

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 17 May 2013

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Contents

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister WA 1

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development WA 5

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure WA 11

Department of Education WA 12

Department for Employment and Learning..... WA 33

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment WA 39

Department of the Environment..... WA 50

Department of Finance and Personnel WA 59

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety..... WA 67

Department of Justice WA 91

Department for Regional Development..... WA 103

Department for Social Development WA 123

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 17 May 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Maze Development: Road Infrastructure Proposals

Mr Craig asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the road infrastructure proposals for the Maze development.

(AQO 3710/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The regeneration of Maze/Long Kesh site is one of the commitments identified under the Executive's Programme for Government for 2011-15. A key objective under that commitment is for site infrastructure development work to commence in 2013-14.

We established the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation last September to regenerate the site and meet this commitment.

The recent adjournment debate on the road infrastructure of the M1 link to the site highlighted the considerable progress the Development Corporation has made since its inception, including the provision of essential internal infrastructure and an additional entrance in time for the first RUAS Agricultural Show to be held on the site in May.

In addition, the Corporation is commencing initial survey work and feasibility studies for inclusion in their detailed proposals for improving infrastructure linkages to the site, including a link to the M1. These wider road developments are seen as key to the overall delivery of regeneration of the site and to attract private sector investment.

Indeed, £21 million has been allocated by OFMDFM in the current CSR period for the regeneration of the site which includes essential infrastructure.

However, no decisions have been taken regarding the preferred options for linkages to the M1, nor will decisions be made without engagement with stakeholders and the local community.

Ministry of Defence: Decontamination and Maintenance Costs of Former Security Sites

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much the Ministry of Defence has contributed to decontamination and maintenance costs for former security sites, broken down by site.

(AQW 21742/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ministry of Defence has not contributed to decontamination and maintenance costs of the former security sites gifted to the Executive and held by our Department.

Ministry of Defence: Decontamination and Maintenance Costs of Former Security Sites

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had with (i) Central Procurement Directorate; and (ii) the Ministry of Defence on the level of the contributions made by the Ministry of Defence for the decontamination and maintenance costs of each former security sites. **(AQW 21743/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There were a number of meetings with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and with Central Procurement Directorate on the issue of the gifting of sites and decontamination.

The MOD and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury confirmed that as the sites were being gifted it was not MOD policy to underwrite decontamination costs at its former military sites before disposal. The MOD confirmed its policy to sell each site 'as seen' and they provided us with all MOD land quality assessments previously undertaken.

At the time of transfer, officials worked with the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) on the review of the land quality assessments provided by the MOD and the process to determine accurate contamination levels at the gifted sites. Officials also sought advice from CPD on maintenance costs for these sites.

Our officials continue to work closely with CPD on these important issues to ensure sites are safe and maintenance costs are kept to a minimum.

Shackleton Army Barracks at Ballykelly

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) what work has taken place on the decontamination of the former Shackleton army barracks at Ballykelly; (ii) what meetings have taken place involving MLAs from the local constituency; and (iii) what plans are in place for developing the site as a major centre of industry, business and commerce. **(AQW 21750/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

- (i) No decontamination has taken place on the former Shackleton Army Barracks at Ballykelly. The need for remedial action will depend on the future potential uses of the site.
- (ii) Meetings have taken place with George Robinson MLA, as part of the OFMDFM Committee visit to the site and regarding local issues. Meetings have also been held with council and community representatives on local issues including the possibility of using part of the site for community purposes.
- (iii) There are no development plans for Shackleton Barracks at present as the intention for the gifting of the site under the Hillsborough Castle agreement was not for development purposes. OFMDFM officials are currently awaiting information from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) on what parts of the site it will require for its headquarters and therefore what parts will still be available in the future for other purposes. In the meantime, the site is being used for one-off events and for agriculture, and OFMDFM will continue to evaluate potential interest in uses for the site.

Northern Ireland Memorial Fund Education and Training Grants

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the funding available for the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund Education and Training grants. **(AQW 22326/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund (NIMF) closed for applications on 31 March 2013.

From 1 April 2013, the funding for Education and Training Grants has been incorporated into the new Health and Wellbeing Programme administered by the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS). Awards will be based on an individual's need as determined by an assessor from the Victims and Survivors Service.

During 2012-2013, the NIMF assisted 1,113 people with Education and Training grants amounting to a total of £430,069.

A further 282 claims for Education and Training grants were received late in the financial year subsequent to eligible recipients being informed that the NIMF was closing. These are currently being processed.

Disability Strategy: Implementation Budget

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether there will be an implementation budget for the disability strategy.

(AQW 22448/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is expected that departments will look carefully at their own resources to target improvements to the delivery of outcomes for people with disabilities as part of delivering the strategic priorities in the disability strategy. Additionally, we will consider bids for further resources, from the Delivering Social Change fund, to enhance the capacity of departments to deliver the seven work streams identified within the strategy.

Planning Appeals Commission: Appeals and Article 31 Hearings

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many (i) appeals; and (ii) Article 31 hearings the Planning Appeals Commission heard in each of the last five years; and on how many occasions was a person from outside the Commission appointed to preside over the proceedings.

(AQW 22646/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its status, we have asked its Chief Commissioner to provide a response directly to you.

Social Investment Fund: Successful Projects

Mrs Hale asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on when the funding allocation for the successful projects under the Social Investment Fund will be made.

(AQO 3952/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The final plans for all nine zones were received on 28 February and are now being subject to a rigorous appraisal process. This process is assessing the individual projects within the plans against set criteria to ensure the most robust projects are recommended, to maximise impact on the ground.

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

Historical Child Abuse Inquiry

Ms McCorley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of the ongoing reports of historical child abuse, whether they will seek advice from the Attorney General about initiating an inquiry to address the issue.

(AQO 3945/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would encourage anyone who was abused as a child in a residential institution here between 1922 and 1995 to contact the Inquiry, where they can talk in

private about their experiences to two members of the Inquiry's Acknowledgement Forum. Contact details for the Inquiry are available on its website.

The recent reports regarding the Magdalene Laundry institutions in the Republic of Ireland have raised the question of how those who were resident in similar institutions here may address concerns. Anyone who experienced abuse as a child within such institutions will be covered by the remit of the current Inquiry. However, we are conscious that there may be a group that would not be covered as they were over the age of 18 during their residency. We have appointed a senior civil servant to draw up a scoping report on the Magdalene Laundry type institutions here to see what further action could be taken.

'Economy and Jobs Initiative' Document

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the commitment in the 'Economy and Jobs Initiative' document, which states that "the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister will bring forward proposals to boost economic activity through the retro-fitting of energy efficiency measures into homes".

(AQO 3948/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The retrofitting of energy efficiency measures into homes is an important element of the wider Economy and Jobs Initiative; it will not only assist in boosting the economy – which is our number one priority – but it will simultaneously contribute to the delivery of several other Programme for Government commitments. These relate to tackling disadvantage, improving wellbeing, reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions and securing energy supply.

The Department has engaged the Strategic Investment Board's Delivering Social Change Unit to work with officials, stakeholders and recognised industry experts to bring forward proposals that both complement and supplement existing fuel poverty and energy efficiency initiatives.

We will be making further comment on this issue in the next short while.

Maze/Long Kesh Regeneration Site

Mr Milne asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Maze/Long Kesh Regeneration Site following their visit on 24 April 2013.

(AQO 3949/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Developing the Maze/Long Kesh site is a commitment in the Programme for Government and the launch on 24 April 2013 of the Development Corporation's Vision, for the regeneration of the whole site, is an important milestone towards meeting this goal.

Significant progress has been made in the seven months since the Corporation has been operational, with the relocation of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) and the announcement that planning approval has been granted for the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre (PbCRC).

These two key projects, together with the provision of essential infrastructure works, will facilitate the Development Corporation in attracting further private investment, with a target of £100 million to be raised by 2016.

These developments, along with the £21 million investment by the Executive, will help create up to an estimated 5,000 permanent jobs and showcase to the international community our commitment to building a brighter, better and shared future society.

Ilex: Chairperson, Board Members and Chief Executive Officer

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the recruitment of a Chairperson, Board Members and Chief Executive Officer for Ilex.

(AQO 3950/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A Public Appointment competition is ongoing to secure a new Chair and additional Board members. We hope to make an announcement on these positions in the near future.

Ilex recently ran a public recruitment competition to appoint a Chief Executive. This competition did not result in any suitable candidates. Ilex is pursuing the Interchange programme to fill the vacancy and the competition is ongoing. Interim arrangements are in place and remain so until the Chair and Chief Executive positions are filled.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Livestock Injuries

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance her Department offers rural dwellers to prevent livestock from getting injured on their land.

(AQW 21970/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): My Department offers no financial assistance to rural dwellers to prevent injury to livestock on their land.

However, where a landowner has a prehistoric or other historic monument on his land the Built Heritage Directorate of the NI Environment Agency (NIEA) will work to protect such sites. This is done either by scheduling under Article 3 of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 or by policy which is agreed between the NIEA and DARD. It is recognised by the NIEA that, from time to time, certain historic monuments may pose a risk to the public and livestock. In these instances, the NIEA will work with people who own, or use, such sites to achieve both the protection of life and property, and also to secure the long-term conservation of the monument.

If a site is scheduled under the above Order, the owner will be contacted by a Field Monument Warden from time to time to discuss its condition. If the site requires remedial action, for instance, repair of an earthwork or fencing to restrict grazing or access by livestock, an owner may be offered a management agreement under Article 19 of the above Order. This is offered up to the value of any necessary expenditure or loss of land use for a particular period, but it is only offered in respect of activity that is permitted at a site. Fencing of a site to mitigate farm animal trampling or the hand-clearance of invasive scrub are typical situations for management agreements. If a site is not scheduled an owner who has a concern about the condition of a monument can contact the NIEA: Built Heritage directly for advice as there is no regular inspection of monuments which are not statutorily protected.

The NIEA also responds to requests from my Department about the protection of prehistoric and other sites on land which is subject to agreement under an agri-environment scheme. Farmers in these schemes receive funding to protect and maintain historic sites on their land. In such cases the NIEA inspects those sites and makes recommendations to DARD about their treatment which are passed to the landowner for action. Farmers implement management practices which may reduce the risks to grazing livestock, for example, a farmer receiving funding must not use a historic monument as a supplementary feeding site or storage area for round bale silage or hay. As the NIEA is concerned to protect all monuments from harm, an inspection of any site, whether scheduled or not, can be carried out on request and advice and direction are provided by the Archaeological Inspectorate free of charge.

Single Farm Payment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she plans to prioritise specific areas or farmers affected by the recent snow crisis for inspection to enable payment of their Single Farm Payment as early as possible.

(AQW 22140/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The final selection of farm businesses identified for Single Farm Payment (SFP) inspections will not be known until after 10 June 2013, which is the final date for receipt of SFP

applications or amendments to the Single Application Form. Once we have identified the businesses selected for inspection, my Department will give consideration to the way in which specific areas or farmers, affected by the recent adverse weather conditions, might have their inspections prioritised for the 2013 claim year.

Single Farm Payments and Agri-Environment Scheme Funding

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given the potential risk of double funding by the ongoing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, how many local farmers are in receipt of both Single Farm Payments and Agri-Environment Scheme funding.

(AQW 22236/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There were 37,585 applicants for 2012 Single Farm Payment (SFP) of which 11,360 also receive funding under agri-environment schemes.

Young Farmer Incentive Schemes

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what incentive schemes are in place for young farmers and people considering taking up farming; and what schemes are planned aimed at reducing the average age of farmers.

(AQW 22245/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: You will be aware that DARD, through CAFRE, provides programmes of Further and Higher education to equip young people for entry into farming. Currently, some 743 people are enrolled on CAFRE's Higher and Further education programmes. The College is also piloting a programme of training to support young farmers in the early stages of their farming career.

Looking to the future, the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy offers the opportunity to secure a flexible policy framework which we can tailor best to meet the balance of local needs, including those of young farmers. That is something I am working hard to achieve. The design of our next 2014-20 Rural Development Programme also offers the opportunity to create a framework to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural industry, and within that, to consider whether any specific provision is required for young farmers. This design is something on which my Department is already engaging with stakeholders and it will be the subject of public consultation later this year.

The attractiveness of the agricultural industry to younger people as a place to forge a long-term career will be driven to a significant degree by its inherent profitability and long term prospects. These long term prospects are generally regarded as being much more positive now than they were a number of years ago, and that is to be welcomed. I hope that the forthcoming publication of the report from the industry led Agri-Food Strategy Board will help chart a way forward to grasp these opportunities and thus underpin the attractiveness of the industry to young people.

Given the nature and structure of our farming industry, its development pathway and the traditional transfer of farms between generations, any significant reduction in the average age of farmers would require a marked acceleration of older farmers leaving the industry. I am not planning any schemes aimed at creating this acceleration. Moreover, I believe that our focus needs to be on improving the profitability and sustainability of the industry, which will open a pathway to growth, rather than focusing narrowly on reducing the average age of farmers.

Regenerating Villages and Small Towns in West Tyrone

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her Department's policies that are aimed at regenerating villages and small towns in West Tyrone.

(AQW 22263/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under the Rural Development Programme 2007-13, my department has a specific measure relating to Village Renewal aimed at enabling and encouraging 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. This measure is being delivered by 7 Joint Council Committees (JCC) working with a Local Action Group (LAG) in each area. Under the Village Renewal measure Assisting Rural Communities in the North West (ARC NW) set aside a budget of £2.5m to support 12 villages across the cluster area (Omagh, Strabane, Derry and Limavady councils).

Four villages in West Tyrone (Carrickmore, Fintona, Gortin in Omagh District Council area and Plumbridge in Strabane District Council area) have been successful in receiving funding support following an open call for applications. Applications from a further two villages in Strabane District Council area are under consideration.

The village renewal measure is open to all rural groups representing villages in the north, regardless of size and capacity.

Agri-Food Branch Inspectors: Enforcement Training

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to enforcement training for Agri-Food Branch Inspectors, to detail whether the training company approached her Department with their programme or a tender process followed.

(AQW 22316/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The enforcement training provided by Veterinary Service for Agri-food Inspection Branch is delivered by staff of Veterinary Service Enforcement Branch in conjunction with two external providers. The external providers were identified by Veterinary Service as having the specific skills and expertise to effectively deliver the bespoke training necessary for inspectors. Procurement policy was followed and a value for money exercise conducted which demonstrated clear benefit from using the current arrangement.

Scrapies in Sheep Herds

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the instances of Scrapies in sheep herds in the last three years.

(AQW 22355/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since 2010 there have been 2 cases of Scrapie in the north of Ireland.

The first was a case of atypical Scrapie found in a human consumption sheep, sampled at a slaughterhouse, in November 2011.

The second was a case of atypical Scrapie found in a fallen sheep, sampled at a rendering establishment, in February 2012.

Farmers' Markets: Upper Bann constituency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for a breakdown of the financial support her Department has allocated for the provision of farmers' markets in the Upper Bann constituency.

(AQW 22389/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: None. Opportunities for support for Farmers' Markets may be available under Axis 3 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013. This Axis is delivered in the Upper Bann constituency area by Down Rural Area Partnership (DRAP) in Banbridge District Council area and by Southern Organisation for Action in rural areas (SOAR) in the Craigavon District Council area. Applications are sought through open calls and are competitively assessed in line with the objectives and priorities set within the local rural development strategy.

DRAP may be contacted via Marguerite Osborne in Ards Business Centre telephone number 028 91820748 or alternatively by email: info@downruralareapartnership.com. SOAR may be contacted via Elaine Cullen in Craigavon civic Centre telephone number 028 38312573 or alternatively by email craigavon@soarni.org

Land Parcel Identification System: Farm Maps

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what changes she has made to the manual quality assurance check process for Land Parcel Identification System farm maps following the distribution of incorrect maps to farmers.

(AQW 22415/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Additional steps have been applied to the manual checking process to ensure that it is quickly identified if fields are missing from maps. This includes checking the map against previous Single Applications and against previous maps.

Land Parcel Identification System: Farm Maps

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the process by which Land Parcel Identification System farm maps are quality checked prior to dispatch; (ii) the number of staff involved in this process in each of the last twelve months; and (iii) whether any disciplinary procedures were instigated following the distribution of incorrect farm maps.

(AQW 22416/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The quality checks involved in the production and distribution of the new maps are as follows:
- a Land & Property Service (LPS) staff quality assure the mapping data (field boundaries and ineligible areas) which has been captured.
 - b The DARD technical quality assurance staff then check the data to satisfy themselves that it is compliant with the DARD protocols.
 - c The mapping data is then analysed by validation software to identify any anomalies within the data, which, if found, are corrected before the data is provided to DARD.
 - d Before loading the data provided by LPS, DARD performs a further software analysis of the data and if issues arise the data is returned to LPS for correction.
 - e When the data has been successfully loaded DARD produces maps from its IT system. A sample of these maps is reviewed by a team before being issued to the print contractor. Any issues identified are addressed.
- (ii) The number of staff involved in the quality check process in each of the last twelve months is as follows:

Technical Data Quality Assurance in DARD

Average of 1.5 Agricultural Inspector Grade II staff plus 1 Agriculture Inspector Grade III staff for each month

Agricultural Group 4 staff as detailed in the table below

May12	Jun12	Jul12	Aug12	Sep12	Oct12	Nov12	Dec12	Jan13	Feb13	Mar13	Apr13
18.4	17.4	17.4	14	13	13	13	13	13	18	18	18

Map Quality Checks

Map production did not take place throughout the year, so the information below covers testing and map checking for appropriate months. This was not a full-time role during these months, but was carried out as necessary when maps were produced.

May12 - Aug 12	Sep12	Oct12	Nov12	Dec12	Jan13	Feb13	Mar13	Apr13
0	2	2	2.5	3	3	2	16	5

- (iii) No disciplinary action has been taken in respect of the maps which were affected by missing fields. This problem was caused by a technical fault which caused a number of fields in the database to lose their connection to businesses which declared them for area-based schemes purposes. This problem was quickly fixed and affected farmers provided with additional time to examine their maps. It would be wrong to blame staff for an error of this kind, particularly when staff worked extremely hard to resolve the problem quickly.

Pollarding and Felling of Trees

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to monitor the pollarding and felling of trees to remain within her Departments Single Farm Payments Guidelines.

(AQW 22421/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not formally monitor the pollarding and felling of trees. However, during On-The-Spot Checks for Single Farm Payment, DARD inspectors record breaches of Cross-Compliance, such as tree cutting inside the closed period of 1 March to 31 August.

