each Trust area.

Social Workers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of Social Workers per head of population in each constituency.

(AQW 22298/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on Health and Social Care (HSC) staff is not available by constituency. However, the number of qualified Social Workers (in terms of whole-time equivalent) per estimated head of population in each of the Health and Social Care Trust areas is shown below.

HSC Trust	Qualified Social Workers (WTE)	Trust Area Population (est.)	Qualified Social Workers per head (est.)
Belfast	777.73	334,820	0.0023
Northern	765.14	460,364	0.0017
South-Eastern	555.41	348,301	0.0016
Southern	585.59	362,711	0.0016
Western	599.02	300,677	0.0020

Notes:

- 1 Population figures by Trust area have been taken from the most recent published sub-national population estimates for mid-2011, which are derived from the 2001 Census.

- 2 The number of qualified social workers employed by the Health & Social Care Trusts, as at 31st December 2012, was taken from the HSC Human Resources Management Systems (excluding staff on career breaks and bank staff). These figures exclude 49.4 WTE qualified social workers who are employed by other HSC organisations that cannot be assigned to Trust areas.

Free Health Service Maternity Care

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether working EU or non-EU nationals are entitled to free Health Service maternity care.

(AQW 22303/11-15)

Mr Poots: Generally, anyone may access the full range of free health services (including maternity services) in Northern Ireland provided they are ordinarily resident here. This means a person must live here lawfully and on a continuous and settled basis, usually for a period longer than six months to be entitled to services, although each case is looked at on an individual basis. Persons are expected to provide evidence of their status via documents such as employment contracts, passports/visas or utility bills etc.

The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations 2005 set out a number of other categories of persons European Economic Area (EEA) citizens and non-EEA persons who come from countries with which the UK has a reciprocal agreement) who may also avail of free health services. EEA includes all those countries signed up to the relevant parts of EU legislation with a bearing on healthcare entitlement, and includes all the EU countries. Anyone claiming an EEA or non-EEA exemption will need to evidence this with relevant documents, which may include evidence of employment in Northern Ireland.

Hepatitis A, Tetanus or Typhoid Vaccination Charges

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a General Practitioner can charge a Health Service patient a fee for administering a (i) Hepatitis A; (ii) Tetanus; or (iii) Typhoid vaccination which has been prescribed for free.

(AQW 22308/11-15)

Mr Poots: General Practitioners are paid via the GMS Contract to administer Hepatitis A, Tetanus and Typhoid vaccinations and should not be charging a fee for administering those vaccines.

The General Medical Services Contract Regulations allows a General Practitioner to levy a fee for administering travel immunisations and vaccines for which they do not receive payment from the Health and Social Care Board.

Drug Abuse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what new strategies his Department is pursuing to combat drug abuse.

(AQW 22328/11-15)

Mr Poots: In 2012, I launched the revised five year cross-departmental strategy to prevent and address the harm related to alcohol and drug misuse, 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.

A range of services are funded through the NSD Phase 2, and these are summarised for each area on the Public Health Agency website: <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/drug-and-alcohol-directories-services>

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.

Breast Feeding Strategy

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what coordination there has been between the breast feeding strategy and the review of the breast feeding strategic plan in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 22338/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is regular engagement between the Regional Breastfeeding lead in the Public Health Agency and the National Breastfeeding Coordinator in the Republic of Ireland. Those involved in promoting and supporting breastfeeding in the Republic of Ireland were consulted during the review of the 1999 Breastfeeding Strategy for Northern Ireland in 2010. The review Report, which recommended the development of a new 10 year Breastfeeding Strategy for Northern Ireland, also proposed that collaboration with the Republic of Ireland should be expanded in the areas of research and evaluation, resource development and activities to promote and support breastfeeding.

I understand that the review of the Breastfeeding Strategic Plan in the Republic of Ireland is currently underway. The difference in timing means that it will not be possible for the review to inform development of the new 10 year Breastfeeding Strategy for Northern Ireland which, following public consultation, is being finalised for publication in June.

Improving Physical Fitness

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what targets he has set to improve physical fitness among the population; and what actions he is taking to achieve these aims.

(AQW 22339/11-15)

Mr Poots: The obesity prevention framework, A Fitter Future for All, was launched on 9th March 2012. This Framework contains the following targets: to reduce the level of obesity by 4% and overweight and obesity by 3% among adults by 2022; and a 3% reduction of obesity and 2% reduction of overweight and obesity among children by 2022

The Framework acknowledges the importance of eating a healthy diet in conjunction with greater participation in physical activity in order to meet these targets and contains a number of outcomes to promote the awareness of the importance of physical activity and provide opportunities for participation throughout the population.

The revised Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, Start Active, Stay Active, provides guidance on recommended levels of physical activity and steps to improve physical health and wellbeing. The proportion of people meeting these guidelines will be measured to provide an indicator of progress on delivering on the framework.

The Public Health Agency is leading on implementing the outcomes contained within the Department's obesity prevention framework and supports a number of schemes and initiatives to promote participation in physical activity, including:

- physical activity co-ordinators in place across Northern Ireland;
- school based initiatives, such as positive playgrounds and Bike-It;
- healthy towns initiatives and 'Active Belfast';

- Joint working arrangements with local government on physical activity opportunities, such as Give it a Go! and Inspiring Communities to Get Active Together;
- physical activity referral schemes; and
- outdoor gyms.

My Department also works in partnership with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure on the Sport Matters strategy, and the Department of Regional Development on the Active Travel strategy, both of which help to promote increased physical activity in a range of settings.

Southern Health and Social Care Trust: Residential Homes

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many residents live in each of the five residential homes currently controlled by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. **(AQW 22340/11-15)**

Mr Poots: This information is not collected centrally but was requested from the Southern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. Their response is provided in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF AVAILABLE PLACES AND RESIDENTS IN STATUTORY RESIDENTIAL CARE IN THE SOUTHERN HSC TRUST

Home	Location	No. of places available including respite and intermediate care	Number of permanent beds	No. of permanent residents as at 29 April 2013
Cloughreagh House	Bessbrook	23	18	18
Crozier House	Banbridge	27	18	16 + 8 Skeagh House Residents
Roxborough House	Moy	30	24	19
Skeagh House	Dromore	24	18	Home currently closed due to environmental risk. 8 Skeagh Residents in Crozier House. 3 Skeagh Residents are located to Independent Sector.
Slieve Roe House	Kilkeel	17	12	10

Currently there are 7 unoccupied permanent beds out of a current maximum of 72 (due to 18 reduced permanent beds with temporary Skeagh House closure).