Destruction of Native Trees

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 20538/11-15, whether the cross-compliance requirements are EU or local,

(AQW 22422/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The 2 elements of Cross-Compliance are laid down by the European Commission.

The first of these, the Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs), require applicants for direct agricultural support to comply with specific articles contained within 18 European regulatory requirements covering the environment, food safety, animal and plant health and animal welfare.

The second element, that land is maintained in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC), were developed from the framework set out by the European Commission and were subject to a local consultation exercise.

Applications for Hardship Payments

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many applications for hardship payments her Department has received from farmers, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 22438/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Approximately 1,300 farmers have had fallen stock collected and disposed of under the first phase of the hardship funding. However farmers will only be able to apply for hardship payments when the second phase of the funding opens. I hope to release details of the hardship scheme and how to apply as soon as possible.

The hardship scheme, which will help to mitigate the costs of the livestock losses that have been sustained by farmers arising from the snow storm will be under the EU de minimis rules and capped at a maximum of 7,500 euro per farmer. This will include the collection and disposal costs of the fallen animals.

The scheme is being framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of these losses.

Agri-Food Branch Inspectors: Enforcement Training

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the enforcement training of Agri-Food Branch Inspectors, to outline the additional costs incurred by the specialist speaker, including travel, and whether this are included in the contract costs provided by the training company or separately met by her Department.

(AQW 22494/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There have been two enforcement courses run for Agri-food Inspection Branch to date. The courses ran from 7 to 15 January and 21 to 29 January 2013. The total cost for the provision of the courses amounted to £2,318 and £2,607 respectively excluding VAT. The additional costs over and above lecture fees are included in these amounts and were itemised on the invoices received from the two specialist speakers. Additional costs included all associated travel, accommodation and subsistence and amounted to £568 and £857 for the first and second courses respectively.

Neonicotinoids

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has had any communication with garden centre retailers who have voluntarily withdrawn plant products that contain neonicotinoids.

(AQW 22496/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: 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, through outlets such as garden centres, will also be prohibited.

I have had no communication with garden centre retailers who have already voluntarily withdrawn plant products that contain neonicotinoids.

Use of Imidacloprid, Clothianidin and Tmx

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has had discussions with departmental officials regarding the EU moratorium on the use of imidacloprid, clothianidin and tmx on crops that attract bees.

(AQW 22501/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My officials have updated me regularly on the European Commission's proposals to restrict the use of these three neonicotinoid insecticides.

Neonicotinoid Pesticides

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has planned any meetings with beekeepers in light of the EU Commission proposals to suspend the use of certain types of neonicotinoid pesticides.

(AQW 22503/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Strategy for the Sustainability of the honey bee, which was published in February 2011, provides a plan of action aimed at sustaining the health of honey bees and beekeeping in the north of Ireland for the next decade.

Beekeepers and Departmental officials are currently working in partnership to deliver the aims and outcomes of the Strategy. Delivery is being phased and outcomes and priorities reviewed at regular intervals by the Strategy's Implementation Group.

It is very clear that bees and pollinators face many problems unrelated to neonicotinoid pesticides. I have not planned any meetings with beekeepers in light of the EU Commission proposals to suspend the use of certain types of neonicotinoid pesticides.

Neonicotinoid Pesticides

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the EU proposals to suspend the sale of certain types of neonicotinoid pesticides for domestic use.

(AQW 22504/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Domestic users of pesticides are not subject to the same requirements, regulations and controls that apply to professional users in the agricultural industry.

Therefore the EU proposal to suspend the sale of certain types of neonicotinoid pesticides for domestic use is a reasonable precaution to prevent possible adverse impacts which could arise from inadvertent or inappropriate use.

Hardship Payments to Farmers

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the timescale for hardship payments to farmers affected by the severe winter weather in March, including whether the payments will be with all the affected farmers by the end of June 2013.

(AQW 22799/11-15)

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 is 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.

Subject to Executive agreement, the scheme will be brought forward as quickly as possible and I hope to release details in the very near future. It is intended to make payments to farmers by the end of June.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Efficiency Savings: Job Losses

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the (i) number; and (ii) location of, job losses she expects as result of efficiency savings in relation to her Department's Arms Length Bodies.

(AQW 20143/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): In line with the letter to the CAL Committee Chair dated 30th January 2013, it is difficult to accurately determine the impact of savings in my Department's Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) on jobs. In the case of ALBs whose budgets contain very significant payroll elements (LibrariesNI and National Museums), the bodies have estimated job losses of 87 and 56 respectively. In the former case, the number of job losses also includes those resulting from its rationalisation exercise (55) when LNI was first established from the former Education and Library Boards.

In contrast, in the case of grant-giving bodies (for example Arts Council, SportNI and NI Screen), the implications for jobs of reduced budgets is harder to determine. While the value of grants to third

parties will fall, much depends on the ability of these grantees to attract funding from other sources and/ or to absorb budget cuts by reducing spending in non- payroll related areas.

My Department is not able to track job impacts across the large number of grantees involved and no reliable estimates are available. For this reason, the overall picture will be incomplete.

Department of Education

Schools Access Team: Admission to Local Schools

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education how his Department's Schools Access Team's refusal to allow some children admission to local schools fits with his Department's Every School A Good School document, which has, as one of its four cornerstones, schools connected to their local community.
(AQW 22375/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): There is a clear link between the role of School Access Team and the Department's policy in relation to Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement (ESaGS).

The Department's School Access Team's role within the open enrolment policy is to address short term demographic pressure(s) in a particular area through granting a small number of additional places using a temporary variation. The team's role is to ensure that the school's estate is actively managed in a strategic, economic and balanced manner, whilst also still ensuring that children are able to avail of a school in their chosen educational sector within reasonable travelling distance of their house. To do otherwise would result in unchecked over subscription of certain schools, deflecting resources from improving educational outcomes such as those supported through the delivery of ESaGS.

Increasing engagement between schools and the parents, families and the communities they serve is one of the key policy areas within ESaGS. However, no child is guaranteed a place at a particular school as places at schools are determined by the schools admissions and enrolment numbers based on the available teaching accommodation. While parents can state their preference for a particular local school, it is the school's own admissions criteria which determines the rank order of admissions and the setting of these criteria are entirely the responsibility of the school's Board of Governors. In some cases it is the school's admissions criteria that results in local children not being able to attend local schools.

Savings Delivery Plans

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 21786/11-15, whether he has identified any efficiencies as part of his Savings Delivery Plans.
(AQW 22410/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department's published Savings Delivery Plan (SDP) identifies a range of services where savings have been required to ensure that the education system lived and continues to live within the overall budget provided.

In identifying areas in which to effect savings, my priority was to protect the classroom as much as possible and to protect also expenditure on important services for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Wherever possible, this has been done through improved efficiency and effectiveness. Moving forward, I will continue to work to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the education sector, including through the establishment of ESA.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19804/11-15, to detail the dates of the formal meetings with procurement staff during the project.

(AQW 22414/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The project team met with the BELB Procurement Officer during September 2011.

Available records also indicate that meetings including ELB procurement staff and project team staff also took place on following dates:

- 19 May 2011 (SEELB Procurement Governance and Accountability meeting);
- 24 June 2011 (SEELB Procurement Governance and Accountability meeting);
- 30 September 2011 (SEELB Procurement Governance and Accountability meeting);
- 11 October 2011 (CoPE re-accreditation sub-group);
- 24 October 2011 (Procurement Practitioners Group);
- 13 December 2011(Procurement Practitioners Group);
- 20 February 211 (Procurement Practitioners Group);
- 22 December 2011 (SEELB Procurement Governance and Accountability meeting).

Teachers Deemed Unsatisfactory

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education when his Department's procedure for dealing with teachers who are deemed unsatisfactory was last reviewed.

(AQW 22476/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current Unsatisfactory Teaching Procedures were drawn up jointly by teachers' employing authorities in consultation with DE in 1997. In March 2010 the Management and Teachers' Side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) agreed that the procedures were no longer fit for purpose and that a new approach was necessary. A working group was set up which included representatives from both trade unions and Management Side.

New procedures have been drafted – a Procedure for Supporting Effective Leadership in Schools for school principals and a Procedure for Supporting Effective Teaching in Schools for teachers and vice-principals. Both revised procedures have been tabled at the Joint Working party, consisting of teachers' employers and unions, for consideration and approval. It is envisaged that these procedures will be finalised in the very near future.

The current procedure for dealing with teachers who are deemed unsatisfactory includes an informal stage followed, if necessary, by a formal stage.

The parties involved at the informal stage are as follows:

- Teacher;
- Principal;
- Board of Governors;
- Employing Authority;
- Teacher union representative/teaching colleague, if required; and
- Education & Library Board's Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) or other agencies, as appropriate.

The parties involved at the formal stage are as follows:

- Teacher;
- Principal;
- Board of Governors;
- Sub-committee, established by the Board of Governors;
- Employing Authority;
- Trade Union;
- Trade Union representative/teaching colleague, if required; and
- CASS or other agencies, as appropriate.

Whilst there is no requirement to involve the Inspectorate in the procedures to address unsatisfactory work, a school's assessment of deficiencies may be corroborated by Inspectorate comments. Requests for an inspection of a teacher will only be considered when submitted by the Board of Governors and with the knowledge of the teacher.

In cases of an appeal, an Appeals Committee shall consist of an Independent Chairman appointed by the Labour Relations Agency, and two panel members, one nominated by the Teachers' Side and one nominated by the Management Side of the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee (Schools).

Teachers Deemed Unsatisfactory

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has any plans to review the procedure for dealing with teachers who are deemed unsatisfactory.

(AQW 22477/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current Unsatisfactory Teaching Procedures were drawn up jointly by teachers' employing authorities in consultation with DE in 1997. In March 2010 the Management and Teachers' Side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) agreed that the procedures were no longer fit for purpose and that a new approach was necessary. A working group was set up which included representatives from both trade unions and Management Side.

New procedures have been drafted – a Procedure for Supporting Effective Leadership in Schools for school principals and a Procedure for Supporting Effective Teaching in Schools for teachers and vice-principals. Both revised procedures have been tabled at the Joint Working party, consisting of teachers' employers and unions, for consideration and approval. It is envisaged that these procedures will be finalised in the very near future.

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- Education & Library Board's Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) or other agencies, as appropriate.

The parties involved at the formal stage are as follows:

- Teacher;
- Principal;
- Board of Governors;
- Sub-committee, established by the Board of Governors;
- Employing Authority;
- Trade Union;
- Trade Union representative/teaching colleague, if required; and
- CASS or other agencies, as appropriate.

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In cases of an appeal, an Appeals Committee shall consist of an Independent Chairman appointed by the Labour Relations Agency, and two panel members, one nominated by the Teachers' Side and one nominated by the Management Side of the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee (Schools).

Teachers Deemed Unsatisfactory

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to list the parties that are involved when the procedure for dealing with teachers who are deemed unsatisfactory is followed.

(AQW 22478/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current Unsatisfactory Teaching Procedures were drawn up jointly by teachers' employing authorities in consultation with DE in 1997. In March 2010 the Management and Teachers' Side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) agreed that the procedures were no longer fit for purpose and that a new approach was necessary. A working group was set up which included representatives from both trade unions and Management Side.

New procedures have been drafted – a Procedure for Supporting Effective Leadership in Schools for school principals and a Procedure for Supporting Effective Teaching in Schools for teachers and vice-principals. Both revised procedures have been tabled at the Joint Working party, consisting of teachers' employers and unions, for consideration and approval. It is envisaged that these procedures will be finalised in the very near future.

The current procedure for dealing with teachers who are deemed unsatisfactory includes an informal stage followed, if necessary, by a formal stage.

The parties involved at the informal stage are as follows:

- Teacher;
- Principal;
- Board of Governors;
- Employing Authority;
- Teacher union representative/teaching colleague, if required; and
- Education & Library Board's Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) or other agencies, as appropriate.

The parties involved at the formal stage are as follows:

- Teacher;
- Principal;
- Board of Governors;
- Sub-committee, established by the Board of Governors;
- Employing Authority;
- Trade Union;
- Trade Union representative/teaching colleague, if required; and
- CASS or other agencies, as appropriate.

Whilst there is no requirement to involve the Inspectorate in the procedures to address unsatisfactory work, a school's assessment of deficiencies may be corroborated by Inspectorate comments. Requests for an inspection of a teacher will only be considered when submitted by the Board of Governors and with the knowledge of the teacher.

In cases of an appeal, an Appeals Committee shall consist of an Independent Chairman appointed by the Labour Relations Agency, and two panel members, one nominated by the Teachers' Side and one nominated by the Management Side of the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee (Schools).

Education and Library Board Staff

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of staff currently employed in each Education and Library Board, broken down by section.

(AQW 22487/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below sets out the number of staff employed in each Education and Library Board headquarters broken down by section.

Education and Library Board (ELB)	Corporate	Education / Curriculum	Finance	TOTAL
BELB	422	369	55	846
NEELB	441	655	78	1,174
SEELB	386	543	101	1,030
SELB	526	584	90	1,200
WELB	183	573	74	830
Total	1,958	2,724	398	5,080

Notes:

- 1 Figures do not include school based employees.
- 2 Corporate section includes areas such as Chief Executive's Office; Commissioners; Legal; Audit; Administrative, Technical and Information Services; Property Services, Student Support Services and staff associated with the delivery of operational services to schools such as maintenance and transport.
- 3 Education / Curriculum section includes all headquarters and out centre staff involved in the provision of support, guidance and assistance to schools and pupils including those delivering Education projects and Youth services.

DE: Invoices Paid and Unpaid

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education to detail, for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, (i) the total number of invoices paid by his Department and its respective Arm's-Length Bodies; (ii) the number of invoices paid within thirty calendar days; (iii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt; (iv) how each of his Department's Arm's-Length Bodies has performed against the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and (v) the number of invoices that remain unpaid.

(AQW 22519/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In respect of my Department and its Arms Length Bodies, the table below details the number of invoices paid, the number paid within 30 calendar days and 10 working days of receipt and the performance against the target 'to ensure that 97% of all non-disputed invoices are paid within 30 days of terms date' for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. Where figures are provided, the number of invoices that remain unpaid includes valid undisputed invoices and does not include invoices that are in dispute.

Organisation	Total Number of Invoices Paid (i)	Number of Invoices paid within 30 Calendar Days (ii)	Number of Invoices paid within 10 Working Days (iii)	Performance against target (iv)	The number of invoices that remain unpaid (v)
Department of Education	2,818	2,767	2,583	98.19	1 Note 1
North Eastern Education and Library Board	115,128	97,267	60,582	84.49	0 Note 2
Belfast Education and Library Board	80,839	71,676	43,293	88.67	0 Note 2
Western Education and Library Board	109,312	95,989	57,576	87.81	0 Note 2
South Eastern Education and Library Board	92,401	81,045	52,267	87.71	0 Note 2
Southern Education and Library Board	118,896	106,888	70,205	89.90	0 Note 2
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	1,171	1,169	1,143	99.83	0
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment	3,319	3,006	2,655	90.57	12
Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards	133	133	133	100	0
Youth Council for Northern Ireland	831	831	830	100	0

Organisation	Total Number of Invoices Paid (i)	Number of Invoices paid within 30 Calendar Days (ii)	Number of Invoices paid within 10 Working Days (iii)	Performance against target (iv)	The number of invoices that remain unpaid (v)
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)	534	534	274 Note 3	100	0
Comhairle na Galescolaiochta	293	292	182	99.66	0
General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland	450	450	299	100	6
Middletown Centre for Autism	877	877	238	100	0

Note 1

It is not possible for the Department to provide the number of invoices received before 31 March 2013 which are not on the Account NI transaction processing system, as the cost of collating this information would be disproportionate.

Note 2

The Education and Library Boards can only report on 2012-13 invoices outstanding within their finance departments. It is not possible to report on the number of outstanding invoices within the wider school network as this information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Note 3

10 working day figures for NICIE were not available prior to July 2012 therefore the total of invoices paid within 10 working days does not include the period 1 March-30 June 2012.

Removal of Modular Examinations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how the removal of modular examinations would impact on the performance of exceptional students compared with that of other students.

(AQW 22655/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There is no clear and consistent evidence that modular examinations are easier than linear.

Current research and evidence reveals that modular assessment is not consistently easier than end of course examinations. Indeed the appropriateness of modular assessment can vary by subject. Even so, where there are differences, the differences have been small in scale.

I have allowed the retention of modular assessment in GCSEs offered here and I am currently considering short term changes to A levels. The fundamental review of GCSEs and A Levels which I commissioned CCEA to undertake will continue to address this issue and I will study the recommendations closely before making any decisions regarding the future of these important qualifications.

Rural Development Council's Rural Proofing Assessment

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 21380/11-15, and in relation to Area Planning, whether the Rural Development Council's rural proofing assessment Striking the Balance, which was carried out in 2008, needs to be updated.

(AQW 22660/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Prior to its publication in 2009, the Sustainable Schools Policy, on which area planning is based, was assessed against the Rural Development Council's rural proofing checklist in its report "Striking the Balance".

The Rural Proofing Guide published by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in March 2011 suggests that rural proofing is carried out at the outset of policy development or policy review.

I do not currently have any plans to carry out a review of the Sustainable Schools Policy and do not therefore consider it necessary to re-assess it in respect of rural proofing.

Education and Library Boards: Teachers and Principals on Long-Term Sick Leave

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the number of (a) teachers; and (b) principals in each Education and Library Board area who were absent on long-term sick leave, in each of the last three years; (ii) how long they have been absent; and (iii) what reasons have been given for their absence.