Source: Southern HSC Trust

Health and Social Care Trusts: Accident and Emergency

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current (i) admission rate; and (ii) average length of stay of patients admitted through each Accident and Emergency department, in each Health and Social Care Trust. **(AQW 22342/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The admission rate and average length of stay of patients admitted to each emergency care department in the most recent year for which information is available is shown in the table below:

HSC Trust / Hospital	2011/12		
	New & Unplanned Review Attendances	Admission Rate	Average Length of Stay
Belfast City*	24,623	23%	8.1
Mater	42,845	21%	6.0
Royal Victoria	81,094	18%	6.7
RBHSC	32,478	10%	3.1
Belfast HSC Trust	181,118	20%	6.4
Antrim Area	71,175	24%	5.7
Whiteabbey	8,614	0%	0.0
Mid Ulster	6,133	0%	328.5
Causeway	43,080	14%	7.0
Northern HSCT	129,002	18%	6.1
Ulster	77,757	27%	5.7
Ards	9,076	1%	13.4
Bangor	12,240	0%	10.2
Lagan Valley	27,280	12%	6.5
Downe	20,142	13%	5.2
South Eastern HSCT	146,495	19%	5.7
Craigavon Area	71,645	24%	4.5
Daisy Hill	37,927	17%	4.4
South Tyrone	18,751	0%	10.6
Armagh / Mullinure	7,793	0%	0.0
Southern HSCT	136,116	18%	4.5
Altnagelvin Area	53,045	23%	5.6
Erne	27,662	18%	5.3
Tyrone County	15,258	2%	0.4
Western HSCT	95,965	18%	5.4
Northern Ireland	688,696	19%	5.8

Source: EC1 Departmental Return & Hospital Inpatient System

* Belfast City emergency care department closed on a temporary basis due to a shortage of senior staff on 1st November 2011. As a result of this the admission rate for Belfast City refers only to emergency admissions and new and unplanned review attendances up to and including October 2011.

Bowel Cancer Screening

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people aged 60 and over were screened for bowel cancer in (i) 2011; and (ii) 2012; and what percentage in each year were shown to be positive.

(AQW 22343/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer Screening Programme was launched in April 2010 and rolled out across all five HSC Trust areas from January 2012. The programme was initially for those eligible aged 60-69 but was extended to include people up to the age of 71 from April 2012.

	2011	2012*
Number of people completing a screening test (of those invited during relevant year)	34,134	54,512
Number of people with a positive screening result (i.e. blood in bowel motion)	929	1,490
% with a positive screening result	2.7%	2.7%

* Individuals are given up to 6 months to respond from the date of the invite and screening kit being issued. The data provided above for 2012 is therefore incomplete as some screening episodes have not yet been closed.

Cancer Outcomes

In 2011 and 2012, 62 and 108 screen detected cancers respectively were diagnosed. These figures do not directly correlate to the data above. For example some individuals with their cancer diagnosed in 2011 may have undertaken the screening process in 2010 and some individuals invited in 2012 will not yet have completed the screening pathway and have a final outcome.

Single or Multiple Fractures

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people aged 65 and over, who suffered a single or multiple fracture in 2012, had to wait in excess of six months for treatment.

(AQW 22344/11-15)

Mr Poots: Patients, of any age, who have sustained a fracture, are not placed on a waiting list as this is classified as unscheduled care. Therefore no patients in 2012 waited in excess of six months for treatment.

If a patient has had a previous fracture and then requires elective surgery at a later date as a result of complications of that injury, this is then defined as being within elective orthopaedic surgery, not a fracture.

Ulster Hospital: Accident and Emergency Unit

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people who have attended the Accident and Emergency Unit at the Ulster Hospital, in each of the last 5 years; and what proportion, in each year, were not (i) treated; or (ii) discharged within (a) 4 hours; and (b) 12 hours.

(AQW 22380/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the proportion of patients attending the Ulster hospital Accident and Emergency department that did not meet (a) the 4 hour component; and (b) the 12 hour components of the Ministerial target for emergency care waiting times, in each of the last 5 years. The emergency care waiting time is calculated as the total time spent in an emergency care department from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge.

Information on waiting times at emergency care departments is published on a quarterly basis and is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3.htm

Information is also available to view or download in an Excel format at the following link for each emergency care department and month, since April 2007:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/ec1_data_mar_13.xls

Reduction in Care Homes

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the increase in the population of older people, how a reduction in the number of older people's care homes can be rationalised.

(AQW 22388/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following on from my statement to the Assembly, any decisions to close older peoples' residential homes will be on a case by case basis and will have to take account of the relevant considerations locally such as the availability of replacement services and the care needs of residents.

I want to ensure that older people receive the best care possible, within available resources, and in an environment that meets their care needs best. The majority of people want to be supported so that they can stay at home for as long as possible. Planning for change is essential, if independent living is to be promoted and people are to be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

These kinds of changes provide an opportunity for the HSC to redistribute financial and other resources to a range of alternative forms of care provision that facilitate independent living and will help to meet an increased volume of care requirements associated with growth pressures of an ageing population within a constrained resource environment.

Positron Emission Tomography Scans

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 21670/11-15, whether the Royal Victoria Hospital is currently accepting referrals for Positron Emission Tomography scans.

(AQW 22404/11-15)

Mr Poots: Positron emission tomography (PET-CT) is a key diagnostic and treatment management tool for patients with cancer, and ensuring short waiting times for cancer treatment depends on timely access to this scanner. Taking into account NICE guidance and the Royal College of Radiologists' position, there is evidence that that current usage of PET-CT for dementia patients in Northern Ireland is significantly higher than would be expected for our population size.

Referrals for dementia patients to the PET-CT scanner, located within the Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast, have been suspended pending a review of the clinical pathway for dementia which will address the appropriate use of PET-CT for patients in diagnosing and managing this condition. New guidance on criteria for acceptance of referrals will be issued shortly by the Health and Social Care Board.

Western Health and Social Care Trust: Residential Homes

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any plans to close residential care homes in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 22442/11-15)

Mr Poots: You will be aware by now that I have suspended the process whereby individual Trusts consult on the closure statutory elderly residential care homes in their area I have asked the HSC Board to lead on a new process for consulting and implementing change. I expect the HSC Board to work closely with the Trusts to coordinate a regional approach on residential care homes, with Trusts

having more time to engage with individuals, families, community and staff. Consultation on change will still be necessary, but the pace of change will be clearly defined and is likely to be over a longer period of time.

The Western HSC Trust had submitted its proposals regarding the closure of four statutory residential care homes at a meeting of its Board on 6 May 2013.

Paediatric Cardiac Surgery

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the regulatory authority and the relevant regulations that apply to paediatric cardiac surgery; and the regulatory authority and the relevant regulations that would apply to paediatric cardiac surgery should all surgery be moved to Dublin.

(AQW 22481/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has a statutory duty of quality in respect of its commissioning role. In commissioning services the HSCB will draw up a commissioning specification that all providers must adhere to. In addition specifically with regard to paediatric congenital cardiac surgery and Interventional cardiology services all units providing this service submit outcomes data to the Central Cardiac Audit Database (CCAD), a system used to collect information for the National Heart Disease Audits and provide audit feedback that is used to monitor and plan how to improve the day-to-day quality of care for patients with cardiovascular conditions.

In addition all doctors performing paediatric cardiac surgery in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are regulated respectively by the General Medical Council in the UK and the Medical Council in the Republic of Ireland.

Private Care Home Vacancies

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of residential vacancies in each private care home, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 22514/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of residential vacancies in each private care home is not centrally available.

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) holds information on all registered health and social care services in Northern Ireland including nursing homes, residential care homes and domiciliary care agencies.

A list of residential services can be accessed through the 'Residential Care Homes' file, at the web address below. This contains all registered services in Northern Ireland detailing maximum approved places for each service.

http://www.rqia.org.uk/what_we_do/registration__inspection_and_reviews/service_provider_directory.cfm

Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has brought proposals to the Executive on the addition of fluoride to the water supply.

(AQW 22545/11-15)

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.

I have not formally brought proposals to the Executive on this matter.

If a proposal to fluoridate the water supplies is made, the appropriate evidence from reputable scientific and medical sources will be considered, and we are required under The Water and Sewerage

Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to consult and ascertain public opinion. Should such a consultation proceed, we would welcome the views of all interested parties, at that time.