(AQW 22692/11-15)

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

Table A (ii), 2011/12 data. The number of teacher who were absent on long-term sick leave by the length of absence and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
21-40 days	73	98	133	75	117	496
41-60 days	67	71	71	48	83	340
61-80 days	11	20	26	21	22	100
81-100 days	10	18	22	11	31	92
101-140 days	8	15	23	13	26	85
141+ days	8	7	12	9	8	44
Total	177	229	287	177	287	1157

Table A (ii), 2010/11 data. The number of teacher who were absent on long-term sick leave by the length of absence and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
21-40 days	74	90	111	92	158	525
41-60 days	51	67	80	55	108	361
61-80 days	16	20	20	10	20	86
81-100 days	19	12	20	15	18	84
101-140 days	#	13	22	#	30	91

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
141+ days	*	11	15	#	9	45
Total	177	213	268	191	343	1192

Table A (ii), 2009/10 data. The number of teacher who were absent on long-term sick leave by the length of absence and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
21-40 days	95	99	130	107	133	564
41-60 days	42	69	65	60	97	333
61-80 days	20	23	18	21	31	113
81-100 days	7	24	16	13	23	83
101-140 days	#	13	19	#	31	80
141+ days	*	12	12	#	11	46
Total	172	240	260	221	326	1219

Table B (ii), 2011/12 data. The number of Principals who were absent on long-term sick leave by the length of absence and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
21-40 days	5	*	11	*	7	28
41+ days	6	#	15	#	13	50
Total	11	12	26	9	20	78

Table B (ii), 2010/11 data. The number of Principals who were absent on long-term sick leave by the length of absence and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
21-40 days	#	5	*	6	*	24
41+ days	*	11	#	9	#	46
Total	9	16	13	15	17	70

Table B (ii), 2009/10 data. The number of Principals who were absent on long-term sick leave by the length of absence and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
21-40 days	8	6	9	8	8	39
41+ days	5	8	14	9	14	50
Total	13	14	23	17	22	89

Table A (iii), 2011/12 data. The number of teacher who were absent on long-term sick leave by the reason given and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
Stress/other psychiatric illnesses	67	87	104	46	98	402
Benign and malignant tumours, cancers	#	10	13	#	6	40
Chest and respiratory problems, cold, flu, asthma	7	11	11	12	10	51
Gastrointestinal problems	*	9	11	#	9	40
Genitourinary/ gynaecological	16	28	31	16	26	117
Injury, fracture	15	16	24	10	24	89
Musculoskeletal problems	12	16	14	15	23	80
Other/ unclassified	52	52	79	64	91	338
Total	177	229	287	177	287	1157

Table A (iii), 2010/11 data. The number of teacher who were absent on long-term sick leave by the reason given and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
Stress/other psychiatric illnesses	69	75	95	59	117	415
Benign and malignant tumours, cancers	*	9	6	#	8	34
Chest and respiratory problems, cold, flu, asthma	8	9	11	6	10	44
Gastrointestinal problems	7	8	12	6	15	48
Genitourinary/ gynaecological	11	23	19	15	30	98
Heart/cardiac and circulatory problems	#	7	7	*	18	40
Injury, fracture	17	23	24	12	25	101
Musculoskeletal problems	16	16	20	19	29	100
Other/ unclassified	40	43	74	64	91	312
Total	177	213	268	191	343	1192

Table A (iii), 2009/10 data. The number of teacher who were absent on long-term sick leave by the reason given and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
Stress/other psychiatric illnesses	68	75	81	79	116	419
Benign and malignant tumours, cancers	*	9	#	7	6	29
Chest and respiratory problems, cold, flu, asthma	9	6	10	10	16	51
Ear, nose, throat, headache /migraine, eye, dental/oral	5	9	6	5	7	32
Gastrointestinal problems	11	13	7	5	17	53
Genitourinary/ gynaecological	14	22	25	10	26	97
Heart/cardiac and circulatory problems	*	11	#	7	10	36
Injury, fracture	12	22	15	18	15	82
Musculoskeletal problems	15	18	17	10	30	90
Other/ unclassified	34	55	88	70	83	330
Total	172	240	260	221	326	1219

Table B (iii), 2011/12 data. The number of Principals who were absent on long-term sick leave by the reason given and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
Stress/other psychiatric illnesses	*	6	9	#	6	24
Other/ unclassified	#	6	17	#	14	54
Total	11	12	26	9	20	78

Table B (iii), 2010/11 data. The number of Principals who were absent on long-term sick leave by the reason given and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
Stress/other psychiatric illnesses	*	6	*	*	8	25
Other/ unclassified	#	10	#	#	9	45
Total	9	16	13	15	17	70

Table B (iii), 2009/10 data. The number of Principals who were absent on long-term sick leave by the reason given and Education and Library Board area.

	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Total
Stress/other psychiatric illnesses	*	*	9	6	8	30
Other/ unclassified	#	#	14	11	14	59
Total	13	14	23	17	22	89

Source: Teachers Payroll and Pensions System

* Relates to fewer than 5 cases.

Number suppressed to prevent disclosure of small number elsewhere.

Notes:

- 1 Data excludes voluntary grammar schools.
- 2 Information is based on financial years, April – March.
- 3 Long-term sick leave has been defined as more than 20 days.

Sperrinview Special School, Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education why the Southern Education and Library Board has refused Sperrinview Special School's application to the Community Foundation for funding for a multi-use games area; and what action he will take to address this issue.

(AQW 22695/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) has advised that a request was received from Sperrinview Special School in December 2012 to use funding available from the Community Foundation for a multiuse games area and outdoor gym.

In January 2013 Board officers advised that the proposal would have limited benefit to pupils with severe learning and disability issues and that SELB would be unable to secure Public Liability Insurance cover for the proposed equipment.

Subsequently SELB received a revised proposal in April 2013 from Sperrinview for:

- Complete refurbishment of the existing play areas to include new surfacing and updated equipment suited to the ages and abilities of the pupils of Sperrinview Special School;
- Additions to the school's sensory garden.

In light of the revised proposals from Sperrinview, Board officers are currently assisting the school with this proposal.

Sperrinview Special School, Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 22456/11-15 and given that Sperrinview Special School has indicated that it would be prepared to meet the recurrent costs, whether this decision can be reconsidered.

(AQW 22696/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board has advised that at the time of the economic appraisal, referred to in my response to AQW 22456/11-15, hydrotherapy provision was a recommendation for two pupils at Sperrinview Special School and it was confirmed that these pupils avail of the hydrotherapy pool at Lisanally Special School in Armagh.

While the Board was willing to contribute the remainder of the required capital funding for the proposed hydrotherapy pool, the recurrent running costs were estimated at £105,000 per annum. When the saving on transport of two pupils to Armagh was deducted, the net recurrent cost was estimated to be £92,000 per annum.

At a meeting between SELB officials and representatives of Sperrinview Special School in September 2012, it was accepted that as neither the school, (through their delegated budget), nor the SELB, (through their non-delegated budget), could sustain the required recurrent costs, the proposal could not be accepted by the Board.

I understand that the school and board are currently considering alternative uses for the funding such as refurbishment of the existing play areas and additions to the school's sensory garden.

Schools Enhancement Programme

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education why his Department moved the closing date for submissions to the Schools Enhancement Programme from 12 April 2013 to 10 May 2013.

(AQW 22714/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In light of representations made to my Department by education stakeholders, I agreed to extend the deadline for the return of applications by four weeks, to Friday 10 May 2013.

Applications already received by my Department did not need to be re-submitted. In light of the additional time, however, if a school authority wished to withdraw and re-submit an application then my Department was happy to facilitate.

Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team: Non-School Based Staff

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 22096/11-15, what role the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team played in the approval process for non-school based staff.

(AQW 22715/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has made funds available to its Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) to cover the costs of non-school based voluntary severance, subject to certain criteria. The role of the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team (ESAIT) in the process is to review voluntary severance proposals, submitted and approved by ALBs, to ensure that the criteria are met before funding is allocated.

The criteria include demonstrating that proposals are consistent with the Programme for Government's target of establishing ESA and in line with Savings Delivery requirements. Proposals must also demonstrate value for money, a payback period of no more than 3.25 years, a reduction in staffing budgets and corresponding reduction in Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff numbers and that risks and mitigation of risks have been addressed.

DE: Accounting Officers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline the responsibilities of the two Accounting Officers within the Department of Education.

(AQW 22716/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has appointed the Permanent Secretary of the Department as principal Accounting Officer of the Department of Education. DFP has also appointed an additional Accounting Officer to be accountable for those parts of the Department's accounts relating to specified requests for resources and the associated assets, liabilities and cash flows. The responsibilities of the additional Accounting Officer are secondary to those of the principal Accounting Officer and are restricted to responsibility for the stewardship of the resources within the bodies that are due to be subsumed into the Education and Skills Authority.

This appointment does not detract from the Permanent Secretary's overall responsibility as Accounting Officer for the propriety and regularity of the public finances of the Department.

Education and Library Boards: Quality and Effectiveness of Services

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 22098/11-15 how he ensured that the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the Education and Library Boards was not diminished in the event of a voluntary severance proposal being approved.

(AQW 22717/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As the employer, the Department's Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) are responsible for determining which posts they can suppress through voluntary severance. In approving the removal of posts, ALBs must take into account the needs of the organisation, including statutory requirements, to ensure the quality and effectiveness of service delivery is appropriately managed.

The Department has put in place a process and determined criteria, which employers must satisfy, in order to secure approval for access to funding. Severance proposals are subjected to risk analysis and appropriate mitigation in considering the competing priorities of reducing costs against retaining necessary skills and ensuring continuity of current levels of service delivery to schools.

To ensure a clear accountability trail, each ALB and their Accounting Officer are required to sign an assurance statement approving the release of staff and suppression of posts for which they are seeking approval for funding and confirming that the ALB can continue to provide its statutory duties; that any risks which may affect the level of service following the release of staff have been considered and appropriate countermeasures have been, or will be, put in place to manage these.

Projected Capital Spend

Mr Storey asked Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW16943/11-15, how much finance has been expended to date in each of the projects listed.

(AQW 22718/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Finances expended against the 18 capital build projects announced in June 2012 up to 31 March 2013 are shown in the table below.

School Scheme	Type of School	All Expenditure up to 31/03/2012 £000's	2012/13 Expenditure up to 31/03/2013 £000's	Total Spend to Date £000's
Coláiste Feirste, Belfast	Post-Primary	2,645	0	2,645
St Clare's Convent Primary School St Colman's Abbey Primary School, Newry	Primary	739	110	849
St Joseph's Convent PS, Newry	Primary	93	66	159
Dromore Central Primary School	Primary	244	80	324
Eglinton Primary School	Primary	154	6	160
Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan	Primary	209	10	219
Ebrington Controlled PS, Derry	Primary	113	51	164
Foyle & Londonderry College	Post-Primary	15,071	2	15073

School Scheme	Type of School	All Expenditure up to 31/03/2012 £000's	2012/13 Expenditure up to 31/03/2013 £000's	Total Spend to Date £000's
St Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan	Primary	144	16	160
Victoria Park Primary School, Belfast	Primary	408	312	720
Enniskillen Model Primary School	Primary	138	4	142
St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge	Primary	69	21	90
Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast	Primary	52	0	52
Belmont House Special School, Derry	Special	10	0	10
Rossmar Special School, Limavady	Special	10	0	10
Castletower Ballymena	Special	0	10	10
Arvalee School & Resource Centre, Omagh	Special	0	0	0
St Gerards Education Resource Centre	Special	0	2	0
		20,099	690	20,789

It should be noted that the figure for Coláiste Feirste, Belfast and Foyle & Londonderry College include site purchases of £2,325k and £14,500k respectively.

Number of Mobile Classrooms in Use

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 22057/11-15, how these figures compare with 2008.

(AQW 22721/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold information on numbers of temporary classrooms by constituency for 2008. I can, however, supply data that was provided in response to a previous Assembly question in May 2009.

The table below indicates that the number of temporary classrooms has increased in most constituencies.

Constituency	No of Temporary Classrooms 2009	No of Temporary Classrooms 2013
Belfast East	11	50
Belfast North	40	55
Belfast South	38	65
Belfast West	76	106

Constituency	No of Temporary Classrooms 2009	No of Temporary Classrooms 2013
East Antrim	92	112
East Derry	97	98
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	131	155
Foyle	98	72
Lagan Valley	74	105
Mid Ulster	131	210
Newry & Armagh	151	228
North Antrim	122	194
North Down	46	43
South Antrim	108	102
South Down	166	201
Strangford	77	96
Upper Bann	83	140
West Tyrone	130	124

Individual School Governors

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to conduct patronage surveys to afford parents an opportunity to have their say in who governs individual schools.

(AQW 22765/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The arrangements for the governance of grant-aided schools in the north of Ireland are set out in the relevant provisions of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989. The Education Bill being considered by the Assembly proposes amendments to these provisions which will if passed make ESA responsible for the governor appointments that currently fall to the Education and Library Boards and the Department. There are no other proposals to change the statutory school governance arrangements for the purpose of affording parents the opportunity to have their say in who governs individual schools. There is of course existing statutory provision for public consultation on changes proposed to the school estate within the area planning process.

Joint Faith Schools

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education if joint faith schools are established, to which sector, controlled, maintained or integrated, would pupils be allocated under the Area Planning process.

(AQW 22766/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The establishment of any school requires the publication of a Development Proposal as required under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 (as amended).

The Development Proposal would specify the size, location and management type of the proposed new school. There is no provision for hybrid status. The management type would have to be drawn from those covered by current legislation which are controlled (including controlled integrated), Catholic maintained, grant-maintained integrated or voluntary maintained. Whichever sector a newly established school decides upon will determine where the pupils are identified within the Needs Model.

Integrated Schools

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education what priority integrated schools attach to children from mixed religion marriages when considering their admissions criteria; and whether his Department has issued any guidance to integrated schools on this issue.

(AQW 22769/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The admissions criteria used by any school are a matter for the Board of Governors of the school concerned and reflect the particular priorities they wish to give for admission to their school. Where schools are oversubscribed they have to apply their admissions criteria to determine which pupils to admit. The Department does not have a role in this other than to offer guidance. The Department has not issued guidance to integrated schools about giving priority to children from mixed marriages.

Belfast Education and Library Board Staff: Automatic Pay Increments

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education why the automatic pay increment for Belfast Education and Library Board staff is subject to approval for the current financial year.

(AQW 22773/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Public sector pay policy introduced in 2004, as endorsed by the Executive in 2007, necessitates following a process to obtain the required approval for any pay related expenditure, including incremental progression, for all staff in public bodies, including NDPB's.

Education and Library Boards: Automatic Pay Increments

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education whether automatic pay increments for the current financial year at Education and Library Boards other than the Belfast Board are subject to approval.

(AQW 22774/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Public sector pay policy introduced in 2004, as endorsed by the Executive in 2007, necessitates following a process to obtain the required approval for any pay related expenditure, including incremental progression, for all staff in public bodies and including NDPB's, which includes the 5 Education and Library Boards.

Education and Skills Authority: Automatic Pay Increments

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education whether automatic pay increments are still in place for staff employed by the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 22775/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Skills Authority has still to be established. Any staff that transfer into ESA once it is established, will do so under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE).

The majority of the staff who will transfer to ESA from the Departments NDPB's are currently employed on National Joint Council (NJC) Terms and Conditions, which apply an incremental pay progression and this will continue to apply after the establishment of ESA.

Public sector pay policy introduced in 2004, as endorsed by the Executive in 2007, necessitates following a process to obtain the required approval for any pay related expenditure, including incremental progression, for all staff in public bodies and NDPB's which includes ESA.

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education: Automatic Pay Increments

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education whether automatic pay increments are still in place for staff employed by the (i) Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; and (ii) Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.

(AQW 22776/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Public sector pay policy introduced in 2004, as endorsed by the Executive in 2007, necessitates following a process to obtain the required approval for any pay related expenditure, including incremental progression, for all staff in public bodies, including NDPB's, which includes CCMS and NICIE.

Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Programme: Funding

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the funding that has been made available to the Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Programme by his Department since the introduction of the programme in 2008.

(AQW 22790/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) arrangements, the Board of Governors of every school receives a delegated budget to enable them to deliver all aspects of the curriculum including careers provision. It is a matter for each school to determine how best to utilise their delegated funding in delivering their statutory requirements which includes careers.

In addition to funding under LMS, the Department provides funding for specific programmes that are a priority for the economy such as the STEM CEIAG programme, details of which are provided below for 2009/10 to 2012/13. The budget for 2013/14 has still to be confirmed.

STEM/CEIAG PROGRAMME

Year	Funding
2009/10	£800k
2010/11	£802k
2011/12	£109k
2012/13	£640k

Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Programme: Funding

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what funding will be made available to the Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Programme in (i) 2012/13; and (ii) 2013/14.

(AQW 22791/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) arrangements, the Board of Governors of every school receives a delegated budget to enable them to deliver all aspects of the curriculum including careers provision. It is a matter for each school to determine how best to utilise their delegated funding in delivering their statutory requirements which includes careers.

In addition to funding under LMS, the Department provides funding for specific programmes that are a priority for the economy such as the STEM CEIAG programme, details of which are provided below for 2009/10 to 2012/13. The budget for 2013/14 has still to be confirmed.

STEM/CEIAG PROGRAMME

Year	Funding
2009/10	£800k
2010/11	£802k
2011/12	£109k
2012/13	£640k

Re-Introduction of Specialist Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education whether his Department is considering the re-introduction of specialist schools.

(AQW 22794/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have no plans to re-introduce the specialist school programme. With the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority, I will introduce a new regional professional support service for schools and have asked my officials to ensure that the learning and good practice that emerged during the specialist schools programme is incorporated into the future delivery of this service.

School Uniform Guidelines

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education what guidelines his Department has in place regarding school uniforms.

(AQW 22795/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The wearing of a school uniform in the north of Ireland, as in the south of Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, is not governed by legislation but falls to schools to determine. The day-to-day management of schools, including school uniform policy, is a matter for school Principals, subject to any directions that might be given by the Board of Governors. The Department has, however, issued guidance to schools on school uniform policy and this is contained in Circular 2011/04 dated 30 March 2011 which is available on the Department's website.

Paragraph 2.1 of the Circular advises that schools "... should ensure that their school uniform policy is fair and reasonable, in practical and financial terms, and should have regard to their duties under relevant equality and other legislation".

The guidance also highlights the need for schools to:

- Consult widely on proposed policies and changes (para 2.1).
- Consider cost and availability (para 2.1).
- Consider comfort and practicality (para 2.1).
- Involve the pupils directly in the process of developing a uniform policy (para 2.2).
- Be aware of the barriers which PE uniform can cause to participation in PE, particularly for girls (para 2.4).
- Ensure that uniforms are widely available in high street shops and other retail outlets, and internet suppliers rather than from an expensive sole supplier (para 3.2).
- Have due regard to equality and other issues (section 6 and Annex 1).

In addition, the Circular makes it clear that the Department expects Boards of Governors to give high priority to cost considerations when designing their uniforms. Families should not feel excluded from being able to select a particular school because of the cost of a uniform.

School Uniform Guidelines

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education why it is important that schools adhere to his Department's school uniform guidelines; and what powers his Department has in relation to schools that do not follow the guidelines.

(AQW 22796/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The wearing of a school uniform in the north of Ireland, as in the south of Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, is not governed by legislation but falls to schools to determine. The Department's guidance on school uniforms was issued to all schools here in March 2011. The guidance advises that schools should ensure that their school uniform policy is fair and reasonable, in practical and financial terms, and should have regard to their duties under relevant equality and other legislation.

I recognise that the day-to-day management of schools, including school uniform policy, is a matter for school Principals, subject to any directions that might be given by the Board of Governors. However, I consider that it is of particular importance that schools adhere to the guidance on school uniforms so that pupils or their families do not feel excluded from being able to apply to or attend a particular school due to the cost of a uniform.

Boards of Governors, in developing their school uniform policy, therefore, have a clear responsibility to give regard to the Department's guidance on school uniforms.

School Uniform Costs

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the costs associated with school uniforms; and how his Department assists families in meeting the costs of the uniforms.

(AQW 22797/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I recognise that the cost of school uniforms can place a substantial financial burden on families particularly in the current economic climate when many families are struggling to make ends meet. Consequently, my Department has provided and continues to provide annual funding to assist families with the cost of school uniforms. I am pleased to advise that, since April 2011, approximately £12.2 million has been allocated by my Department, through the Clothing Allowance Scheme, to help families with such costs.

I am aware, however, that there is considerable variation between schools in the costs of school uniforms. I have made it clear on previous occasions that I consider it unacceptable for schools to charge excessive costs for school uniforms, particularly where this may act as a deterrent to parents who are considering whether to send their child to a particular school.

I wrote to all schools on 27 September 2012 to remind Boards of Governors of their responsibilities in relation to the Department's guidance on school uniform policy (Circular 2011/04). The guidance specifically states that schools should ensure that their school uniform policy is fair and reasonable, in practical and financial terms, and should have regard to their duties under relevant equality and other legislation. I have emphasised that Governors should ensure that regard is given to the guidance when drawing up their school uniform policy.

Education and Library Boards: Key Stage 1 and 2 Performance of Pupils

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) Key Stage 1; and (ii) Key Stage 2 performance of pupils in (a) rural; and (b) urban schools in each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 22849/11-15)

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

- (i) Percentage achieving level 2 or above in Key Stage One Assessments by urban/rural classification of school location and Education and Library Board 2011/12 (latest figures available)

	Rural		Urban	
	English	Maths	English	Maths
Belfast	NA	NA	92.8	94.5
Western	94.0	95.7	95.9	96.7
North Eastern	94.9	95.8	94.7	95.2
South Eastern	96.4	97.0	94.0	94.8
Southern	94.4	95.2	91.1	93.2

- (ii) Percentage achieving level 4 or above in Key Stage Two Assessments by urban/rural classification of school location and Education and Library Board 2011/12 (latest figures available)

	Rural		Urban	
	English	Maths	English	Maths
Belfast	NA	NA	76.9	78.2
Western	84.6	85.7	81.5	81.4
North Eastern	86.8	87.3	82.1	82.1
South Eastern	88.0	88.9	84.9	85.7
Southern	85.7	87.0	79.9	81.6

Note:

NA – No rural primary schools in the Belfast Education and Library Board

Please note that due to industrial action, 7% of primary schools did not submit returns in 2011/12.

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to outline the (i) plans for school visits to the proposed Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre; (ii) the estimated cost of school visits; and (iii) from which budget these visits will be funded.

(AQW 22929/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) In matters such as school 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 it would therefore be up to individual schools to decide whether or not to visit this venue.
- (ii) At this early stage, the Department of Education has no information regarding the estimated cost of a school visit to the proposed Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre.
- (iii) Educational visits in general are provided by schools and as such are funded from the school's own delegated budget.

Department for Employment and Learning

Utilising Workers from A8 Countries

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he is taking to address the gap in local skills by utilising workers from the A8 countries, such as engineers, health professionals and managers, who have moved here but who have limited proficiency in the English language.

(AQW 22159/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): My Department focuses on the skills development of individuals, located here irrespective of background, in order to meet the needs of our businesses community and to support economic growth in Northern Ireland.

In conjunction with this approach, businesses can also recruit staff from throughout the European Union, for instance through the European Employment Service (EURES) scheme. My Department supports the development of the European labour market in order to meet business needs by providing job brokerage services aimed at preventing and combating skills bottlenecks.

When an employer advertises a vacancy through DEL, a language requirement can be stipulated. Language requirements associated with an advertised vacancy are appropriately worded to ensure that no eligible jobseeker is prevented from applying.

In addition, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, which are targeted at individuals with limited proficiency in English, are available across all further education colleges in Northern Ireland. My Department does not set a cap on the amount of ESOL provision that colleges can deliver. Colleges' decisions are based on the needs of learners and employers in their areas.

Youth Employment Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether a target has been set for the number of people aged, between 18 to 24, enrolled in the Youth Employment Scheme by the end of 2013.

(AQW 22449/11-15)

Dr Farry: In July 2012 I announced to the Assembly a package of new measures – “the Youth Employment Scheme” - to help young people gain experience, acquire new skills and find employment. I had earlier presented my proposals to my Executive colleagues who agreed to support and endorse these measures to help address youth unemployment.

Within the business case presented to the Executive we had set a target to make available 2,500 short 2 to 8 week work experience placements, 1,400 longer 6 to 9 month skills development opportunities and 1,000 subsidised jobs in 2013/14

Proposed Royal Exchange Development

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the discussions he has had with the Minister for Social Development in relation to the establishment of a Community and Business Opportunity Plan for the proposed Royal Exchange development.

(AQW 22483/11-15)

Dr Farry: To date my Department has not been approached by the Department for Social Development regarding the Royal Exchange development and I understand this will not happen for some time yet. At the appropriate time, my Department will engage fully in the development of a Community and Business Opportunity Plan, similar to our involvement in the Victoria Square Scheme.

Disability Employment Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline how the Disability Employment Service can assist people who have been receiving long-term benefits but have been assessed under

Welfare Reform as fit for work although recognised as having a disability; and are such people routinely advised to contact the Disability Employment Service for assistance.

(AQW 22489/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department's provision for people with disabilities is delivered by my staff, healthcare professionals and specialist providers. Providers have a range of expertise required to meet the specific needs of disabled people wanting to obtain or sustain employment.

Those people who have been assessed by healthcare professionals, through the Work Capability Assessment process, as being fit for work, are seen in the first instance by an Employment Service Adviser in their local Jobs and Benefits office or Jobcentre.

All of The Employment Service Advisers have received training in disability awareness, and also on the impact that a disability can have on the individual. These Advisers have close working relationships with the department's Disability Employment Service, and indeed, they are supported on an ongoing basis by specialist disability staff from that business area, including a team of Occupational Psychologists.

The Advisers are fully aware of the programmes and services provided by the Disability Employment Service, including those that are delivered by key strategic partners within the local disability sector. Therefore, those individuals who are deemed suitable for one of the department's specialist employment programmes, will be referred as such.

The specialist provision offered by my Department's Disability Employment Service includes:

- a dedicated Occupational Psychology Service;
- the Workable (NI) programme;
- the Access to Work (NI) programme;
- Work Connect; and
- the Condition Management Programme.

This menu of health and disability related provision aims to help those who have been unemployed, both short and long term, in relation to confidence building, managing the impact of their health condition in making a return to work, assistance in finding jobs that match abilities, assistance in applying for jobs and providing an opportunity to gain experience in a work setting.

The in-work supports through Workable (NI) and Access to Work (NI) include attachment of a dedicated job coach, disability training for the employer and immediate work colleagues, assistance with workplace adjustments and direct travel cost support for those unable to use public transport due to their disability.

In recognition of the number of people coming off Incapacity related benefits, but who have a disability, the Condition Management Programme has been extended to clients who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance as a result of the reassessment process.

People Moved from Welfare into Employment

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many of the 64,338 people moved from welfare into employment (i) are still in employment; (ii) in retraining programmes; and (iii) are receiving benefits.

(AQW 22517/11-15)

Dr Farry: This information is not available.

People Moved from Welfare into Employment

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many of the 64,338 people who moved from welfare to employment are aged between (i) 18 to 21; (ii) 21 to 35; and (iii) over 35.
(AQW 22527/11-15)

Dr Farry: Of the 64,438 people who moved from welfare into employment between April 2011 and November 2012, (i) 3,024 were aged 18 to 19; (ii) 39,147 were aged 20 to 34; and (iii) 22,110 were over 35. This age breakdown does not add up to the overall total of 64,438 due to rounding errors.

Unfortunately due to the way the data is recorded in NOMIS, it is not possible to provide the data in the age ranges specified in the question.

SAE Education Ltd

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department classes SAE Education Ltd [the SAE Institute – Liverpool] as a private university for the purposes of student funding, and what is the maximum amount of funding available to any student who wishes to study there.
(AQW 22745/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can confirm that SAE Institute in Liverpool is a private institution and is classified as such by my Department.

To cover tuition fees for designated higher education courses at private institutions, a student is entitled to borrow up to a maximum of £3,465 per year for “validated only” degrees or up to a maximum of £9,000 per year for “franchised” degrees. The term “validated only” is used to describe degrees validated by, but not delivered by or on behalf of, a publicly funded institution elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The term “franchised” means degrees delivered by, or on behalf of, a publicly funded institution elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

In addition, maintenance support is available through the student's local education and library board. In 2013/14 the maintenance grant is up to £3,475, depending on their household income. In 2013/14 the maintenance loan is up to £4,840, the same rate that applies for all Northern Ireland students studying outside London and not living with their parents. Students who benefit from a maintenance grant have any maintenance loan reduced by a commensurate amount.

Universities: Student Numbers

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the proposed reform of the Maximum Student Numbers system.
(AQO 4004/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Maximum Student Number, or MaSN as it is commonly known, is the cap which is placed on the number of full-time undergraduate places in each of the higher education institutions in Northern Ireland as a means of controlling the cost to Government of student support.

The MaSN does not apply to part-time undergraduates, postgraduates with the exception of PGCEs and some Social Work places, students from outside the EU or, since academic year 2012/13, students from the rest of GB following the introduction there of higher tuition fees.

A review of MaSN is one of 16 projects being taken forward to implement my Department's higher education strategy, Graduating to Success. The strategy, which I launched in April 2012, gives a timescale to complete this review by 2016. However, I have asked my officials to have made significant progress on it by 2014.

I am conscious that the Department needs to have in place a fit-for-purpose mechanism, which enables it both to control costs in the sector, and to respond to the changing patterns of engagement in higher education. This is critical, as we move to having people from a range of backgrounds and age groups participating, and to having much more part-time and flexible learning.

The outcome of the MaSN review will form an evidence base that will contribute to the review of the higher education funding model; this is another key project in the higher education strategy, helping to support a flexible lifelong learning environment. ApprenticeshipsNI: Creative Arts

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what his Department is doing to promote ApprenticeshipsNI schemes in creative arts.

(AQO 4003/11-15)

Dr Farry: The current review of Apprenticeships will be reporting in the Autumn. Its primary aim is to ensure that future apprenticeships are more closely matched to the growth sectors of the economy, to support its rebalancing and meet the needs of businesses. I have identified the creative industries sector here as one of the growth sectors that my Department will focus its employment and skills provision on. I know there are real opportunities in this sector which I am keen to support through the work of my Department.

In terms of ApprenticeshipsNI schemes, my Department has supported a pilot Creative Industries apprenticeship programme in which five candidates undertook an apprenticeship in Technical Theatre.

The pilot project commenced in April 2011 and was delivered in partnership with Creative and Cultural Skills, a Sector Skills Council, and Belfast Metropolitan College.

The pilot has provided an opportunity to test an apprenticeship framework that is currently available in England, Scotland and Wales. Creative and Cultural Skills have recently presented a report on the pilot and an evaluation is ongoing. The evaluation will inform the way forward.

Currently, my Department does not have contracts with any training suppliers to deliver the qualifications outlined in apprenticeship frameworks for the Creative Industries. However, with the award of new contracts, provision in this sector will be available at Levels 2 and 3.

Up until very recently, the Department has been unable to proceed with the award of the 2010 ApprenticeshipsNI contracts due to a legal challenge. It is now hoped that a timetable for the award of new contracts for ApprenticeshipsNI can be drawn up very shortly.

My Department's Careers Service provides advice and guidance on the opportunities available in the creative arts sector and the vocational and educational qualifications available to help individuals to access the opportunities.

Pathways to Success

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what impact the Pathways to Success programme has had on young people not in education, employment or training.

(AQO 4005/11-15)

Dr Farry: Implementation of 'Pathways to Success' is at an early stage, however initial outcomes are encouraging and as operations accelerate I anticipate significant benefits for young people.

For example, under the Collaboration and Innovation Fund, £9.2 million will be made available until March 2015, to help over 5,500 young people improve their employability prospects. Seventeen projects commenced activity in December 2012 and to date, ten projects have recruited 401 unemployed young people.

The Community Family Support Programme pilot is currently being piloted in targeted areas across Northern Ireland and has supported 47 families since commencing in January 2013.

Early feedback indicates that 13 individual family members have elected to enter education and training since starting the programme. An additional 20 family members have availed of the specialist provision available and family members of working age are focusing on increasing their employability skills.

The Pathways Training Allowance was introduced to ensure there are effective incentives in place to encourage eligible young people to participate in projects which re-engage them with learning and training; to date more than £31,000 has been paid to 161 young people.

The Community Based Access programme pilot commences in September 2013 and will enable 16 to 18 year olds to increase their essential skills qualifications and progress into further education or government funded training.

In addition to the above, the 'Training for Success' programme offers a guaranteed training place for every 16 and 17 year old; currently over 7,000 young people are participating on programmes.

Furthermore, since the launch of the Youth Employment Scheme in July 2012, almost 1,000 employers have signed agreements to participate in the scheme. These employers have offered more than 2,000 workplace opportunities and 720

young people have participated in the scheme, with 260 securing permanent employment.

In combination I think you will agree these initiatives represent a comprehensive programme of action.

Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College: Merger

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQO 4006/11-15)

Dr Farry: On 28 November 2011, I made a statement on teacher education issues to the Assembly. During that statement I indicated my intention to commission a two-stage study of the teacher education infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

The first stage of the study is now complete and I will be making a statement on its findings to the Assembly within the next week or so.

It is anticipated that the second stage of the study will commence during the summer. This will seek to establish options for a more shared and integrated system for the delivery and funding of teacher education.

Disability Employment Service

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether there will be an increase in staff or resources in the Disability Employment Service to assist those with disabilities to adapt to Welfare Reform.

(AQO 4007/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department's provision for people with disabilities is delivered by departmental staff, healthcare professionals, and specialist providers from the third sector; these include Disability Action, Action Mental Health, Mencap, Cedar Foundation, Action on Hearing Loss, Royal National Institute for the Blind and Ulster Supported Employment Ltd.

My Department is a key delivery partner of the Social Security Agency's Incapacity Benefit Reassessment project, as part of Welfare Reform. As part of this, 77 additional staff have been employed, mainly front-line Employment Service Advisers. Officials from the Department are actively considering the staff resource needs for the remainder of the Reassessment period.

All of these Employment Service Advisers have been trained in disability awareness and receive ongoing support and guidance from specialist staff from the Disability Employment Service. During the past year, my Department has recruited an additional Occupational Psychologist, as well as two Access to Work Advisers. The Department's Disability Employment Service currently employs 46 staff.

In relation to the Department's range of Disability programmes, additional funding has been allocated to the Access to Work programme, and the Workable programme has been re-contracted. These

flagship programmes are helping more than one thousand people with more complex disabilities find and retain work.

My Department also funds the Condition Management Programme, which is delivered by the five Health and Social Care Trusts.

In September 2012, my Department launched a new specialist disability programme, entitled Work Connect. This is aimed at helping those clients on Employment Support Allowance to overcome their health and disability-related barriers to employment.

Finally, my Department has offered an additional contribution of around £7.2 million to the European Social Funding of 20 local disability projects. Over the period 1 April 2008 and 31 December 2012, these projects have assisted approximately 19,000 participants with disabilities or health conditions.

Employment: Community-based Schemes

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department has taken to reinstate community-based employment schemes as a method of creating sustainable employment opportunities.

(AQO 4008/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has no plans to introduce a community-based employment scheme.

The Action for Community Employment programme ran from 1981 to 1998 when it was replaced by New Deal. During these years unemployment ranged from 100,000 – 120,000 whereas today, though considered high relative to that of recent years, unemployment stands at just under 65,000.

At its peak, Action for Community Employment employed 10,000 workers at an annual cost in excess of £50 million. To replicate this, based on National Minimum Wage, would cost in excess of £100 million per year which would be unaffordable given the current constraints on Government expenditure.

Steps to Work is my Department's main adult return to work programme. It provides a wide range of assistance to help people find employment. This includes work experience placements, training and subsidised employment. From September 2008 to December 2012 over 106,000 participants have started the programme, while occupancy at December 2012 was 15,185.

An additional 2,800 job opportunities for 18 to 24 year olds and those aged 50 or over have been introduced into the Steps to Work programme. These targeted opportunities include a number sourced solely from within the community and voluntary sector.

The Youth Employment Scheme is a £31million employment and skills package to help young people to compete for jobs. A core strand of this new scheme is an enhanced employer subsidy worth up to £5,570 per year. This new employer subsidy will be for sectors which have the potential to help rebuild and rebalance the economy.

The Local Employment Intermediary Service, LEMIS, is a community employment initiative designed to help the hardest to reach, in targeted areas of multiple deprivation, to find employment. From April 2011 to March 2013, LEMIS has supported 1,121 disadvantaged clients to find employment.

Finally, the Department will soon commence the procurement process for the Steps 2 Success programme. I expect to make an announcement to the Assembly in June.

Stranmillis University College: Chairperson of Governing Body

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the appointment process for the new chairperson of the governing body of Stranmillis University College.

(AQO 4009/11-15)

Dr Farry: The appointment process for a new chairperson of the governing body of Stranmillis University College has been carried out in accordance with guidelines issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

A set of criteria was established and included in a public advertisement for the post and, in greater detail, in an information pack issued to all applicants.

A selection panel was set up consisting of two senior officials from my Department and an independent panel member appointed by the Commissioner.

By the original closing date, only two applications for the post had been received. Given the low number of applications the Selection Panel considered that, the position should be readvertised.

At this stage, the Panel was not aware of the names of the applicants, nor had they reviewed the applications submitted. After seeking advice from the Commissioner that this was a legitimate and compliant course of action, the Panel decided that the competition should be re-advertised.

In order to increase circulation and awareness, the second advertisement was placed in the Sunday Times and the Irish Times in addition to the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the Newsletter.

The vacancy was also publicised through the Whitehall and Industry Group and brought to the attention of the CBI, NICVA, the IoD, the NI Chamber of Commerce and the Chief Executive's Forum. The re-advertisement resulted in an additional six applications being received.

The panel assessed the eight anonymised application forms against the essential criteria to determine those candidates eligible for interview.

After the selection panel interviewed all eligible candidates, it provided me with a list of suitable candidates divided into recommended or highly recommended categories, depending on performance at interview.