Mileage Allowance for Nurses

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the allowance paid to nurses for mileage, as well as any lump sums available for general use of vehicles, is being changed; and to outline the reason for any change.

(AQW 22649/11-15)

Mr Poots: From 1 July 2013 the current Agenda for Change mileage allowances for infrequent (called 'standard') or frequent (called 'regular') users and fixed lump sum payment for frequent users, will be replaced by rates based on information in the AA guides on motoring costs.

Under these new arrangements the rates will allow for increases in fuel costs and all the costs of keeping a car on the road, including petrol, repairs, insurance and road tax. The same rate will apply for frequent users and regular users and lump sum payments will no longer be payable.

The new system will be simpler and easier to use. It will apply a consistent reimbursement rate to all Agenda for Change staff regardless of the number of business miles travelled and it will have built in bi-annual reviews, to ensure that payments continue to cover any costs that staff incur.

NHS mileage arrangements had not been reviewed since 2000. This new National Agenda for Change Agreement was negotiated with the Main National Health Service Trade Unions including the RCN. The process included two comprehensive consultations. The partnership responses indicated a strong preference for a single rate of reimbursement and use of the AA guides as the reference for the costs of business motoring.

This is a National Agreement and consequently, it will be introduced here in parity with the rest of the UK.

Department of Justice

Legislative Changes: Legal Loopholes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether there have been any legislative changes following the McDermott brothers case to ensure that the legal loopholes, which restricted the judiciary, cannot be used to permit offenders to reside in the same community as their victims.

(AQW 22010/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): In terms of legislative change I have extended the period available for a Supervision and Treatment Order (STO) from two to three years. That change was not on the basis of any legal loophole but was made to widen court powers and in support of a request made by the sentencing judge.

In the context of the new mental capacity legislation I am also reviewing current law with a view to additional provisions in relation to criminal justice. I am, for example, proposing to enhance the options available to the courts in cases where defendants are unfit to be tried to provide a wider range of options for the court.

Courts have, and already deploy, additional powers in cases such as these where residence requirements can be applied. It is, for example, open to the court to use a sexual offences prevention order (SOPO) to place conditions on residence where it is deemed necessary in the interest of protecting the public from serious sexual harm. A SOPO with residence requirements and a STO were applied in the McDermott brothers' case.

I am also very alert to the needs and requirements of victims and communities to have their voices heard. In January of this year I introduced Community Impact Statements in line with my published commitment in our annual Victim & Witness Action Plan. The purpose of these statements is to let

the court know about the impact of the crime on a community, after someone has been convicted of a particular crime and before they are sentenced. Community impact statements are to be used in a targeted manner, for critical incidents that have had a significant impact on a community (as an indirect victim) and have damaged public confidence.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18759/11-15, what action he intends to take to increase the availability of Northern Ireland Prison Service posts that are suitable for people with disabilities, specifically in relation to prison officers who have become disabled.

(AQW 22036/11-15)

Mr Ford: In line with Equal Opportunity Legislation, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) when recruiting staff ensures that all eligible persons have equal opportunity for employment on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Appointments are made on merit without regard to disability.

As previously stated in AQW/21278/11-15 if a member of staff becomes disabled then NIPS is legally obliged, in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, to consider whether a reasonable adjustment can be made to their current duties. If, due to the nature of the disability, this cannot be accommodated then alternative duties, including a possible change in location, may be considered within the constraints of the business need to enable staff to remain in post or return to work. Such considerations are subject to suitable work being available.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17561/11-15, whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service plans to employ more civil servants and if so, to detail the grade and salary scale.

(AQW 22038/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) plans to employ civil servants in a range of both Prison and General Service grades. In the current financial year NIPS will be making appointments to the following grades as set out in the table below:

Grade to be Recruited	Salary Range Advertised
Director of Rehabilitation	£63,360 - £77,500
Psychology Assistant	£23,336 - £26,086
Custody Prison Officer (Custody Officer)	£18,000 - £23,000
Prisoner Custody Officer (PCO)	£8.89 per hour

Prisoner Releases

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners have been released, time served, in 2012 and had been serving a sentence for (i) a terrorism related offence; (ii) a sexual offence; and (iii) other offences from (a) Maghaberry; (b) Magilligan; and (c) Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison.

(AQW 22061/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below shows the number of prisoners released, time served, between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2012 in each establishment and by specified offences.

	Terrorist related offences	Sexual offences	Other offences
Maghaberry	5	41	1825
Hydebank Wood	0	7	596
Magilligan	1	67	624

Gross Misconduct Training

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21137/11-15 (i) why training has not been provided to Governors and Northern Ireland Civil Service staff who are responsible for processing cases of gross misconduct; (ii) why the advice of the Labour Relations Agency was not followed; (iii) for his assessment of whether this deficiency is satisfactory; and (iv) whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service has been monitoring the operation of its disciplinary and grievance procedures as part of the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Guidelines.

(AQW 22067/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my response to AQW 20698/11-15 regarding training for staff. There is no statutory requirement to train staff or management on the Code of Conduct and Discipline. However, in line with good practice, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) intends to introduce formal training for those who use and operate the procedures when the new Code of Conduct is introduced.

I would confirm that NIPS compiles equity monitoring information in relation to disciplinary and grievance cases as part of the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Guidelines.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21327/11-15, aside from the regulatory functions of the Code of Conduct and Discipline, to detail (i) the contributory factors that the Northern Ireland Prison Service takes into consideration when deciding not to discipline staff, at senior grades, who have breached the Code of Conduct and Discipline whilst junior staff have been disciplined as a result of the same investigation; and (ii) whether discipline should be applied consistently and fairly across all grades.

(AQW 22104/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 20303/11-15 and AQW 21317/11-15 and confirm that each disciplinary case is considered on an individual basis and appropriate sanctions applied irrespective of grade.

This ensures consistency in the application of disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the current Code of Conduct and Discipline.

High Court Case Reference McCL8697

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to High Court case reference McCL8697, whether Legal Aid was granted to either the plaintiff or the respondent; and to provide a breakdown of costs including those expended on senior counsel.

(AQW 22110/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission based on the information provided is unable to identify any record of legal aid being granted in this case.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Voluntary Exit Retirement Scheme

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21143/11-15, to detail the minimum period of service required for eligibility for the Voluntary Exit Retirement Scheme in relation to staff that are late joiners to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 22111/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service launched the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme on 8 November 2011 and invited applications from those staff aged 50 or over on that date in surplus grades. Length of service was not taken into consideration. Benefits paid under the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (NI) are determined by length of service.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff: Environmental Allowance

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice whether he has considered applying the Environmental Allowance to Northern Ireland Prison Service employees in light of the ongoing security threats against them.

(AQW 22142/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have considered a request by the Prison Officers' Association (NI) to pay an Environmental Allowance to those uniformed grades working in the Northern Ireland Prison Service who have been appointed since 2002. I have concluded that as the salary scales are higher than comparable prison grades in the rest of the United Kingdom, this reflects the situation in Northern Ireland. Consequently the introduction of an Environmental Allowance would not be appropriate.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17725/11-15, to detail (i) the date on which the officer was appointed to a prison hospital or healthcare facility; and (ii) the date that each of the nursing officers concerned, including the deceased nurse, entered the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 22184/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested has been withheld. This is to protect the identity of the individuals concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Changes in Legal Aid Payments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail how he plans to address the issue of Mr Raymond Brownlee, in relation to sentencing for false imprisonment, threats to kill and wounding, which cannot proceed as no counsel will take on this case due to changes in Legal Aid payments; and whether Mr Brownlee can seek counsel from outside Northern Ireland.