It was from this list that I chose the candidate that I believed to be best suited to fill the vacancy.

I have today, announced the appointment of Professor Sir Desmond Rea as Chair of the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College.

Stranmillis University College: Annual Report

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the latest Annual Report from Stranmillis University College.

(AQO 4011/11-15)

Dr Farry: The annual report presents a summary of the College's activities for the 2011/12 academic year. It highlights the main achievement of the College during the year in areas such as teaching, enhancing the employability of its students, continuing professional development, widening participation, international development, research and scholarship and staff and student achievements.

The report also contains an extract from its audited annual financial statements. This shows that the College earned a surplus of some £558k after taking account of recurrent annual grant from my department and other time limited funding. I congratulate the College on its achievements throughout the year.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Top Five Tourist Destinations

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of visitors to the top five tourist destinations, over each of the last five years.

(AQW 20684/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): This information is sourced from the Northern Ireland Visitor Attraction Survey. The report for 2012 will not be available until May 2013 so data has been provided for the years 2007 to 2011. It is important to note that the Visitor Attraction Survey is a voluntary survey and all data presented in the report is based solely on the visitor numbers provided by attractions choosing to take part in the survey. Visitor Attractions that do not appear in the published reports either did not respond or requested confidentiality

Top 5 Destinations in terms of Visitor Numbers, 2007

	Visitor Attraction	Visitor Numbers
1	Crawfordsburn Country Park	760,000
2	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre	712,714
3	Botanic Gardens	660,000
4	Roe Valley Country Park	300,000
5	Belfast Zoological Gardens	294,935

Top 5 Destinations in terms of Visitor Numbers, 2008

	Visitor Attraction	Visitor Numbers
1	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre	751,693
2	Crawfordsburn Country Park	710,000
3	Botanic Gardens	660,000
4	Lagan Valley Regional Park	500,000
5	Oxford Island National Nature Reserve	341,025

Top 5 Destinations in terms of Visitor Numbers, 2009

	Visitor Attraction	Visitor Numbers
1	Crawfordsburn Country Park	950,000
2	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre	714,612
3	Botanic Gardens	700,000
4	Lagan Valley Regional Park	600,000
5	Oxford Island National Nature Reserve	324,947

Top 5 Destinations in terms of Visitor Numbers, 2010

	Visitor Attraction	Visitor Numbers
1	Crawfordsburn Country Park	750,000
2	Botanic Gardens	679,000
3	Lagan Valley Regional Park	670,000
4	Dundonald Ice Bowl	617,568
5	Ulster Museum	542,171

Top 5 Destinations in terms of Visitor Numbers, 2011

	Visitor Attraction	Visitor Numbers
1	The Lagan Towpath	1,080,520
2	Crawfordsburn Country Park	770,000
3	Lurgan Park	750,000
4	Botanic Gardens	650,000
5	Dundonald Ice Bowl	601,347

Further information on the Visitor Attraction Survey can be found at:

http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/tourism-statistics/visitor_attraction_survey-2.htm

or

<http://www.nitb.com/ResearchIntelligence/VisitorAttractions.aspx>

Unanswered Question: AQW 14189/11-15

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why AQW 14189/11-15 has not yet been answered.

(AQW 22063/11-15)

Mrs Foster: AQW 14189/11-15 was not answered until 26 April 2013 due to an administrative error.

InvestNI

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to the four Belfast parliamentary constituencies, to detail (i) the financial assistance that was provided by InvestNI in 2011/2012; (ii) the number of inward investment visits that took place in each in the past five years; and (iii) the business people, business organisations, Belfast City Council officials, political representatives and community representatives that were involved in these inward investment visits.

(AQW 22144/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) Financial assistance provided to companies located in the four Belfast Parliamentary Constituency Areas (PCAs) in 2011-12 is as follows:

PCA	Assistance Offered (£m)
BELFAST EAST	12.93
BELFAST NORTH	2.72
BELFAST SOUTH	22.44
BELFAST WEST	4.46
Total	42.56

Notes:

- 1 Table totals may not add due to rounding.
- 2 Planned Investment includes Assistance Offered.
- 3 These figures include both projects that are specifically aimed at job creation and projects that are not; therefore, job numbers do not directly correlate with the assistance and investment figures included in this table.

- 4 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.
- (ii) The number of inward investment visits to the four Belfast PCAs in the last five years is as follows:

PCA	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	TOTAL
BELFAST EAST	36	85	34	47	51	253
BELFAST NORTH	9	13	17	22	25	86
BELFAST SOUTH	51	96	48	54	62	311
BELFAST WEST	6	13	12	7	7	45
Total	102	207	111	130	145	695

Notes:

Visit figures for 2008-09 include visits associated with the US:

- 1 NI Investment Conference
- (iii) Invest NI records the locations visited during an inward investment visit, including existing investors, property visits and meeting with stakeholders. However, the agency does not maintain a central record of the individuals that were involved in these visits.

Jobs Promoted and Jobs Created

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQO 3853/11-15, to outline the difference between jobs promoted and jobs created.
(AQW 22322/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Government grant support is offered at the start of a project based on a company's commitment to create a set number of new jobs. As Invest NI does not expect to pay all of the investment costs to create these new jobs, it will negotiate with the customer to ensure that there is a significant investment from them in the project as well. Based on these two matched financial commitments, the company will then contract with Invest NI to create an agreed quantity of jobs. These jobs are known as jobs promoted.

As the project is implemented new jobs are created over a period of time, with some stretching out over five years. Therefore, it is important to point out that there is a lag between the promoted jobs and their actual creation by customers. However, these arrangements are monitored and managed by Invest NI and financial support is only released when commitments have been met in line with an agreed plan.

Jobs Promoted and Jobs Created

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether jobs created or jobs promoted is the more reliable measure of long term success of her Department in attracting investment.
(AQW 22323/11-15)

Mrs Foster: At the time that an offer of financial support is provided to a business the number of jobs promoted is the only employment-based metric available. Therefore, jobs promoted will continue to be a useful indicator of the number of jobs expected to be created at some point in the future. It is a reliable indicator of Invest NI activity, together with the amount of assistance offered and the total investment to which this contributes.

Clearly, the number of jobs actually created is important as it is the basis upon which grant payments are made to the business and a true value for money measure on the use of public funding. Invest NI is already reporting the number of jobs created for those assisted through the Jobs Fund. This is because a system was set up to enable this from the outset of the programme.

With regard to other forms of employment-related assistance, Invest NI now has a system in place to enable the recording and collation of both the number of jobs promoted and created. However, it will take a number of years for the job creation data to become meaningful since projects can take up to five years to be fully implemented.

In summary, both measures are valid and required to enable Invest NI to monitor and measure its performance and overall value for money.

Jobs Promoted and Jobs Created

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQO 3853/11-15, to detail the number of (i) jobs promoted; and (ii) jobs created by her Department and InvestNI in the financial years (a) 2010/11; (b) 2011/12; and (c) 2012/13.

(AQW 22324/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) Invest NI promoted (a) 6,828 jobs in 2010-11, (b) 6,480 jobs in 2011-12 and (c) 7,390 in 2012-13.
- (ii) As previously explained in AQO 3583/11-15, Invest NI is developing its systems to enable the reporting of jobs created. Data will therefore be available this year but as offers typically have a three year life span, a detailed and meaningful analysis of this job creation data will not be possible until the end of each contract period. In the interim it will continue to report on the number of jobs promoted, as this is the only employment-based measure available when an offer of assistance is provided. The exception to this are those projects supported through the 'Jobs Fund', which was introduced in 2011-12, where Invest NI already reports on the number of jobs that have been created. This scheme created 1,021 jobs in 2011-12 and 1,678 in 2012-13.

Petroleum Prospecting Licence

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline (i) the reason for the recent advertisement of a Petroleum Prospecting Licence in various areas including those along the western shore of Lough Neagh; and (ii) to advise what consultation has been carried out with the local community, the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and other relevant stakeholders.

(AQW 22372/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI officials placed a notice in the Press during week commencing 25th March, advising of DETI's intention to grant a 'Petroleum Prospecting Licence' (PL1/13) in Counties Antrim, Down, Tyrone, Londonderry and Armagh in accordance with the provisions of the Petroleum (Production) Act (NI) 1964 (PPA). The notice invited any person to make representations to DETI within one month of the 25th March.

DETI's activities in granting of Petroleum Licences in NI are informed by the provisions of the PPA. To ensure that DETI has an informed view of any issues that may have the capacity to impact on the granting of the licence or the terms and conditions thereof, notification is made to a number of organisations including the District Councils of the intent, and they are invited to make representations to the Department.

The PPA places no statutory obligation on DETI to consult regarding the intention to grant a Licence. The notification is primarily designed to inform the earliest stages of the Petroleum Licensing regime in NI as each Petroleum Licence requires to be comprised of its own terms and conditions as appropriate.

DETI notified the following list of organisations of its intention and invited them to make representations:

NI Tourist Board; The National Trust; NIE plc; British Telecom; Department of Education; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety; Northern Ireland Environment Agency; Northern Ireland Office; Department of Environment - Planning Service; Invest NI; Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure; Department of Employment and Learning; Office

of First and Deputy First Minister; Northern Ireland Water; Roads Service; Department of Social Development; Royal Society Protection of Birds (RSPB).

In addition, a letter was issued by DETI to the Chief Executive of the 11 District Councils which the licence area under consideration takes in. Antrim, Cookstown, Dungannon/South Tyrone; Newtownabbey and North Down Councils subsequently contacted DETI seeking further information and were furnished with same.

The Department also placed an advertisement in 11 newspapers; namely: Antrim/Ballymena Times; Belfast Gazette; Belfast Telegraph; East Antrim Gazette; Irish News; Lurgan Mail; Mid Ulster Mail; News Letter; Tyrone Times; Ulster/Armagh Gazette; and the Ulster/Lisburn/Castlereagh Star.

The intention to grant was not notified to the ETI Committee at this juncture on the basis that at this very early stage in the licensing process, the amount of information that DETI could share with the Committee could be limited by the Intellectual Property Rights and Commercial In Confidence sensitivities pertaining to some of the information provided to DETI to facilitate assessment. The processing of this licence application has been conducted by DETI officials in the same manner as all Petroleum Prospection Licences processed by DETI since 2010 and processed as within the ordinary line of business.

Horizon 2020 and Other EU Funding Streams

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) what measures have been put in place to ensure that relevant advice and information will be provided directly to small and medium sized enterprises, micro businesses and other stakeholders to maximise the benefits of Horizon 2020 and other relevant EU funding streams; (ii) how advice and information measures will be provided using collaboration with other Departments; and (iii) any departmental co-operation to date.
(AQW 22374/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) My Department continues to take the lead in improving the support available to those who wish to participate in EU Innovation Programmes, with a continued focus on small and medium-sized enterprises. The NI Horizon 2020 Action Plan identifies a range of actions to be implemented during 2013 to ensure that companies and our research organisations have the necessary support to be successful in Horizon 2020. A major part of this is the introduction of the NI Contact Point (NICP) network. As part of this network, Invest NI are taking on the role of being the 'NICP for SME's.
- (ii) As part of a new Communication Strategy on Horizon 2020, which will be agreed with all organisations who will have a role in supporting applications, a new website will be developed along with a guide to Horizon 2020. In addition, a series of workshops are planned to raise awareness of Horizon 2020 and importantly to advise of the support, financial and non financial, available to help prepare high-quality applications.

As part of this Invest NI will host a workshop – “Preparing for Horizon 2020 in Northern Ireland” at the European Business Network (EBN) 2013 Congress being held in Londonderry between 29th and 31st May 2013. In addition, in partnership with my Department, Intertrade Ireland have organised a major conference on Horizon 2020 in Dublin on 16 May.

- (iii) My Department continues to work in close partnership with other Departments on this issue. Departments have already been involved in the preparation of the Horizon 2020 Action Plan and will continue to work in collaboration on the implementation of that Plan.

Horizon 2020 and Other EU Funding Streams

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions have taken place with the Irish Government about the potential for businesses to co-operate in order to maximise benefits from Horizon 2020 and other EU funding streams.

(AQW 22379/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My department continues to take the lead on developing North/South links to support increased collaboration for Framework 7 applications and in the forthcoming Horizon 2020 programme.

DETI is a member of an All-Island FP7 Steering group which facilitates the sharing of information with counterparts in the Republic of Ireland. Additionally, the NI Horizon 2020 Manager remains in regular contact with counterparts in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) and Enterprise Ireland.

InterTradeIreland also continue to offer valuable supports to those seeking to collaborate on a North/South basis for FP7. This includes a notice-board for the posting of potential project information, travel support to meet partners and the organising of combined events. With this in mind the 3rd annual 'Collaborate to Innovate' event is being organised for the 16th May in Dublin and will see speakers from the European Commission, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and across the EU discussing Horizon 2020 and what supports will be available.

Grid Connections for Wind Turbines

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what efforts are being made to (i) reduce the cost; and (ii) increase the speed of grid connections for wind turbines.

(AQW 22424/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The cost and speed of grid connections is a matter for Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) operating under a regulatory framework determined by the Utility Regulator and detailed in the company's licence. My Department has no statutory role or remit in the process to provide a grid connection for renewable electricity technologies.

Off Shore Wind Turbines

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what the additional cost per household for electricity consumers will be as a result of the introduction of the input of offshore wind turbines into the power supply grid.

(AQW 22511/11-15)

Mrs Foster: All renewable electricity generation is currently incentivised through the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO). The cost of the NIRO is socialised across the UK and is passed onto the consumer through energy bills and currently represents approximately £12 to £15 on an average annual domestic electricity bill.

The NIRO will close to new generation in 2017 after which time large scale technologies such as offshore wind turbine will be incentivised by Feed in Tariffs with Contracts for Difference (FIT CfDs). The costs of the FIT CfDs will continue to be spread across the UK consumer base as currently happens with the NIRO and is estimated to be approximately £9 on an average annual domestic electricity bill.

South Down Offshore Wind Farm

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what percentage of the financial risk will the consumer be expected to underwrite if the proposed South Down off-shore wind farm does not generate enough electricity to recover investor costs.

(AQW 22512/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The financial risk and recovery of investor costs is a commercial matter for the developer of the proposed wind farm in South Down. The wind farm will not receive an income stream from

renewable obligation certificates or feed in tariffs with contracts for difference until the wind farm is actually generating electricity.

If the offshore wind farm, in line with other renewable generators, is constrained by the System Operator then it may be entitled to a compensation payment from the Single Electricity Market (SEM) in line with the market rules that will be in place at the time. The Utility Regulator approves the level of compensation payments in the SEM to ensure that they are at the least cost to the consumer. From 1 January 2018 curtailed generation will not be paid for via the market.

South Down Offshore Wind Farm

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether any maritime rights of way will be extinguished to accommodate the proposed South Down wind farm and any other proposed wind farms.

(AQW 22513/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The proposed Offshore Renewable Energy Bill, due for introduction in Spring 2014, will provide for the extinguishing, suspending or allowing with conditions the public rights of navigation that usually apply on the sea. It is proposed that offshore wind farm developers must ask for a declaration to extinguish public rights of navigation when applying for consent for construction, extension or operation of generating stations under Article 39 of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

The extinguishment of maritime rights is not an automatic right, is assessed on a case-by-case basis and is subject to consultation with relevant bodies including the Commissioner of Irish Lights as General Lighthouse Authority and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. This is to minimise any impact on all legitimate users of the sea.

Mechanisms to Enhance Trade

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether all mechanisms which are used to enhance trade are beneficial to the economy.

(AQW 22534/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department and Invest NI regularly evaluate the benefits of its main programmes and an independent evaluation of Invest NI's suite of trade Interventions was carried out in 2011. That evaluation concluded that the suite of trade interventions provided value for money, and that the Invest NI Trade Programme exhibited positive benefits in terms of turnover, employment and GVA.

My Department is currently carrying out research to examine how we can grow and diversify our export base over the coming years. This will not only identify key export markets which local companies can exploit, but will also consider the extent to which existing provision of export support available across all organisations can support this.

Indigenous Business

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether consideration will be given to introducing a diversity approach through which to develop indigenous business.

(AQW 22536/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is committed to the principles of Equality and Diversity under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. We have an Equality Scheme and Action Plan and have carried out 6 major Equality Impact Assessments on our Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy, our Recruitment & Selection Policy, our Business Development Solutions Policy, our Corporate Plans and our Communications and Access Policy.

Based on feedback we produce updated action plans to demonstrate how we have listened to stakeholders and mainstreamed equality into the organisation. Examples of positive outcomes include: special arrangements to accommodate female parents on the Business Start Programme; outreach

events for ethnic communities; tailored events for potential entrepreneurs with disabilities and making signers and translators available where required.

In common with all public authorities, Invest NI has also implemented a Disability Action Plan, which outlines our commitment to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Integrated Economic Strategy: Ireland

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the manner in which she will work with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to develop an integrated economic strategy for the island of Ireland.

(AQW 22538/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I co-operate with my counterparts in the Republic of Ireland where it is beneficial to the Northern Ireland economy. However, both economies face very different challenges. The Irish Government has almost double our unemployment rate, operates in the Eurozone and is subject to a severe fiscal regime imposed by the bail out from the European Union. I have therefore no plans to develop an all-Ireland strategy but I remain committed to delivering actions detailed within our own Northern Ireland Economic Strategy and the more recent Economy and Jobs Initiative. I believe that implementation of these activities will deliver growth, prosperity, jobs and rebalance the local economy in the longer term.

Economic Strategy

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the steps taken to address the limitations and age of the economic data highlighted within the Economic Strategy.

(AQW 22541/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Economic Strategy utilises the latest available economic and labour market data, produced by NISRA, HMRC and ONS. However, the Strategy highlighted that steps were being taken to improve coverage and, where possible, the timeliness of some of the economic data, particularly regarding exports.

In order to improve the timeliness and coverage of official economic statistics, NISRA introduced the Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index in January 2013 to provide a new measure of overall economic activity. The index is produced quarterly and is published within four months of the period to which it refers.

In addition to existing export surveys, NISRA has also increased the sample size and introduced new questions in the Annual Business Inquiry and the Index of Production to improve the measure of exports. Collection and validation of the data are ongoing.

These additions will improve the coverage of service sector exports and provide more timely export data for the production industries as identified by the Economic Strategy.

In addition, my officials continue to discuss with NISRA improvements to exports and other economic data in ongoing reviews of statistical surveys.

Mechanisms Used to Lower Unemployment

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether all mechanisms used to lower unemployment are being explored; how she proposes to address high unemployment.

(AQW 22543/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Tackling high levels of unemployment is the responsibility of the whole Executive. The Northern Ireland Economic Strategy sets out what the Executive is doing, across Departments, to boost the competitiveness of the Northern Ireland Economy.

The path we have chosen to increase employment and wealth, is to rebalance the economy by building a larger and more export-driven private sector.

The actions within the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy seek to rebalance the local economy by stimulating higher rates of innovation, increasing skills levels and encouraging export growth. Executive Departments are also taking action aimed at rebuilding the local labour market in the aftermath of the global downturn.

Recognising that recovery has been slower than expected and that difficulties in our key trading partners were still impacting on the Northern Ireland labour market, the Executive launched the £200 million Economy and Jobs Initiative in November 2012.

This package will provide a significant boost to the economy in Northern Ireland with a focus on initiatives which will provide support to people, businesses and infrastructure.

Planning Application M/2011/0126/F

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has raised the delay in planning application M/2011/0126/F with the Minister of the Environment.

(AQW 22548/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department and Invest NI recognise the importance of companies such as DMAC Engineering Limited to the Materials Handling Sector and to Mid-Ulster.

I have been in contact with Minister Attwood and it is my understanding the planning application is progressing.

Credit Union in Portadown

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the recent case on a Credit Union in Portadown, whether any (i) assessments; and (ii) checks been made regarding the viability and sustainability of the other Credit Unions.

(AQW 22581/11-15)

Mrs Foster: On 1st April 2012, responsibility for the regulation of Northern Ireland credit unions transferred to the former Financial Services Authority (FSA). From April 2013, all credit unions in the United Kingdom are now the subject of dual-regulation by the FSA's successor bodies, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

My Department continues to be the registration authority for Northern Ireland credit unions and is consulted as necessary by the UK regulatory authorities.

Northern Ireland Events Company

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 10859/11-15, what action she now proposes to take in relation to the Northern Ireland Events Company.

(AQW 22606/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Company inspection into the Northern Ireland Events Company is ongoing and a final draft report is expected by 30 June 2013.

Jobs Fund: Tourism Sector Jobs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many tourism sector jobs have been funded through the Jobs Fund for (i) 2012/13; and (ii) 2013/14.

(AQW 22608/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During 2012/13 two tourism-related projects were offered support through the Jobs Fund, promoting a total of 36 jobs. This includes £99,000 of support towards the creation of 33 new jobs in the Enniskillen Hotel, a new development by Damiraco Ltd.

No tourism projects have been supported to date during 2013/14, however Invest NI continues to build a pipeline of projects that will lead to further new job creation within the tourism sector and across a broad range of sectors in Northern Ireland.

Single Wind Turbines

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for a breakdown of the number of (i) 0kW to 50kW; (ii) 50kW to 100kW; (iii) 100kW to 200kW; and (iv) 200kW to 250kW single wind turbines which are (a) new machines; and (b) second-hand machines.

(AQW 22613/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A breakdown of onshore wind generating stations by capacity was provided in response to AQW 22284/11-15. The Department does not keep records of whether the turbines installed are new or second-hand nor is this information retained on the Ofgem Renewables and CHP Register.

Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when a domestic renewable heat incentive will be introduced.

(AQW 22671/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department is currently finalising analysis work on the design of the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) with a view to launching a public consultation on the policy option. The proposals for a domestic RHI are part of phase two of the RHI scheme that will also consider the expansion of support to the non-domestic market.

The development of a domestic RHI is complex and assessment has been required on the eligible technologies, the required levels of support, the potential costs and how the scheme will be administered. In the interim the Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme (which was launched in May 2012) has received around 850 applications from domestic customers wishing to install renewable heat technologies and my Department has already offered support of £1.3million, equating to an investment in the market of £4.2million.

The launch of the domestic RHI will be dependent on the outcome of the public consultation, the development of administration arrangements and the passage of subordinate legislation. It would be my intention that the scheme could be in place before the end of 2013.

G8 Summit

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what benefits, in terms of employment, will be generated as a result of the G8 summit.

(AQO 4012/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The G8 summit 2013 will provide a singular opportunity for Northern Ireland to showcase itself to a global audience as a positive place to live, work, visit, study, invest and do business with.

There will be a short term economic benefit to our tourism and hospitality sectors, which may result in some additional employment opportunities.

In the longer term, we would hope that the international media exposure which will come from the Summit will support our efforts to win new inward investment and for our local companies to develop their export activity, with the potential for further employment opportunities.

Home Energy Efficiency Measures

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the funding of home energy efficiency measures through an energy supplier obligation would require regulation of the oil industry.
(AQW 22710/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is planned that legislation to set up the framework for an energy efficiency obligation will be brought before the Northern Ireland Assembly in the pending Energy Bill. It is further envisaged that secondary legislation will be necessary to bring an energy efficiency obligation into effect. That legislation, subject to the views of the Assembly, will put in place the regulatory requirements for those parties, covering a range of energy sectors, obligated by the energy efficiency obligation. It is not currently envisaged that wider regulation of obligated parties will be necessary.

Reduce Electricity Costs for Businesses

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans her Department is pursuing to reduce electricity costs for businesses.
(AQW 22737/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have noted, with concern, the initial analysis by the Utility Regulator, which shows that electricity costs for our Industrial and Commercial sector are among the highest in Europe. I have written to the Regulator asking for further, prioritised analysis to examine why this is the case and suggested the formation of a working group to include my Department. I have made the point that any further analysis should examine how other jurisdictions may be operating to deliver, on the surface, better prices for businesses and if this is at the expense of other consumers.

Department of the Environment

Post-Excavation Storage and Archiving

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of the Environment what amendments would be required to PPS 6 to increase the provision for post-excavation storage and archiving of artefacts from undeposited sources.
(AQW 21854/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The baseline quantification survey of the archival material held by archaeological practices from excavations conducted in Northern Ireland has been completed. A report of the findings has been submitted to a working group comprised of officials. It will come to me for consideration, when I will assess its various recommendations.

Planning Permission: House in the Countryside

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment to detail his Department's plans to overcome the barriers faced by non-farming rural dwellers in securing planning permission for a house in the countryside.
(AQW 22265/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I believe that as PPS21 has been rolled out during my tenure as Minister, more and more there is the evidence that the policy works in a proper way for non-farming rural dwellers.

Whilst PPS21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' does not include a policy specifically for non-farming rural dwellers almost all of its provisions provide opportunities for them. These include policies for the re use or replacement of existing buildings as well as provision for new dwellings within existing clusters of buildings and in designated Dispersed Rural Communities.

As part of my rolling operational review into PPS21, I met with former members of the Independent Working Group, established by the previous Executive and many others to examine this issue. Their views have been taken account in the review.

I would stress that my review is, however, not a fundamental review of PPS21 policies. It is intended to ensure both consistency and increased flexibility of decision-making in line with the content and substance of the existing policy. This should benefit all those seeking to build in the countryside, including non-farming rural families. I will shortly be making a statement to the Assembly and would refer also to the DOE Oral Questions of 22 April 2013 (Question 2 AQO 3835/11-15) in this regard.

Driver and Vehicle Agency, Coleraine

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what additional services the Driver and Vehicle Agency in Coleraine has provided over the last two years.

(AQW 22297/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In June 2011 the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) introduced a new service to improve and streamline the process for upgrading a driving licence following a test pass. The new process – Automatic Driving Licence Issue (ADLI) means following a test pass and provided certain conditions are met, the Driving Examiner will issue an electronic notification detailing the test pass to the Driver Licensing Division who then automatically issue the upgraded licence to the customer. This simplified service means applicants do not have to send their test pass certificate and provisional licence for upgrade to the Agency and licences are issued more promptly. Approximately 30,000 applicants per year benefit from the improved service.

The DVA in Coleraine has provided other new or additional services over the last two years. As is widely known, there are ongoing discussions with DfT in relation to integration of services which would see additional services to NI customers. However, DfT has argued that integration means centralisation of services in Swansea, with the serious job impact on DVA. I oppose and resist this view, believe integration could be achieved with the protection of NI jobs. I will continue to make this case.

Approved Planning Applications

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment what proportion of all planning applications were approved, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 22331/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the period 1 April 2008 to end of 31 December 2012, a total of 79,568 planning applications have been approved out of a total 85,728 decisions representing a 92.8% approval rate.

Table 1 below details the number and proportion of applications approved, in each of the last five business years.

Table 1 - The number of applications approved¹ between 2008/09 and Q3 of 2012/13²

	Approvals	Approval rate
2008/09	23,211	94.2%
2009/10	19,016	94.0%
2010/11	14,456	89.3%
2011/12	13,384	92.2%
2012/13 (Q1-Q3)	9,501	93.4%

Notes:

- 1 Decided applications may not have been received in the same time period. Applications decided do not include withdrawn applications.
- 2 Q3 of 2012/13 is our latest published information.

Northern Ireland Red Squirrel Forum: Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the level of funding provided to the Northern Ireland Red Squirrel Forum, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 22369/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum (NISF) was established to bring together statutory and non-statutory organisations as well as representatives of Country Parks and local volunteer organisations dedicated to protecting the Red Squirrel in Northern Ireland. The Forum meets in Government maintained facilities and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency provides the Chair and Secretariat. The Agency provided a Natural Heritage Grant of £7540 to the Glens and Tollymore Red Squirrel Groups who applied to the Grant scheme on behalf of all the local squirrel groups for monitoring equipment during the 2011/12 round of funding.

Full Driving Licence

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment how many people hold a full driving licence.

(AQW 22406/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The latest DOE Official Statistics reporting numbers of full driving licence holders by entitlement are detailed in the table below.

Figures have been sourced from the Driver & Vehicle Agency Compendium of Key Statistics Quarter Three 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2012 – Revised.

It should be noted that licence holders are counted in each category for which they have full entitlement, therefore adding the figures together does not give the number of people with a full driving licence as some drivers may have multiple driving licence category entitlements.

Licence Entitlement	Numbers of Full Driving Licence Holders
Private Cars/Light Vans	1,042,730
Motorcycles	108,955
Large Goods Vehicles	48,153
Passenger Carrying Vehicles	8,957

Ballymena Borough Council: Adults with Special Needs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 21701/11-15, what action he intends to take to address the fact that Ballymena Borough Council neither employs nor offers placements to adults with special needs.

(AQW 22435/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Ballymena Borough Council has advised that in answer to AQW 21701/11-15 it employed a very narrow interpretation of the term “special needs”. Within a broader definition, which would include all persons with disabilities, (including physical, sensory, learning, mental health and hidden) Ballymena Borough Council has confirmed that it does employ and provide placements within these criteria.

Whilst there is no fixed number of posts, the Council further advised that it endeavours to support all requests for placements. I hope this corrects the perception created by the previous information from the Council. I know that the Council officials will want to have an inclusive approach to employment issues.

DOE: Invoices Paid and Unpaid

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of the Environment to detail, for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, (i) the total number of invoices paid by his Department and its respective Arm's-Length Bodies; (ii) the number of invoices paid within thirty calendar days; (iii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt; (iv) how each of his Department's Arm's-Length Bodies has performed against the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and (v) the number of invoices that remain unpaid.

(AQW 22521/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides the information requested.

DOE (INC ALB'S)	2012/13
Total number of invoices paid	29,202
Total number of invoices paid within thirty calendar days	28,672
Total number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt	26,878
Performance of ALB'S against 30 day performance target:	
Local Government Staff Commission	97.4%
Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Scheme	98%
Total number of invoices that remain unpaid	70

Local Government Employees

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment what requirements or flexibility exist for local government authorities to accommodate employees both present and future who conscientiously object to working on a Sunday or on other occasions of religious importance.

(AQW 22583/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Local councils are independent employers. The vast majority of employees in district councils are employed under the conditions set out in the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service. The employment conditions of council employees are governed by the provisions contained in their contracts of employment which will include which days of the week they are required to work. There is no right for an employee to be excused from working in circumstances where it is required by and agreed in the contract of employment.

There are, however, no impediments to councils, as employers, exercising such flexibility as they see fit with regard to working on a Sunday or on other occasions of religious importance.

Full-Time and Part-Time Council Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment how many (i) full-time; and (ii) part-time staff are employed by each council.

(AQW 22585/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The information that you have requested is detailed in the table below. The figures provided have been taken from the councils 2011/ 2012 certified accounts and are currently the most up to date the department holds.

Council	Full time numbers employed	Part time numbers employed	Total number employed
Antrim	264	51	315
Ards	314	149	463

Council	Full time numbers employed	Part time numbers employed	Total number employed
Armagh	245	261	506
Ballymena	245	66	311
Ballymoney	97	45	142
Banbridge	175	108	283
Belfast	2,092	445	2,537
Carrickfergus	163	52	215
Castlereagh	249	206	455
Coleraine	272	67	339
Cookstown	198	72	270
Craigavon *	449	129	578
Derry	486	111	597
Down	286	113	399
Dungannon	210	86	296
Fermanagh	279	68	347
Larne	159	52	211
Limavady	132	51	183
Lisburn	403	116	519
Magherafelt	145	25	170
Moyle	109	13	122
Newry & Mourne	391	84	475
Newtownabbey	307	291	598
North Down	347	113	460
Omagh	254	131	385
Strabane	148	63	211
Total	8,419	2,968	11,387

* uncertified accounts

Local Councils: Publish Minutes of Council Proceedings

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the accountability requirements on local councils to publish minutes of council proceedings in a timely manner.

(AQW 22611/11-15)

Mr Attwood: At present there is no statutory requirement on councils to publish minutes of council meetings. They are however required to make the minutes available for inspection by electors. I am committed to improving the transparency in the operation of councils and their decision-making as part of the local government reform programme. The Local Government Bill, to be introduced to the Assembly shortly, will provide that the new councils must make background papers, written records of meetings and any decisions available to the public unless they contain exempt information. A duty

will be placed on councils to publish the minutes of meetings on their websites. It will be a matter for councils themselves to set out a timeframe for publication of this material as agreed by council members, but clearly if guidance and further prescription on this is required, I will consider the issue further.

Removal of References to Community Benefits

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to list the organisations, or individuals, that advocated the removal of references to community benefits from the draft PPS 18.

(AQW 22612/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In total, 90 separate consultation responses were received to the consultation on draft PPS 18. Of these, TCI Renewables, RES, Renewables UK (formerly BWEA), and Turley Associates while not opposed to the concept of community benefits, all sought the removal of such references within the context of the policy document. The Royal Town Planning Institute sought the delivery of community benefits through Article 40 agreements only.

In addition, Lisburn City Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council, SWAMP and NILGA (supported directly by Newry and Mourne and Coleraine District Councils) all expressed reservations about citing community benefits within the PPS.

I strongly support the principle that communities which play host to major or regionally significant development, such as wind farms, should derive long term and meaningful benefits from those developments.

I have instructed my officials to organise a Summit on community benefits which will take place on Wednesday 5 June. My intent is that the work of the Summit will inform subsequent guidance the Department may issue to developers and community groups in respect of delivering or securing community benefits.

Single Use Carrier Bag Levy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what monitoring his Department will undertake on the impact of the plastic bag levy on small shops, including whether the levy is encouraging customers to go to larger shopping stores.

(AQW 22724/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has established a Carrier Bag Levy Team (CBLT) to administer the carrier bag charging arrangements and ensure that sellers comply with the Regulations.

The Team includes a number of Customer Relations' Managers who will monitor compliance and investigate alleged breaches of the Regulations. This will be done mainly through visits to retail premises and the analysis of quarterly returns from sellers. The CBLT has built, and continues to build, relationships and work in partnership with both small and large retailers to provide education, advice and guidance on the levy. To ensure consistency and transparency the monitoring process of all retailers will be applied equally across Northern Ireland.

The Department is not aware of any information which would suggest the levy is encouraging customers to go to larger shopping stores.

Single-Use Plastic Bag Levy

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact of the single-use plastic bag levy to date, and its implications for shops and businesses.

(AQW 22874/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Levy is being administered and implemented by an established in-house Departmental team. The Carrier Bag Levy Team (CBLT) continues to work closely and in partnership

with retailers across the country in educating and creating awareness of the Levy to ensure a high level of compliance is delivered.

Prior to, and since 8 April there has been significant correspondence and face to face interaction with retailers and the public and I am pleased with how the Levy has been both received and supported. I am also encouraged by early feedback informing of a noticeable shift in customer behaviour with significantly fewer single use bags being used and many shoppers bringing their own bags.

While my Department will not validate the first set of levy returns until the end of July 2013, officials have advised that many retailers both small and large have already informally advised of a reduction in usage of single use bags of between 75% and 98% which very much supports my efforts to bring about at least an 80% reduction in bag use.

I believe the levy introduction was behind the public mood, one of making contribution to addressing the issue of waste. The positive reaction of such a large number of customers and many retailers confirm this.

Single-use Carrier Bag Levy

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the operation of the single use carrier bag levy.

(AQO 4039/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Levy is being administered and implemented by an established in-house Departmental team. The Carrier Bag Levy Team (CBLT) continues to work closely and in partnership with retailers across the country in educating and creating awareness of the Levy to ensure a high level of compliance is delivered.

Prior to, and since 8 April there has been significant correspondence and face to face interaction with retailers and the public and I am very pleased with how the Levy has been both received and supported. I am also encouraged by early feedback informing of a noticeable shift in customer behaviour with significantly fewer single use bags being used and many shoppers bringing their own bags.

While my Department will validate, the first set of levy returns until the end of July 2013, officials have advised that many retailers both small and large have already informed of a reduction in usage of single use bags of between 75% and 98% which is very much in supporting my efforts to bring about at least an 80% reduction in bag use.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment how many Areas of Special Scientific Interest have been declared.

(AQO 4034/11-15)

Mr Attwood: To date the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has declared a total of 360 Areas of Special Scientific Interest, 6.7% of the NI land mass, 104,861 acres. The ambition was to have 440 by 2016. At the current rate of 15 per year (a PFG commitment and met in 2011/12 and 2012/13), DOE will fall short of the ambition. I will continue to assess the issue.

Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils: Merger

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment, given that he has secured funding to support councils through the change management process, to outline his plans for the Lisburn and Castlereagh Cluster, which will have to manage the merger of their two councils as well as the modification of their boundaries with Belfast City Council area.

(AQO 4035/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department wrote to all Council Chief Executives on 17 April 2013, including Lisburn and Castlereagh, encouraging Councils to utilise the funding on a cluster basis, primarily for

Change Manager appointments. This is to enable Change Managers to provide integral support in the implementation of the reform programme at a local level. There is however some flexibility if clusters want to use the funding for other change management functions, if they think this is more appropriate, but this must be justified to the Department on business grounds.