(AQW 22186/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 20 March 2013, the High Court delivered a judgment in favour of Mr Raymond Brownlee arising from Judicial Review proceedings taken by him against the Department of Justice in relation to his legal representation under criminal legal aid. The Department lodged an appeal against this judgment on 26 April 2013 which has yet to be heard by the Appeal Court. While proceedings remain ongoing, it would not be appropriate for me to make any comment on this matter.

Mr Brownlee could seek counsel from outside Northern Ireland. However, before counsel from outside this jurisdiction could represent him they would have to meet the requirements set down by the Bar Council of Northern Ireland.

Strategic Steering Group

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice how many issues have been referred from both Prison Service and healthcare staff to the Strategic Steering Group for resolution; and the outcome of each deliberation.

(AQW 22215/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Strategic Steering Group which the Member is referring to has not met for approximately three years and therefore has not deliberated over any issues.

Security Service Personnel

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice to outline under what circumstances Security Service personnel have access to prisoners; and whether the prisoner's approval to meet them is required.

(AQW 22216/11-15)

Mr Ford: The legislation is outlined below in Rule 69 part 1A and part 1B from The Prison and Young Offenders Centres Rules (Northern Ireland)

(1A) A member of the Serious Organised Crime Agency's staff

designated under section 43 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, an officer of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, or a member of the Security Service may, on production of an authorisation issued by or on behalf of a person specified in paragraph (1B), interview any prisoner willing to see him.

(1B) Those persons are –

- (a) the Director General of the Serious Organised Crime Agency;
- (b) the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs;
- (c) the Director General of the Security Service.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice why the 2009/10 pay scales are still in place for staff in the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission.

(AQW 22255/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC) is a discrete bargaining unit for pay purposes with pay remits approved through the Department of Justice and the Department of Finance and Personnel. The NILSC presently has 3 pay remits outstanding covering the periods 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13. The last agreed pay settlement for NILSC covered the period 2006/07 to 2008/09; no agreement was

reached in 2009/10 pay settlement negotiations and in July 2011 the NILSC imposed a 2.6% pay award for that period which, at the time, resulted in the introduction of LSC specific pay scales from August 2009. My officials will continue to work with the NTLSC to address the outstanding issues and to ensure that, when completed, any agreed Pay Strategy is passed to DFP for financial approval.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice why the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has not submitted a pay remit bid and accompanying business case in respect of pay remit years 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13.

(AQW 22256/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission does not presently have an agreed Pay Strategy. The NILSC also has a number of outstanding Pay Remits covering the periods 2010/11, 2011/12 and 20 12/13. The last agreed pay settlement for this arms length body covered the period

2006/07 to 2008/09; no agreement was reached in 2009/10 pay settlement negotiations and in July 2011 a 2.6% pay award was made for that period. The NILSC submitted a Pay Strategy Business Case to the Department of Justice on 22 January 2013 for consideration. At that time a number of resolved between the NILSC and my officials. My officials will continue to work with the NILSC to address the outstanding issues and to ensure that, when completed, any agreed Pay Strategy is passed to DFP for financial approval. It is only at this stage that an approved business case and supporting DFP pay remit templates would be completed.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what pay progression there has been for staff in the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission over the last three years; and to outline the reasons for this position. **(AQW 22257/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC) presently has three pay remits outstanding covering the periods 2010/11, 2011/2012 and 2012/13 (with the pay progression element for its 2009/10 pay settlement also outstanding).

Staff last received a pay increase in 2010, when a unilateral 2.6% pay award was made. This pay award did not include an element for pay progression.

My officials will continue to work with the NILSC to address the outstanding issues and to ensure that, when completed, any agreed Pay Strategy is passed to DFP for financial approval.

Northern Ireland Policing Board: Injury on Duty Review Working Group

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) whether his Department has been invited by the Northern Ireland Policing Board to appoint a departmental official to sit on the Board's Injury on Duty Review Working Group; and (ii) whether the invitation has been accepted. **(AQW 22383/11-15)**

Mr Ford: I can confirm that my Department has been invited to sit on the Policing Board's Working Group and the invitation has been accepted.

Community Safety Action Plan

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice (i) when the Community Safety Action Plan will be published; (ii) what period the plan will cover; and (iii) whether it will result in the continuity of programme funding from Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. **(AQW 22610/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The Community Safety Strategy Action Plans were published in February 2013, setting out the priority actions from 2012/13 to 2014/15 to deliver on each strand of the Community Safety Strategy.

Action plans are available at www.dojni.gov.uk. Click on "publications" – "publications - categories" – "Policing and Community Safety" – then "Community Safety Strategy Action Plan".

Just over £5.1m is being provided jointly by my Department and the Policing Board to fund the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships in 2013/14.

The purpose of this funding is to support the PCSPs in the implementation of their local action plans, which are required to contribute to the delivery of the Community Safety Strategy Action Plans by improving community safety through tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, and supporting community confidence in policing by working in partnership with communities to ensure local accountability.

Decisions on how PCSP Action Plan funding is accessed and allocated are the responsibility of each PCSP, on the basis of consultation, community engagement and research carried out to identify local priorities.

Department for Regional Development

Illegally Erected Flags and Signs

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 923/10, how many illegally erected flags and road signs Roads Service removed in (i) 2010/11; and (ii) 2011/12.

(AQW 22011/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Details of the number of illegally erected flags and road signs removed by my Department's Roads Service are provided in the table below:

	Number of illegally erected flags removed	Number of illegally erected signs removed *
Financial Year 2010/11	116	1425
Financial Year 2011/12	24	982

* Signs were either attached to or placed on Roads Service property.

Roads Service has signed up to the multi-agency protocol on the display of flags in public areas, which was launched by Government on 4 April 2005. The protocol recognises an effective resolution to the flags issue is more likely to be achieved through the co-operation of local communities. It will require widespread community support for the partnership established by the protocol to be effective.

A6 Road Scheme

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister for Regional Development when the procurement process for the A6 road scheme will commence.

(AQW 22074/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has recently received the Inspector's Report on the proposed A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling scheme and I intend to publish a statement on the way forward in due course, after issues arising from the report have been fully examined and resolved.

The Direction Order and Environmental Notice to Proceed for the Randalstown to Castledawson scheme were confirmed in March 2011. The scheme can be brought forward for procurement in a relatively short timescale, when funding is confirmed.

Whilst the A5 project remains on the Roads Service Major Works Programme, it is important that other schemes, such as the A6, which may be in a position to be progressed ahead of the A5, are given full consideration by the Executive. I therefore intend to bring forward proposals to the Executive detailing other options such as, moving forward on procurement of other possible schemes.

Translink: Meetings

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development how many meetings were held by Translink managers at which his Department was represented in the last twelve months; and the grade of departmental staff in attendance.

(AQW 22125/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Officials have liaised with Translink and I can advise you that my Department has been represented at Senior Civil Service level over the past twelve months at a number of high level meetings which are detailed in the table below. In addition, four briefing sessions have taken place during this period, between the Transport NI Chief Executive and Translink Group Chief Executive to discuss current issues.

Meeting Title	Number of Meetings Held
Ministerial Performance Review	1
Tri-annual Accountability	3
Sponsor Division Monitoring	9
Public Transport Partnership Board	3
Belfast Transport Hub Sponsor Group	3

This does not include membership of specific capital project meetings occasionally attended by Departmental staff. Finally, my officials at various different levels within the Department attend numerous meetings with Translink on a wide range of operational issues.

NI Water: Meetings

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development how many meetings were held by NI Water managers at which his Department was represented in the last twelve months; and the grade of departmental staff in attendance.

(AQW 22129/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Over the twelve month period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 my officials, at SCS level, held a range of regular governance monitoring and review meetings with Northern Ireland Water's senior managers. These are detailed in the table below. In addition, eight briefing sessions have taken place during this period, between the Board, Chief Executive and senior officials of Northern Ireland Water and the Minister; and there have been 13 meetings with Board members and the Chief Executive at Permanent Secretary level.

Finally, officials at all levels within my Department engage with NIW managers on a wide range of business and operational issues. These meetings are not included in the table.

Meeting Title	Number of Meetings Held (1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013)
Quarterly Shareholder Meetings	4
Ground Clearing Pre Quarterly Shareholder Meetings	4
Post Quarterly Shareholder Meetings (with Company Secretary)	4
NIW Internal Audit Team	6
NIW Governance Team	6
NIW Business Improvement Team	6
Meeting with NIW Capital Team	7
NIW Finance and Regulation Team	8
Output Review Group	3
Water Stakeholders Steering Group	2
Meetings to discuss Performance Delivery Efficiency Unit recommendations on flooding	8
Price Control Process meetings	10

Sewage and Waste Water Problems in Millisle

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what interim solutions will be put in place to tackle sewage and waste water problems in Millisle, pending further capital works.

(AQW 22131/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that a £2.2 million capital project is included in its PC13 Business Plan covering the period April 2013 to March 2015 to deliver improved bathing waters and reduce the risk of out of sewer flooding in Millisle. Subject to obtaining statutory approvals and completion of lands acquisition, NIW proposes to commence work in Spring 2014.

In the interim, NIW has increased its operation and maintenance activities within the existing network, and will continue to monitor the performance of the sewerage system in Millisle in order to reduce the risk of sewer blockages and out-of-sewer flooding.

Sewage and Waste Water Problems in Millisle

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the interim solutions being put in place to tackle sewage and waste water treatment problems in Millisle in advance of major capital works.

(AQW 22132/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the member to my answer to AQW 22131/11-15.

Bus Shelters in Rural Areas

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the budget allocation for the supply and maintenance of bus shelters in rural areas.

(AQW 22192/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not have a specific budget allocation for the supply of bus shelters in rural areas and therefore any requests for additional shelters would have to compete for funding against other road improvement schemes. Unfortunately in the current climate where there are considerable pressures on budgets, these requests would attract a low priority in comparison to other schemes, which address specific road safety concerns.

The Member may be aware that my Department currently has a contract with Adshel for the provision and maintenance of bus shelters across Northern Ireland which runs until the end of 2015. This contract, which was approved whilst Peter Robinson was Minister for Regional Development, has delivered over 1,350 new bus shelters since 2001, at no cost to my Department, however although it currently does not make provision for any new shelters, Adshel continues to fund the maintenance of all existing bus shelters during the remaining contract period.

In order to ensure the future provision of bus shelters, my Department is currently working towards the establishment of new contractual arrangements, which are to be in place for 2015. Any requests for bus shelters received in the intervening period that cannot be accommodated will be given priority when the new contract is in place.

The Member may also be aware that District Councils and Translink are also permitted to provide and fund additional bus shelters.

Removal of Illegal Road Signs

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many illegal road signs have been removed by Roads Service, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 22237/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of illegally erected road signs removed by my Department's Roads Service are shown in the table below:

Year	Number of illegally erected signs removed *
2010/11	1425
2011/12	982

* Signs were either attached to, or placed on Roads Service property.

Translink/Ni Transport Holding Company

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the full extent of the cash reserves held by Translink/Ni Transport Holding Company.

(AQW 22241/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The 2012/13 Annual Accounts are not yet finalized, and therefore I would refer you to the latest set of audited accounts that have been laid in the assembly library and are made available to the public. The Ni Transport Holding Company consolidated balance sheet on page 68 provides a detailed breakdown of the assets and liabilities of the group for the financial year ended 25 March 2012.

Translink/Ni Transport Holding Company

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he approved the size of the cash reserves held by Translink/Ni Transport Holding Company.

(AQW 22242/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Although I appoint the NITHC/Translink board, it is established as a commercial organization and has ultimate responsibility for production of their own accounts. The Directors are required to consider, as part of the review of going concern, cash resources available to pay debts falling due.

I can confirm that on an annual basis Translink seek approval from my Department for the main elements of their Corporate Plan including their projected financial position and share with us going concern deliberations. The corporate plan sets out the broad financial plans and key performance measures for a three year period. I refer you to page 57 of the 2011/12 Annual Report and Accounts which is the latest set of audited accounts available. This sets out the financial key performance indicators of turnover and pro forma profit before tax which Translink are measured against.

Translink/Ni Transport Holding Company

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the cash reserves held by Translink/Ni Transport Holding Company, whether he will be reviewing any further sums of public money going towards the company's operating costs.

(AQW 22243/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In relation to the corporate plan for 2013/14 and 2014/15 I have agreed the position with Translink that over the three year period from 2012/13 to 2014/15, the group will break even. This will require Translink to utilise their profit in 2012/13 to balance their projected losses in subsequent years. This approach is based on the assumption of a certain level of funding from the department including in year funding. The pro-active use of reserves is justifiable in current circumstances as it mitigates the need for further fare increases and subsidised services over this period.

Translink/Ni Transport Holding Company

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the investment portfolio which Translink/Ni Transport Holding Company is guaranteed by the profits it has made over the last five years.

(AQW 22244/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Officials have liaised with Translink who has confirmed that Translink's Group Property Asset Management Plan records the following investment properties:

- Abbey Trading Centre
- Railway Street, Ballymena (warehouse)
- Bow Street, Lisburn (retail unit)
- Donegall Quay (multi-storey car park)
- 58/60 Duncrue Street (warehouse/office)
- Great Northern (multi-storey car park)
- Hi Park (multi-storey car park/retail)

Translink has also confirmed that there has been no change to this portfolio in the past 5 years.

Under section 48 of the Transport Act NITHC has been established as a commercial organisation with statutory power to manage its assets and generate revenues as if it were a company engaged in a commercial enterprise. To that end the group is permitted to hold an investment portfolio and generate income from that portfolio. In light of the budgetary constraints under which the group is currently operating, any profits generated through their investment portfolio will assist in mitigating the need for fare increases and subsidising services. As was also noted in the response to AQW 22242/11-15 Translink are required to work to specific targets as agreed in the corporate planning process, these are detailed in page 57 of the group's Annual Report and Accounts for 2011/12.

Terrorist Commemorations: Newry and Armagh Constituency

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the occasions on which he has instructed his Department to remove terrorist commemorations on departmental controlled or associated property in the Newry and Armagh constituency.

(AQW 22287/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's policy, which has been approved by previous Ministers, is that it does not endorse, or support, the unauthorised use of departmental property for any purpose. The Department must also take into account the safety of those who are asked to undertake the removal and the risk of escalating the problem.

Given these circumstances, I, like my predecessors Mr Conor Murphy, Mr Gregory Campbell and Mr Peter Robinson, have not instructed my officials to remove terrorist commemorations on departmental controlled or associated property in the Newry and Armagh constituency, or in any other parliamentary constituency.

I should further advise that unauthorised memorials on the property of the Department's arms-length bodies are matters for the Boards of those organisations.