Lisburn and Castlereagh may be in a different position, given the modifications to their boundaries with areas transferring into Belfast, but all councils are to some extent having to manage mergers with constituent councils. Therefore, I will expect Lisburn and Castlereagh to demonstrate clear commitment to taking the change forward by developing and implementing detailed plans for convergence.

In the meantime, I will continue to support all council clusters by ensuring best use of the Executive's funding package and will soon place Transition Committees on a statutory footing to strengthen their roles. I will also hold the chairs of all Transition Committees to account on a regular basis through the Regional Transition Committee structures.

Shadow Councils

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment what will be the functions of the Shadow Councils before they formally take over on 1 April 2015.

(AQO 4037/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Following the next set of local government elections in 2014, the eleven newly-elected councils will exist in shadow form until 31 March 2015. The intention is that the new councils will use this shadow period to build upon the work of the Statutory Transition Committees in preparing to take on their full range of responsibilities and 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, do the necessary preparatory work to adopt their full range of powers and responsibilities on 1 April 2015. This will include key tasks such as agreeing a corporate and business plan for the new council, agreeing a budget and striking of the rate for the first financial year of the new council.

The detail of the role of the new councils during the shadow period will be subject to a full public consultation later this year.

Non-Farming Rural Dwellers

Mr Milne asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his Department's plans to improve the prospects of non-farming rural dwellers, who wish to live in the countryside, obtaining planning permission.

(AQO 4038/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My rolling review into the operation of PPS21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' has considered the issue of non-farming rural dwellers. As part of the review I met with former members of the Independent Working Group established by the previous Executive to examine this issue. Their views will be reflected in the review.

I made clear at the outset of my review that it was not a fundamental review of PPS21 policies. It is, however, intended to ensure both consistency and increased flexibility of decision-making in line with the content and substance of the existing policy. This should benefit all those seeking to build in the countryside, including non-farming rural families.

I would ask you to note that whilst PPS21 does not include a policy specifically for non-farming rural dwellers, almost all of its provisions provide opportunities for them. These include policies for the conversion and reuse of non-residential buildings as dwellings; replacement dwellings; new dwellings within an existing cluster or ribbon of buildings; social and affordable housing schemes; development within designated Dispersed Rural Communities; and a dwelling to meet compelling personal or domestic circumstances.

I will shortly be making a statement to the Assembly with the conclusions of the review to date.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on any discussions with the UK Government around Driver and Vehicle Agency jobs in Coleraine.

(AQO 4040/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As you know, vehicle licensing is delivered in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA), under an agreement between the Department of the Environment and the Department for Transport. The Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), located in Swansea, is responsible for vehicle licensing services across the UK, and is nearing completion of a project to integrate the separate computer systems in Britain and the North, to produce an integrated system capable of meeting the vehicle licensing needs of customers across the UK.

As part of the implementation of this integrated computer system, the DVLA has proposed centralising all of the work not done online or in Post Offices in Swansea and terminating the agreement with DVA.

Since I became aware of this proposal, I have been in regular contact at a Ministerial level with the Department of Transport setting out clearly my strong view that the integration of the computer system, whilst improving the services for customers, should not lead to the centralisation of jobs in Swansea at the expense of jobs in the North.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister raised the issue of the threat to DVA jobs at a meeting with the Prime Minister on 26 March and provided Mr Cameron with a copy of my letter to them of 25 March, which outlined, in particular, my concerns surrounding the lack of effective consultation on the proposals to centralise work in Swansea. The Prime Minister undertook to consider the implications of the centralisation proposals.

I met the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 11 April 2013 and set out the inadequacies in the consultation process in relation to DVLA's proposal. I also pointed out the lack of any assessment of the impact of the proposed changes on Northern Ireland, in particular on Coleraine. I reminded the Secretary of State of the dossier that I supplied to Transport Ministers that sets out the wider social and economic impact of the loss 320 jobs. I also emphasised that a decision to cut these jobs was unacceptable and would be inconsistent with ongoing discussions between London and the Executive on an economic pact. The Secretary of State undertook to discuss the issues with the Transport Minister.

On 7 May 2013, I had a further meeting with Stephen Hammond, the Minister in the Department for Transport responsible for vehicle licensing. At this meeting, I once again challenged the lack of effective and meaningful consultation with stakeholders in the North and the absence of any assessment of the potential impact of DVLA's centralisation proposals on staff and the social and economic conditions.

Mr Hammond informed that, at this late stage, he was still waiting to see the impact assessments from DVLA, which he would receive shortly and fully consider before making a decision. I sought assurances that these assessments would be shared with me, before he takes them into account, in order to be assured that these have been properly compiled and, where appropriate, challenge any conclusions reached.

I also reminded Mr Hammond of the wider social, economic and political context and of the disproportionate impact that the loss of 320 jobs would have on the Northern Ireland economy, particularly on Coleraine.

Since becoming Minister I have made – repeatedly and robustly – the case for retention of all DVA jobs in NI. I believe the quality of the DVA NI service and its staff, the circumstances in NI, the hugely disproportionate impact on Coleraine and the North West, the flawed approach of DfT on consultation and assessment of impact (etc) mean the campaign to save the jobs will be pursued relentlessly.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 17631/11-15, to detail the £3.39m in assets that his Department has identified to the Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board, broken down by year.

(AQW 21452/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): DFP has completed the following asset sales during the period:

FY12/13 1a Belt Road, Londonderry	£0.496
FY13/14 2-14 George Street, Ballymena	£0.12m

The following buildings are currently being marketed for sale:

- Northland House, Frederick Street, Belfast;
- Mall West, Armagh (as part of a DSD urban regeneration scheme);
- 21 Hospital Road, Omagh.

Work on estate consolidation is continuing with a view to enabling a number of other assets to be brought to market in FY14/15 and beyond.

EU Sources: Funding

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount of funding that has been received from any EU sources in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 21495/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Details of EU structural funding received in the last 10 years through NI Government departments is detailed in the table below.

EU STRUCTURAL FUND RECEIPTS IN £M STERLING

YEAR	ERDF	ESF	EAGGF	FIFG	TOTAL
2002/03	74.088	39.958	0.000	0.000	114.046
2003/04	127.185	2.844	1.754	3.734	135.517
2004/05	29.360	43.545	15.981	4.783	93.669
2005/06	196.497	60.269	27.202	1.594	285.562
2006/07	124.850	90.258	12.585	2.624	230.317
2007/08	45.707	54.423	10.474	0.948	111.552
2008/09	16.974	1.705	5.779	3.930	28.388
2009/10	28.984	13.947	2.768	0.506	46.205
2010/11	52.880	19.425	4.662	0.000	76.967
2011/12	53.052	0.000	0.000	0.148	53.200
Total	749.577	326.374	81.205	18.267	1,175.423

Garden Centre Losses: Extreme Weather

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration his Department has given, or intends to give, for the losses suffered by garden centres during the recent extreme winter weather, given the refusal of insurers to insure greenhouses and polytunnels, many of which were severely damaged.

(AQW 21496/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The only conceivable way my Department could provide help is through the rating system but for the reasons I have outlined below I do not think this is appropriate or helpful. If a compelling case can be made that financial support is justified then this would be a matter for the Executive to consider and respond.

So far as the rating system is concerned, nursery grounds and market gardens are treated as agricultural land for rating purposes and therefore are not rated. Polytunnels and greenhouses on such land are normally treated likewise. However, commercial garden centres and structures on them are subject to business rates.

In any case, my Department currently has no authority to offer special help to particular business sectors through the rating system and any change to this position would require new primary legislation to be passed through the Assembly, which would not deliver help to anyone within a reasonable time period.

If specific garden centres are struggling with their rates they should contact LPS and discuss the possibility of an extended payment plan to help them through this difficult period.

Garden Centre and Nursery Losses: Extreme Weather

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he will consider rate rebates for garden centres and nurseries that have suffered financial losses during the recent extreme winter weather.

(AQW 21498/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The only conceivable way my Department could provide help is through the rating system but for the reasons I have outlined below I do not think this is appropriate or helpful. If a compelling case can be made that financial support is justified then this would be a matter for the Executive to consider and respond.

So far as the rating system is concerned, nursery grounds and market gardens are treated as agricultural land for rating purposes and therefore are not rated. Polytunnels and greenhouses on such land are normally treated likewise. However, commercial garden centres and structures on them are subject to business rates.

In any case, my Department currently has no authority to offer special help to particular business sectors through the rating system and any change to this position would require new primary legislation to be passed through the Assembly, which would not deliver help to anyone within a reasonable time period.

If specific garden centres are struggling with their rates they should contact LPS and discuss the possibility of an extended payment plan to help them through this difficult period.

European Funding Receipts

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the proportion of European Funding receipts allocated locally.

(AQW 21952/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details the proportion of the 2007-13 European Structural Fund Programmes which has been allocated for local delivery which falls within my departmental responsibility.

The PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes are cross-border cooperation programmes, and the allocations presented in respect of these programmes are joint UK / Ireland allocations. The local delivery allocation under INTERREG IVA may increase pending the outcome of a current project assessment process.

Programme	Total budget (£ million)	Local delivery element	Local delivery allocation (£ million)	Proportion allocated through local delivery
PEACE III Programme	289	Local peace and reconciliation Action Plans	89	30.8%
INTERREG IVA Programme	223	Projects led by Local Authority based partnerships	52	23.4%

An exchange rate of £1=€1.15 has been used.

Financial Measures in Place to Assist the Unemployed

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what financial measures there are to assist people who were previously self-employed but are now unemployed because of the economic downturn.

(AQW 22032/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Executive has a number of measures in place to assist those who have become unemployed as a consequence of the downturn, including those who might have been previously self-employed. These include a range of Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) and Invest NI initiatives designed to both help such individuals overcome any barriers to work they may face and to promote greater employment opportunities in Northern Ireland.

These include Steps to Work which is DEL's main adult return to work programme which is flexibly designed to assist participants find and sustain employment. DEL support also includes an adviser service in each Jobs and Benefits office/JobCentre which can provide assistance on a wide range of issues. Job search is further facilitated by the DEL's vacancy services being available online while DEL also provides an all-age careers service which provides impartial information, advice and guidance to adults throughout Northern Ireland.

A broad range of support is also available from Invest NI. For example, Invest NI's Regional Start Initiative provides support and guidance to those people who may be thinking of running their own business. Invest NI is also encouraging social enterprises in regions where there have traditionally been few and supporting new social economy businesses with growth potential. While the aim of Invest NI's Jobs Fund is to create jobs quickly with a guiding principle that they should help individuals get a job from which they will gain appropriate experience to enable them over time to apply for a better job.

My Department has also sought to maximise the training and employment opportunities that procurement spend can deliver for the unemployed through the inclusion of social clauses in government contracts.

Northern Ireland Civil Service: Equal Pay Entitlement Claims

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many expressions of concern his Department received from civil servants, who retired between 1974 and 2003, with regards to Northern Ireland Civil Service equal pay entitlement claims.

(AQW 22217/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Whilst a large volume of interest has been generated around the NICS equal pay settlement, the information requested is not readily available and could only be collected at disproportionate costs. However my officials have advised that they have no specific recollection of expressions of concern from staff who retired between 1974 and 2003.

Multiple Deprivation

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the accuracy of the current methodology used to measure poverty and deprivation in rural areas; and whether he has any plans to revise the current methodology for assessing multiple deprivation.

(AQW 22353/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 is the current official measure of spatial deprivation in Northern Ireland and is the most robust spatial measure of deprivation for Northern Ireland.

In order to provide a relative deprivation measure for all of Northern Ireland, data were collected in a consistent form. Where any bias was identified the indicator was either omitted or corrected for this effect.

NIMDM 2010 is based on an internationally agreed methodology developed by the Social Disadvantage Research Centre at the University of Oxford. NIMDM 2010 was overseen by a Steering Group including representatives from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Rural Development Council. A full public consultation was undertaken and any concerns addressed.

As the NIMDM 2010 includes results across 5,022 Output Areas in Northern Ireland, this gives a highly detailed picture of spatial deprivation. It may be more appropriate when assessing deprivation in rural areas to focus on the Output Area results.

Subject to inter-departmental agreement, a review of the NIMDM 2010 is expected to start in 2014/15.

Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many young people in North Down are not in education, employment or training.

(AQW 22370/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Estimates of young people not in employment, education or training are sourced to the Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, these estimates are not available at parliamentary constituency level, as the LFS sample size and design does not support the production of sufficiently reliable estimates of this type at constituency level.

For information, during the period October - December 2012, the LFS estimated that there were 51,000 (23.1%) 16-24 year olds in Northern Ireland who were not in employment, Government supported training or full-time education.

Faulty Cavity Wall Insulation

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what regulation is in place to identify and resolve faulty cavity wall insulation to ensure that no families are subjected fuel poverty.

(AQW 22396/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There is no regulation to identify faulty cavity wall insulation. However, when a fault is identified, Regulation 19 of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 provides a district council with the power to issue a contravention notice within a specified period requiring the fault to be rectified.

Business Rates in Major Towns and Cities

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what reduction there has been in the business rates collected in major towns and cities over the past four years.

(AQW 22420/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information is not available on business rates collection in major towns and cities in Northern Ireland as the information is collated at District Council and ward area level only and at domestic and non-domestic level only.

The total non-domestic rates collected in Northern Ireland has increased from £533.6 million in 2009/10 (the earliest year for which comparable information is available) to £574.7 million in 2011/12 (the latest year for which comparable information is available). This is an increase of £41.1 million (or 7.7%).

Suicide from Depression

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of cases in which depression was known to be a factor in the 278 recorded suicides in 2012, broken down by (i) age; and (ii) Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 22484/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Detailed provisional figures for deaths from suicide¹ in 2012 will be published on 21 May 2013.

Death statistics on suicide are based on a coroner's certificate. The coroner's certificate states the pathological cause of death (e.g. 'toxicity', 'hanging') as determined at post mortem. It is very unusual for the coroner to write "depression" on a death certificate. Since 2008 only one suicide has been recorded where depression² was listed as an associated cause of death.

1 The International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death codes used are 'Suicide and self-inflicted injury' X60-X84 and Y87.0 and 'Undetermined injury' are Y10-Y34 and Y87.

2 The International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death codes used for 'Mild depressive episode' and 'Recurrent depressive disorder' are F32 and F33.

Asthma Deaths

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 22197/11-15, how many deaths as a result of asthma were recorded in the last two years, broken down by (i) gender; and (ii) age.

(AQW 22525/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The tables overleaf detail the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland, by (i) gender and (ii) age, where asthma¹ has been recorded as the primary cause of death in 2010 and 2011.

Provisional figures for 2012 will be available in late May 2013.

1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10).

Table (i): Asthma¹ Deaths Registered in Northern Ireland by Gender, 2010-2011

Gender	Registration Year	
	2010	2011
Male	7	10
Female	27	23
NI Total	34	33

Table (ii): Asthma¹ Deaths Registered in Northern Ireland by Age, 2010-2011

Age Group	Registration Year	
	2010	2011
0-14	-	-
15-24	-	2
25-34	1	-
35-44	1	-
45-54	-	2
55-64	3	2
65-74	7	5
75-84	13	9
85+	9	13
NI Total	34	33

1 Asthma deaths were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10), code J45.

Review of Economic Indicators

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he plans to carry out a review of economic indicators.

(AQW 22542/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) produces a range of economic indicators in line with the statutory Code of Practice for Official Statistics. These are subject to assessment by the UK Statistics Authority and those assessed to date have either been designated or are in the process of being designated as complying with the standards of the Code of Practice. Designation means that the statistics meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are well explained.

NISRA also engages with users of official statistics to inform their ongoing development, as required by the Code.

Civil Service Staff: Agency Workers Regulations

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps are being taken to ensure that agency workers employed by the Civil Service are employed in accordance with the Agency Workers Regulations.

(AQW 22632/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The procurement of a new Agency Workers contract in 2011 coincided with the introduction of the new Agency Workers Regulations in Northern Ireland and a major requirement of those bidding for the contract was to demonstrate processes and procedures that would ensure compliance with the new Agency Workers Regulations.

In addition to this, my Department produced a User Protocol which set out, among other things, pay rates for contract workers (applicable after 12 weeks) which were equal to salary rates for new appointees to the NICS. Corporate HR within my Department monitors the services provided by the successful contractors and in addition provides advice and guidance to other departments on how to operate the Protocol.

Agency Workers Regulations: 12 Week Qualifying Period

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether agency workers in the Civil Service are required to undertake a 12 week qualifying period each time they are assigned to a new Department; and whether this situation meets the requirements of the Agency Workers Regulations.

(AQW 22633/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The 12 week qualifying period under the Agency Workers regulations is triggered by working in the same job with the same hirer for 12 calendar weeks. The NICS regards all departments within the NICS as the same 'hirer' and therefore movement from one department to another would not by itself trigger a new qualifying period. However, under the Agency Workers Regulations a new qualifying period begins where the Agency Worker remains with the same hirer but is in a substantively different role.

Civil Service Equal Pay Issue

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he has taken to find a solution for people with unresolved issues stemming from the Civil Service equal pay issue.

(AQW 22647/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have taken no action to extend the NICS equal pay settlement to those who have no legal entitlement to it.

Defamation Bill

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why he has withdrawn legislative proposals to deal with defamation.

(AQW 22728/11-15)

Mr Wilson: On 14 June 2012 the Department wrote to the Clerk of the Committee for Finance and Personnel in respect of this matter. I refer the Member to that letter, which is attached.

NAMA: Ramada Hotel, Portrush

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the decision by the National Assets Management Agency to put the Ramada Hotel, Portrush into administration at the start of the tourist season, for his assessment of the National Assets Management Agency taking decisions which could damage the economy.

(AQO 4051/11-15)

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

More generally, it is true that NAMA has acquired a significant amount of loans and assets in Northern Ireland and it is an added factor we have to deal with. However, it is important to also recognise that the creation of NAMA was a necessary step to restore liquidity and confidence in the Irish financial system. While I was initially concerned about the impact it would have locally, NAMA has kept to its commitments on avoiding a 'firesale'.

Indeed I believe NAMA is playing a positive role in Northern Ireland in making finance available to debtors seeking to develop assets and for potential buyers of commercial property. Something that is very helpful at a time when bank finance can be difficult to secure for such investment.

Public Service Pensions Bill

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the discussions his officials have had with trades unions on the Public Service Pensions Bill.