Traffic Wardens

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of traffic wardens working in each constituency.

(AQW 22292/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The information requested by the Member is not available in the form requested as my Department does not provide or manage parking enforcement on a constituency basis.

Coleraine Railway Station: Staff Shortages

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to address staff shortages at Coleraine Railway Station following the introduction of a new hourly timetable.

(AQW 22350/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise you that there are currently no vacancies/staff shortages at Coleraine Railway Station. Since the introduction of the hourly frequency train service and re-opening of the Londonderry line, we have identified the requirement for an additional three on-train conductors to be based in Coleraine; these posts are currently in the process of being filled.

Roads Maintenance

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on roads maintenance in each of the last two years, broken down by mile of road.

(AQW 22390/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's structural maintenance expenditure per mile of road, in the last two financial years for which information is available, was approximately £5,500 during 2010/11 and £7,500 during 2011/12. These figures exclude expenditure by the two Design Build Finance and Operate (DBFO) companies, who maintain the majority of the motorway and some of the trunk road network.

Structural maintenance is the collective term used for activities which maintain the integrity of the road and footway structure. These include resurfacing and reconstruction, surface dressing, patching and structural drainage.

Repainting of Road Surface Markings

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how often road surface markings are repainted; and (ii) the criteria for identifying when markings need repainted.

(AQW 22467/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service carries out regular inspections of all public roads and footways to ensure that essential response maintenance is identified and completed as necessary. The frequency of these inspections depends on the type of road and the volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Town centres and major traffic routes are inspected monthly, while all other roads and footways are inspected at either two or four monthly intervals. During these inspections, all defects, including defective signs and road markings, are noted.

Where the condition of road markings falls below the required standards, they are renewed as soon as possible. However, they are not replaced within a routine/specific time frame rather when they have faded by approximately 30–40%, according to their specific importance. For example, regulatory road markings, such as stop markings, no entry markings and markings on high traffic roads, that is, those with over 5,000 vehicles per day, are replaced within shorter timescales.

Derry to Coleraine Railway Line

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has considered taking any action to increase the regularity of the trains on the Derry to Coleraine railway line, during working days from 9am to 5pm to assist commuters.

(AQW 22549/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise you that it is not currently possible to increase the frequency of the services between Londonderry and Coleraine due to the single line nature of track between Coleraine-Castlerock and Londonderry. Only one train is permitted to operate at any time between Castlerock-Londonderry-Castlerock.

However on completion of Phase II of the Londonderry line upgrade (due 2015), which includes the installation of a passing loop, an hourly frequency can be achieved. This will then facilitate additional services to Londonderry from Coleraine at 09.43, 11.43, 13.43, 15.43 and 17.43.

There will also be trains departing from Londonderry to Coleraine at 08.33, 10.33, 12.33, 14.33 and 16.33 as part of the hourly service introduction.

Daily Rail Service between Coleraine and Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what rail service is in place between Derry and Coleraine on a daily basis during normal working hours.

(AQW 22556/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise you that Translink currently operate 18 services per day (Monday to Friday). The original proposal had been to operate 8 return trips (16 services) per day (Monday to Friday) however, following public consultation, customers and key stakeholders informed Translink they had a preference for the first train to arrive into Waterside Station before 09:00. In order to achieve this the number of trips have been increased to 9 return trips per day.

The number of services that can be provided are limited by the single track nature of this line. Further service increase will be possible on completion of Phase II of the Coleraine-Londonderry upgrade in 2015 which includes the addition of a new passing loop. This will allow for a train every hour from Londonderry to Coleraine.

Translink also operate 16 services on Saturdays and 12 services on Sundays between Londonderry and Coleraine.

Department for Social Development

Employment Support Allowance: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in North Down claimed Employment Support Allowance in each of the last five years.

(AQW 22127/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The number of claimants in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance in the North Down Local Government District is detailed in the table below. As Employment and Support Allowance was introduced in October 2008, figures for 2008 are not available.

Period ending	No of claimants
20 Nov 2009	410
3 Dec 2010	660
2 Nov 2011	930
30 Nov 2012	1,580

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.

Unfinished 1 and 2 Bed Apartments: Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many unfinished 1 and 2 bed apartments there are in the Coleraine Borough Council area.

(AQW 22137/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to social housing new build, the Housing Executive has advised that there are no uncompleted social housing schemes within the Coleraine Borough Council area. My Department does not hold any statistics in relation to unfinished private sector properties.

Community Foundation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development what is the current total of the Community Foundation.

(AQW 22162/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The fund, formally known as the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust Fund, is operated by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland who advise that it is worth £10m as at April 2013.

Housing Association Funding

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding his Department has given to each Housing Association in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 22203/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has provided the table attached which details the amount of funding that they paid to each Housing Association in each of the last three financial years. It should be noted that these figures refer to the amount of cash that was paid to each Housing Association, which differs from figures reported in the Department's and the Housing Executive's accounts which measure Resource Spend.

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Housing Association	2010/11			2011/12			2012/13		
	HAG	Adaptations	Total	HAG	Adaptations	Total	HAG	Adaptations	Total
	£								
Abbeyfield	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	806.66	806.66	0.00	0.00	0.00
Alpha	848,546.00	47,327.71	895,873.71	197,304.10	75,912.56	273,216.66	0.00	48,974.38	48,974.38
Apex	31,241,136.00	182,014.65	31,423,150.65	30,848,673.24	53,036.22	30,901,709.46	20,043,940.00	80.68	20,044,020.68
Ark	551,487.00	20,343.68	571,830.68	283,679.00	4,014.99	287,693.99	216,295.00	2,329.09	218,624.09
Ballynafeigh	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Belfast Community	1,556,891.00	82,936.86	1,639,827.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Clanmill	7,360,010.00	270,370.59	7,630,380.59	13,671,717.81	54,485.76	13,726,203.57	10,707,580.83	63,173.92	10,770,754.75
Connswater	3,799,176.00	46,668.15	3,845,844.15	3,939,554.00	13,010.41	3,952,564.41	2,782,645.00	49,408.21	2,832,053.21
Craigowen	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dungannon	42,331.00	0.00	42,331.00	46,516.00	4,622.70	51,138.70	0.00	0.00	0.00
Filor	0.00	63,971.65	63,971.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Flax	1,211,962.00	18,628.29	1,230,590.29	58,162.00	26,039.71	84,201.71	508,079.00	11,063.69	519,142.69
Fold	12,790,238.64	148,107.60	12,938,346.24	2,022,360.00	92,736.14	2,115,096.14	21,419,729.46	236,094.81	21,655,824.27
Gosford	0.00	181,847.56	181,847.56	0.00	16,473.00	16,473.00	0.00	3,197.70	3,197.70
Grove	637,876.00	9,826.89	647,702.89	414,568.00	17,525.88	432,093.88	33,741.00	4,824.53	38,565.53
Habinteg	922,154.83	149,235.56	1,071,390.39	207,112.00	64,364.66	271,476.66	919,631.00	235,750.61	1,155,381.61
Harmony Homes	386,669.00	6,121.39	392,790.39	50,531.00	0.00	50,531.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hearth	89,656.69	0.00	89,656.69	261,902.00	2,762.22	264,664.22	246,402.00	2,698.95	249,100.95

Housing Association	2010/11			2011/12			2012/13		
	HAG	Adaptations	Total	HAG	Adaptations	Total	HAG	Adaptations	Total
	£								
Helm	14,648,077.45	416,857.19	15,064,934.64	10,755,965.52	206,294.87	10,962,260.39	2,063,505.00	12,161.47	2,075,666.47
Newington	889,616.00	52,109.49	941,725.49	2,447,275.00	8,611.36	2,455,886.36	1,794,888.00	13,901.81	1,808,789.81
Oaklee	15,107,497.67	315,651.68	15,423,149.35	11,067,202.00	170,544.48	11,237,746.48	7,542,112.00	72,737.63	7,614,849.63
Open Door	311,414.00	3,265.62	314,679.62	311,414.00	15,297.64	326,711.64	266,926.00	4,670.14	271,596.14
Rural	1,027,523.00	34,974.95	1,062,497.95	32,732.00	0.00	32,732.00	123,288.00	26,097.03	149,385.03
SHAC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
South Ulster	4,246,458.00	77,390.01	4,323,848.01	2,326,111.00	13,274.54	2,339,385.54	1,214,524.00	11,782.48	1,226,306.48
St. Matthews	166,682.00	49,593.97	216,275.97	0.00	6,661.48	6,661.48	0.00	6,552.27	6,552.27
Triangle	2,850,545.00	0.00	2,850,545.00	1,254,811.00	32,801.07	1,287,612.07	2,672,040.00	21,541.88	2,693,581.88
Trinity	2,976,412.38	137,260.27	3,113,672.65	1,331,628.26	130,778.77	1,462,407.03	1,958,368.00	107,513.06	2,065,881.06
Ulidia	8,909,301.73	41,359.92	8,950,661.65	5,715,184.86	8,858.94	5,724,043.80	1,133,832.00	9,948.32	1,143,780.32
Wesley	522,732.00	15,814.57	538,546.57	0.00	13,111.68	13,111.68	196,024.00	10,855.11	206,879.11
Total	113,094,393.39	2,371,678.25	115,466,071.64	87,244,402.79	1,032,025.74	88,276,428.53	75,843,550.29	955,357.77	76,798,908.06

Employment Support Allowance

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development what is the average cost of an Employment Support Allowance (i) assessment; and (ii) appeal.

(AQW 22204/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am unable to provide an average cost of administering the Work Capability Assessment process (which determines entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance) and appeal process within the Employment and Support Allowance Centre as these are integral but not specific activities within the entire claims process.

This process involves medical assessment provided by an independent provider and the associated charges are designated commercially sensitive information, in accordance with the provisions of the contract.

Departmental Underspend

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his Department's underspend for the 2012-13 financial year; and for a breakdown of the areas from which these monies came.

(AQW 22210/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department is currently compiling its 2012-13 provisional outturn figures for submission to the Department of Finance & Personnel by the middle of May. Final expenditure figures will be published in the Annual Report & Accounts and laid before the Assembly in July.

Universal Credit Pilot Trials in Britain

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the delays put on the universal credit pilot trials in Britain, whether he is seeking any flexibilities to ensure that a flawed system is not introduced locally.

(AQW 22212/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I announced, in my Assembly statement of 22 October 2012, that following successful negotiations with Lord Freud I had secured payment flexibilities for Northern Ireland and that Universal Credit would not launch in Northern Ireland until April 2014. This approach reflects the needs of Northern Ireland people whilst also enabling the IT systems and processes to be rigorously tested by the Department of Work & Pensions before Universal Credit goes live in Northern Ireland.

Universal Credit commenced in Great Britain at the end of April 2013, and my officials are currently engaged with the Department of Work & Pensions to ensure that Northern Ireland learns from the experiences in Great Britain and that this learning is reflected my plans for the launch of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland in April 2014.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Warm Homes Scheme.

(AQW 22213/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Warm Homes Scheme contracts with the two Scheme Managers have been extended by another year to June 2014. In the financial year to the end of March 2013 the Warm Homes budget spend was just over £16 million. This delivered heating and insulation measures to 9,904 households.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development what actions he has taken in the last 12 months to secure flexibility and protection from the expectant changes in the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 22214/11-15)

Mr McCausland: During the past 12 months I have been working hard to achieve flexibility and protection from the expectant changes in the Welfare Reform Bill for the people of Northern Ireland.

I have recognised the challenges brought about by the payment arrangement proposals under Universal Credit and, following detailed discussions with Lord Freud, I announced in my Assembly statement of 22 October 2012 that I had secured flexible payment arrangements to protect the most vulnerable claimants.

My officials continue to work with Department for Work and Pensions colleagues to ensure circumstances particular to Northern Ireland claimants are reflected in the design of the Personal Independence Payment. In reassessment cases, if a claimant has not replied to the invitation letter, a home visit will be made. This does not happen in Great Britain.

In terms of Housing, I am keen to ensure appropriate housing services are put in place for households impacted by the Coalition Government's Welfare Reforms, that is why I asked the Housing Executive and housing association movement to bring forward their action plans that will ensure a range of support measures are put in place to mitigate and support those affected.

I have consulted upon and am currently in the final stages of developing a new system of discretionary support which is intended to extend the scope of any such systems and which will include a system of loans and grants.

I continue to work with Executive colleagues and Department for Work and Pensions Ministers to ensure that in implementing Welfare Reform in Northern Ireland we take account of local circumstances and take action where possible to protect those most in need.

Parents with Caring Responsibilities: Child Maintenance

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, following the recent Child Maintenance Population Report, what steps are being taken to ensure that more parents with caring responsibilities are aware that they will not lose child maintenance should they choose to apply for and receive other benefits.

(AQW 22266/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are some key issues which Child Maintenance Service (CMS) has identified from the report and already begun to take action on. The report identified that the majority of parents interviewed did not know that their benefit income will not be affected by the receipt of child maintenance. It is important to address this gap in knowledge, as even small amounts of child maintenance could make a difference to the number of children in poverty.

We have taken steps to ensure that all customers who contact the Child Maintenance Choices Service are advised if they are on benefits, that their benefit income will not be affected by the receipt of Child Maintenance.

In addition, CMS is working with colleagues in the Social Security Agency to identify and contact lone parents, on benefit, to advise them that any benefits they receive or apply for will not be affected by the receipt of Child Maintenance.

Through our stakeholder engagement programme, we will communicate this message to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland and by liaising with the Northern Ireland Advice Consortium on the provision of information to their customers who have a child maintenance interest.

Funding for Town Improvements

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Social Development what funding his Department provides for town improvements.

(AQW 22272/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department provides funding for a range of regeneration initiatives to improve town and city centres which include: Urban Development Grants; Environmental Improvement / Public

Realm / Revitalisation schemes and Comprehensive Development schemes. In recent years this has averaged out at £18m per annum.

My Department has also been progressing Business Improvement District legislation for Northern Ireland, which provides a statutory basis for businesses to self fund improvements in their town centres through the collection of a levy within a defined area.

Exclusion from Schemes: Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle Council Areas

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of properties in the (i) Ballymena; (ii) Ballymoney; and (iii) Moyle Council areas that have not been included in schemes because the existing or previous tenant did not give their consent.

(AQW 22275/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised me that over the last three years (2010/11 to 2012/13) the number of properties in Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle Council areas which were originally included in planned schemes but were subsequently taken out of those schemes because of tenants' refusals is as follows: -

- Ballymena Council Area – 252 properties
(148 for heating schemes; 81 for kitchen schemes; 23 for smoke alarms)
- Ballymoney Council Area – 71 properties
(39 for heating schemes; 1 for kitchen scheme ; 3 for External Cyclical Maintenance; 28 for smoke alarms)
- Moyle Council Area – 67 properties
(31 for heating schemes; 23 kitchen schemes; 11 for smoke alarms; 2 for Multi Element Improvement scheme.)

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Housing Executive Properties, North Down: Cavity Walls

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) number; and (ii) location of the Housing Executive properties in North Down that do not have cavity walls.

(AQW 22296/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely record data by Parliamentary Constituency. The Housing Executive has the following properties within its Bangor District Office area that do not have cavity walls: -

- 10 aluminium bungalows at Bloomfield Place (on main Bloomfield Road)
- 207 no fines dwellings in Loughview, Holywood
- 129 no fines dwellings in Whitehill Estate, Bangor.

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Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development on which date will the reforms to the IT system be complete in order to be compatible with the changes flowing from the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 22377/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Welfare Reform Bill (NI) 2012 has not yet completed its Assembly Consideration Stage at this time and therefore the changes flowing from this have not yet been finalised. Consequently the reforms to the various IT systems which are used to pay social security benefits in Northern Ireland and the dates on which these will be complete are not yet known.

If the Welfare Reform Bill becomes law it is anticipated that the majority of changes will be implemented between Autumn 2013 and Spring 2014 and the reforms to the supporting IT systems will need to be completed by this time. My officials are continuing to work closely with Department for Work and Pensions officials to ensure the needs of Northern Ireland are reflected in any changes to the IT systems.

Bangor Town Centre Regeneration: Theatre

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions he has had with the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure on the establishment of a theatre in Bangor as part of the town centre regeneration.

(AQW 22446/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department recently announced that DSD has stepped in to take forward the Queen's Parade development scheme as set out in the Bangor Town Centre Masterplan. This scheme is at a very early stage of development it is too early to enter into discussions with The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. Discussions with interested stakeholders on the development plans will take place at the appropriate time.

Installation of Double Glazing

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what support his Department offers to homeowners who wish to install double glazing.

(AQW 22453/11-15)

Mr McCausland: If the lack of double glazing in an owner occupied property represents an imminent or significant risk to the health of the occupier, financial assistance may be available through a home repairs assistance grant or a renovation grant administered by the Housing Executive. These grants however, are awarded on a discretionary basis, are subject to limited funding, and are only available in exceptional circumstances under specific criteria.

My Department is at present carrying out a review of the support for repair and improvement in the private housing sector. The responses from the public consultation are currently being considered and a series of proposals will be published when this consideration concludes.

Community and Business Opportunity Plan

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail any discussions he has held with developers on the establishment of a Community and Business Opportunity Plan for the proposed Royal Exchange development.

(AQW 22488/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have not held any discussions with the developers of the Royal Exchange Scheme regarding the establishment of a Community and Business Opportunity Plan.

A Community and Business Opportunity Plan for Royal Exchange will be put in place at the appropriate time, which would be around 2 years prior to the start of construction. There is presently no date for the commencement of construction.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Libel Action of O'Loan-v-Given and UTV

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission whether any part of the damages and costs awarded in the recent libel action of O'Loan-v-Given and UTV will be paid by its insurers, and, if so, to specify the amount and the basis upon which the contribution will be made.

(AQW 22015/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission's Combined Employer's and Public Liability insurance policy contains cover in respect of defamation. The recent action of O'Loan v Givan and UTV Media was settled prior to hearing. The action was indemnified under the provisions of the policy. The Assembly Commission is advised that the parties have agreed that the only information to be made public was the statement read in court. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to specify the amount of the settlement to be met by the Commission's insurers.

Defamation Proceedings

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission whether its insurers have met claims for damages and costs arising out of defamation proceedings against MLAs to date; and to specify each occasion.

(AQW 22016/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): At present, no claims for damages or costs arising out of defamation proceedings have been met by the Assembly Commission's insurers. You will be aware of the recent case of O'Loan v Givan and UTV Media. A settlement was made in this case under the personal injury section of the Commission's combined Employer's and Public Liability insurance policy. The final settlement figure (to include costs) has still to be advised by the Commission's insurers.

Legal Proceedings Underwritten by Insurance

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission to provide a full list of the type of legal proceedings which are underwritten by insurance held by the Commission on behalf of MLAs, and to outline whether it applies equally to the initiation and defence of proceedings and what conditions or restrictions apply.

(AQW 22021/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission retains insurance cover against a variety of risks. The main elements of this cover relate to Employer's and Public Liability. The Commission also holds travel insurance (for example, for Committee visits). In addition to employees of the Assembly Commission, the policy in respect of Employer's Liability also covers Members. It also provides cover to Members in their role as employers. Similarly, the Public Liability policy provides cover for Members' constituency office(s).

In respect of Employer's and Public Liability, the cover is provided by way of a relatively standard commercial policy. Therefore, a number of aspects of cover are included in the policy document even though the Assembly is not a commercial entity and is unlikely to utilise the full range of cover offered by the policy. The policy covers the following main risks which represent the types of legal proceedings that could be envisaged under the policy:

- (a) Legal liability for bodily injury to an employee arising from the employee's employment including liability to an employee transferred under a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) arrangement;
- (b) Legal costs arising from a);
- (c) Payment of damages for unsatisfied court judgements – where a court in EU has awarded damages to an employee for bodily injury arising from the employee's employment and the court-awarded damages remain unpaid for six months;
- (d) Compensation for an employee's court attendance at the request of the insurer (related to potential Employer's liability);
- (e) Compensation for damages and legal costs arising from a claim by an employee under the Data Protection Act 1998;
- (f) Legal liability for personal injury to any person who is not an employee;
- (g) Legal liability for property damage;
- (h) Legal costs arising from f) and g);

- (i) Compensation for an employee's court attendance at the request of the insurer (related to potential Public liability);
- (j) Legal liability under the Defective Premises (Northern Ireland) Order 1975;
- (k) Contingent motor cover in respect of personal injury or property damage arising from the use of a motor vehicle (NB – this is NOT motor insurance);

The term bodily injury is defined in the policy to include, inter alia, death, disease or illness whereas personal injury is defined to include bodily injury and a range of injuries that can be broadly described as injury to freedom (for example, false arrest or false imprisonment) or injury to reputation (for example, libel or slander).

The types of proceeding noted above relate to the Employer's and Public liabilities aspects of the policy. In addition, the standard wording of the policy covers matters such as Product Recall, Crisis Containment and Clean-Up Costs that are un-related to the Assembly's activities.

It is highly unlikely that the Employer's or Public liability element of the policy would be used to initiate proceedings as these are defensive elements of the policy that are intended to mitigate the Commission's risks (legal or otherwise). To clarify, the personal injury provisions do not include cover to initiate proceedings in respect of "... injurious falsehood, libel, slander, defamation of character...".

In common with most insurance products, the policy contains General Conditions and Provisions relating to matters such as disclosure of information, adopting reasonable precautions, limits of liability, etc. In addition, there are additional conditions and provisions relating to specific sections of the policy.

Libel, Slander and Defamation Insurance

Mr Lunn asked the Assembly Commission whether insurance cover for MLAs in respect of Libel, Slander and Defamation is subject to an excess for each claim.

(AQW 22320/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Cover in respect of Libel, Slander and Defamation is provided under the Combined Employer's and Public Liability Insurance policy. Each element of this policy is considered by the insurers prior to renewal to consider limits of indemnity and appropriate excesses, depending on a number of factors including client's claims history. This element of the policy has been assigned an excess of £25,000 for 2013/14.

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Victims and Survivors Service

WA 355

WA 355



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