(AQO 4048/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Discussions at meetings of the Public Service Pensions Bill Collective Consultation Group jointly chaired by DFP and NIC-ICTU have been open and transparent. Officials have provided timely and relevant information on the background and rationale for the pension reform policies agreed by the NI Executive and which the Public Service Pensions Bill is intended to give effect to. Pension reform is a complex area and our aim has been to provide full and adequate detail on the reform proposals in order to enable TUS to make a full and informed response.

One output of the consultation process to date has been that NIC-ICTU has provided a central response to the Departmental consultation on proposals for pension reform on behalf of all trade unions impacted by the Bill. This is a welcome step. There are issues in the consultation process which remain unresolved. But we have also told TUS that we want to progress consultation with the aim of reaching agreement and full consideration is being given to the views expressed in ongoing discussions to further this aim.

Small Business Rate Relief Scheme

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many businesses have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme since its inception.

(AQO 4052/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Since the Small Business Rate Relief scheme commenced in April 2010, a total of 30,271 properties have attracted relief (as at 30th April 2013). This includes the additional properties which have benefitted from the extension of the Scheme from 1st April 2013 to include those with a Net Annual Value of £12,001 to £15,000.

The figures available relate to properties rather than businesses since it is the value of the property which determines eligibility for Small Business Rate Relief. These figures are not the same as the number of ratepayers who have benefitted since ratepayers in a particular property may change over time. Also, ratepayers may have three properties and qualify for the Relief. The Relief is awarded automatically, thus there is no application burden on business.

Rates: Empty Properties

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how Land and Property Services plans to resolve the issues around obtaining the details of the ownership of empty properties to allow rates bills to be issued and debts recovered.

(AQO 4050/11-15)

Mr Wilson: LPS obtains ownership information from a number of sources, primarily under my Department's information gathering powers. LPS also continues to use a number of internal data sources for obtaining ownership information, including the Land Register and Valuation List. LPS also carries out a number of property visits and continues to use the services of an external data intelligence trace service in an effort to establish ownership details.

The data sources available to LPS has supported the collection of ownership details for circa 8,000 empty properties since April 2012.

Treasury Discussions

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what issues he has discussed with the Treasury in the past three months.

(AQO 4053/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My officials are in ongoing discussions with HM Treasury on a range of issues, some of which are occasionally elevated to Ministerial level.

Issues that have been discussed with HM Treasury over the last three months include the Carrier Bag Levy; G8 costs; Welfare Reform; the implications for Northern Ireland of the UK 2013 Budget; and preparations for the 2015-16 UK Spending Round.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Mid Ulster Hospital

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to improve and increase services in the Mid Ulster Hospital.

(AQW 22276/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The future development of services at the Mid Ulster Hospital is a matter for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. The Northern Trust has advised that it plans to provide a health and community care 'village' on the Mid Ulster Hospital site. This will accommodate integrated community teams and provide facilities for additional community clinics, allowing the expansion at local level of services such as the Eating Disorders service, Mental Health Home Treatment service, Addictions service and Family Planning service, among others. There will also be a rehabilitation area for the Acquired Brain Injury service, the respiratory service, heart failure service and cardiac rehabilitation service and long term conditions physiotherapy service.

People with a Communication Disability

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the census finding that 30,000 people have a communication disability, what funding and services are directed at meeting their needs; and how his Department proposes to respond to the census finding.

(AQW 22295/11-15)

Mr Poots: The 30,000 figure from the 2011 census data refers to communication difficulty.

These conditions also span every programme of care within the health and social care sector. Health and social care trusts do not record communication disabilities in isolation and therefore cannot provide information specific to this vast range of conditions. Therefore a comprehensive answer could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

While the census provides useful information which can help inform the policy-development process, it is not used specifically to determine Departmental policy or HSC commissioning plans.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Service and Budgets Agreements

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on which date the Health and Social Care Board issued their Service and Budgets Agreements to each Health and Social Care Trust in the (i) 2009/10; (ii) 2010/11; (iii) 2011/12; (iv) 2012/13; and (v) 2013/14 financial years.

(AQW 22304/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details

- a) the date on which the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) issued their Service and Budget Agreements (SBA) to each Health and Social Care Trust and
- b) the value of each Health and Social Care Trust's Service and Budget Agreement.

Information for the current financial year 2013/14 has not yet been finalised and is therefore not available.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	30-Jun-09	16-Feb-11	02-Dec-11	10-Oct-12
Value of contract	£848,445,255	£916,414,000	£968,847,000	£992,266,912

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	26-Jun-09	11-Feb-11	30-Nov-11	12-Oct-12
Value of contract	£391,185,802	£417,851,000	£436,548,000	£450,366,000

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	23-Nov-09	11-Feb-11	30-Nov-11	10-Oct-12
Value of contract	£448,152,990	£503,250,000	£520,163,000	£528,630,000

Southern Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	26-Jun-09	11-Feb-11	30-Nov-11	10-Oct-12
Value of contract	£402,083,192	£436,770,000	£458,481,000	£466,433,000

Western Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	30-Jun-09	16-Feb-11	30-Nov-11	10-Oct-12
Value of contract	£401,622,144	£413,668,000	£435,024,000	£458,422,000

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	23-Jul-09	28-Feb-11	20-Dec-11	13-Mar-13
Value of contract	£51,966,848	£53,607,769	£56,211,938	£55,996,355

* Source: Health and Social Care Board.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Service and Budgets Agreements

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what was the value of each Health and Social Care Trust's Service and Budget Agreement in the (i) 2009/10; (ii) 2010/11; (iii) 2011/12; (iv) 2012/13; and (v) 2013/14 financial years.

(AQW 22306/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details

- c) the date on which the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) issued their Service and Budget Agreements (SBA) to each Health and Social Care Trust and
- d) the value of each Health and Social Care Trust's Service and Budget Agreement.

Information for the current financial year 2013/14 has not yet been finalised and is therefore not available.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	30-Jun-09	16-Feb-11	02-Dec-11	10-Oct-12
Value of contract	£848,445,255	£916,414,000	£968,847,000	£992,266,912

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	26-Jun-09	11-Feb-11	30-Nov-11	12-Oct-12
Value of contract	£391,185,802	£417,851,000	£436,548,000	£450,366,000

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	23-Nov-09	11-Feb-11	30-Nov-11	10-Oct-12
Value of contract	£448,152,990	£503,250,000	£520,163,000	£528,630,000

Southern Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	26-Jun-09	11-Feb-11	30-Nov-11	10-Oct-12
Value of contract	£402,083,192	£436,770,000	£458,481,000	£466,433,000

Western Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	30-Jun-09	16-Feb-11	30-Nov-11	10-Oct-12

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Value of contract	£401,622,144	£413,668,000	£435,024,000	£458,422,000

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Date HSCB issued SBA to Trust	23-Jul-09	28-Feb-11	20-Dec-11	13-Mar-13
Value of contract	£51,966,848	£53,607,769	£56,211,938	£55,996,355

* Source: Health and Social Care Board.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Non-Recurrent Funding

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what was the additional non-recurrent funding awarded to each Health and Social Care Trust in the (i) 2009/10; (ii) 2010/11; (iii) 2011/12; (iv) 2012/13; and (v) 2013/14 financial years; and for a breakdown of the funding awarded in each year.

(AQW 22307/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on additional non-recurrent funding allocated to each Health and Social Care Trust for 2012/13 is set out in the table below.

HSC Trust	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Elective Care	24	6	6	5	4	45
Transforming Your Care	4	3	3	3	3	16
Funding for AHP, Nurse training & Clinical Excellence Awards	30	2	2	1	2	37
Other Funding ⁽¹⁾	32	11	15	17	9	84
Total	90	22	26	26	18	182

Source: Health & Social Care Board

Note (1) – Includes out of hours services, extra contractual referrals, winter pressures, pseudomonas

Information for 2013/14 is not yet available whilst information for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Closure of Skeagh House

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether an engineer was brought in to assess Skeagh House before or since the closure of the home; (ii) when the assessment was made; and (iii) if no assessment was carried out, whether he will now ensure that one is undertaken.

(AQW 22347/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following the apparent landslip in March 2013 to the rear of houses constructed on the hill above Skeagh House, the Southern Trust engaged a Structural Engineer to monitor the situation, review reports provided by the Developer's geo-technical specialists and provide on-going advice to the Trust.

In addition to this, The Trust has engaged its own geo-technical specialist to undertake a full assessment of the situation.

Skeagh House Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) full-time; (ii) part-time; and (iii) temporary staff have been (a) employed; and (b) recruited by Skeagh House, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 22348/11-15)

Mr Poots: The staffing and recruitment levels requested are shown in the tables below. These figures have been supplied by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, and have not been verified by the Department.

- a) i) and ii) Number of permanent full-time and part-time staff employed at Skeagh House in each of the last five financial years:

Position as at:	Full-time	Part-time (HC and WTE)
31st March 2013	7	19 (11.01 WTE)
31st March 2012	7	20 (11.99 WTE)
31st March 2011	9	18 (11.10 WTE)
31st March 2010	10	21 (12.95 WTE)
31st March 2009	12	26 (16.65 WTE)

- a) iii) Number of temporary full-time and part-time staff employed at Skeagh House in each of the last five financial years:

Position as at:	Full-time	Part-time (HC and WTE)
31st March 2013	1	1 (0.80 WTE)
31st March 2012	1	1 (0.80 WTE)
31st March 2011	1	1 (0.80 WTE)
31st March 2010	0	1 (0.80 WTE)
31st March 2009	0	1 (0.86 WTE)

- b) i) and ii) Number of new permanent full-time and part-time staff recruited to Skeagh House in each of the last five financial years.

Year	Full-time	Part-time (HC and WTE)
2012-2013	0	1 (0.67 WTE)
2011-2012	0	0
2010-2011	0	0
2009-2010	0	0
2008-2009	0	0

- b) iii) Number of new temporary full-time and part-time staff recruited to Skeagh House in each of the last five financial years.

Year	Full-time	Part-time (HC and WTE)
2012-2013	0	0
2011-2012	0	1 (0.67 WTE)
2010-2011	1	0
2009-2010	0	0
2008-2009	0	0

Notes:

- 1 New staff recruitment does not account for all of the variation in staff in post. Staffing levels may also increase/decrease due to transferred staff, promotions, etc.
- 2 Bank staff are excluded.

In addition, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust have supplied the following paragraph:

In 2008, following consultation on the closure of two Statutory Residential Homes, it was agreed to reduce permanent places across the five Statutory Residential homes from 138 to 90 permanent beds in line with identified need. Since 2008 the number of permanent residents has reduced from 112 to 74 across the 5 Trust Residential Homes, which reflects decreasing demand for this service. It is important to note there was no policy to cease admissions during this period. This resulted in the need for reduced staff complement, in line with RQIA staff ratio requirements.

Community Based Care Packages

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the different levels of community based care packages which will be put in place to replace accommodation in older peoples care homes; and what measures will be applied to standardise these packages.

(AQW 22385/11-15)

Mr Poots: HSC Trusts are investing in flexible and responsive models of care in the community. There are a range of alternatives to statutory residential care including Supported Living accommodation or 'housing with care', Re-ablement services, Self-directed support, assistive technology and domiciliary care packages. Trusts have been developing these services for a number of years and will continue to do so to meet the assessed needs of any individual. Work will also continue on promoting health and wellbeing of older people and prevention of ill-health.

Residential Care will continue to be available where this is assessed as the best model of care to meet an individual's need.

Care of the Elderly

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has a generic definition of care of the elderly.

(AQW 22386/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department does not have a generic definition for elderly care.

The term can be used in a number of ways to describe interventions that meet the medical, social, rehabilitation, psychological/ psychiatric and other needs of people who are typically aged over 65 years.

People using Communication Devices

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people rely on communication devices, such as voice boxes, to communicate.

(AQW 22398/11-15)

Mr Poots: Community Information Branch (CIB) in the Department can provide information on the number of patients fitted with a hearing aid. During quarter ending 31 December 2012, 3,910* patients were fitted with a hearing aid in Northern Ireland.

*Source: AUD1 information return

Information on the number of people who avail of other communication devices is not held centrally and could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children: Clark Clinic

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the dates on which he has visited, or plans to visit, the Clark Clinic of the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, prior to taking any decision on the future of paediatric cardiac surgery in Belfast.

(AQW 22402/11-15)

Mr Poots: I recently visited the Clark Clinic and over the past few months I have met many parents and paediatric cardiologists from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to hear their concerns about the future commissioning of paediatric congenital cardiac surgical services for the population of Northern Ireland. I wish to place on the record again my appreciation for the services provided by the staff of the Clark Clinic and their dedication to meeting the needs of these vulnerable children.

Community Based Care Packages: Full-Time Medical Support or Supervision

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his plans for elderly patients who need full-time medical support or supervision and care under community based care packages in a Health and Social Care Trust area where all the elderly care homes have been closed.

(AQW 22417/11-15)

Mr Poots: Older people living at home, in nursing or residential care receive medical care from their local GP and this will continue to be provided.

The GP works in partnership with a range of primary and community care services to enable older people to live independently in the community. These services include:

- District Nurses
- Domiciliary Care
- Social Workers
- Long-Term Conditions Case Managers
- Primary Care Teams
- Allied Health Professionals
- Community Mental Health Teams
- Reablement Service

At present, someone who needs intensive or full time medical input is likely to be in hospital rather than the community and this will continue to be the case.

Closure of Care Homes

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what objective test of need has been applied in Health and Social Care Trust areas where elderly care homes are planned for closure.

(AQW 22418/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have asked the HSCB to develop a set of regional criteria around closure of homes as part of the new process for consultation which, I announced on 3 May. I will expect these criteria to cover key social and economic considerations – like the care needs of residents in homes and the availability of replacement services locally.

At an individual level, the individual health and social care needs of all older people are assessed using the Northern Ireland Single Assessment Tool (NISAT), which is designed to capture information required for holistic, person-centred care.

The completed multi-disciplinary assessment will enable the older person and their family, in conjunction with HSC staff, to plan services for them.

Paediatric Heart Patients

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what emergency cover will exist locally for paediatric heart patients should all paediatric coronary care move to Dublin.

(AQW 22419/11-15)

Mr Poots: Emergency cover for paediatric cardiology patients from Northern Ireland is currently and will continue to be provided by the paediatric cardiology team in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. The only component of the services currently provided in Belfast that it is proposed will move to Dublin under the preferred option put forward by the Paediatric Congenital Cardiac Services Working Group is the surgical/interventional element of care.

Beech Hall Centre, West Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available at the Beech Hall Centre in west Belfast.

(AQW 22428/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust that the following services are available at Beech Hall Health and Wellbeing Centre: Family and Child Care; Health Visiting, School Nursing; Child Health; and Dental Services.

In addition to these services, there is also a range of clinics operating from the building. These include Mental Health Services; Allied Health Professionals Services; Speech and Language Therapy Services; Podiatry Services; Physiotherapy Services; Occupational Therapy Services; Dietetics; Clinical Psychology; Auditory Implant Centre; Sexual Health and Reproduction; and Community Pediatrics.

Ovarian Cancer

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department is doing to encourage GPs to avail of free online learning on the recognition and initial management of ovarian cancer.

(AQW 22429/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and Public Health Agency (PHA) are currently working closely with specialists and GPs from across the 5 Health and Social Care Trusts to develop an agreed management pathway for patients suspected of having ovarian cancer.

The HSCB anticipates that the pathway will be distributed to GPs across Northern Ireland shortly, after it has been agreed by the key stakeholders. As part of this process, the HSCB and PHA will explore

the extent to which GPs utilise elearning sites such as the one available through the Royal College of General Practitioners and will, as appropriate, raise the awareness of this valuable resource.

Developing an agreed pathway for suspected ovarian cancer will improve patient experience by reducing delays in identification of disease, streamlining access to investigations such as ultrasound examination, and specialist review. The pathway will incorporate NICE guidance on the symptoms and signs of ovarian cancer.

Backlog of Cancer Patients Awaiting Scans

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to meet the need for more oncologists and scanning equipment in order to address the backlog of cancer patients who are awaiting scans.

(AQW 22430/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency are progressing work on an oncology workforce plan which aims to take account of the future needs of oncology services. There are currently a number of vacancies (4 from the current planned workforce of 31) and every step is being taken to fill them.

The Health and Social Care Board is also reviewing the current and future MRI needs with a view to a managed increase in core capacity over a number of years. My Department is currently considering: four business cases for additional MRI scanners; and, several business cases have also been submitted for replacement scanners. The model underpinning the proposed expansion in diagnostics is informed by experience within the UK of improving access to MRI in order to drive improved cancer outcomes.

Adult Mental Health Services

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will direct part of the £13m investment in adult mental health services towards the development of community services for the agricultural sector, in order to support early intervention.

(AQW 22433/11-15)

Mr Poots: The £13m investment in Adult Mental Health to 2015 is being delivered on a capitation basis across the 5 Trusts. This approach ensures a fair distribution of new services across both rural and urban localities.

Among the priority areas for the DHSSPS and HSCB/PHA is the further development of Psychological Therapies in Primary Care during 2013-14. This has the expressed aim of providing effective intervention at an early stage in the management of common mental health conditions.

Muckamore Abbey Hospital

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients are in Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

(AQW 22439/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to answer given to AQW 21858/11-15.

Muckamore Abbey Hospital

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many staff work in Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

(AQW 22440/11-15)

Mr Poots: Staffing levels at Muckamore Abbey Hospital as at 31st March 2013, broken down by Occupational Group, are shown in the table below.

Occupational Group	Headcount	WTE
Admin & Clerical	40	32.36
Estates Services	12	12.00
Support Services	124	88.56
Qualified Nursing	157	144.20
Nurse Support	232	201.90
Social Services	29	27.19
Professional & Technical	9	8.51
Medical & Dental	17	15.27
Total	620	529.99

Notes

- 1 Figures have been obtained directly from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, and have not been verified by the Department.

Northern Health and Social Care Trusts: Multi-Agency Support Teams for Schools

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 5092/11-15 and AQW 5093/11-15, to list the additional primary schools that have applied to, and been serviced by, the Multi-Agency Support Teams for Schools in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area since December 2011, broken down by council area.

(AQW 22473/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust that nine additional primary schools have applied to the Multi-Agency Support Teams for Schools since December 2011 and that 12 new schools are supported by the Multi-Agency Support Teams since December 2011.

The schools are listed by District Council areas in the table below. [see Tab A attached].

Tab A

ANTRIM DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
0	0

BALLYMENA DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
Buick Memorial PS & NU	
1	0

BALLYMONEY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools who are supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
St Joseph's PS & NU, Dunloy	
1	0

CARRICKFERGUS DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
0	0

COLERAINE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
Carhill Integrated PS Macosquin PS	DH Christie Memorial PS St Colum's PS, Portstewart
2	2

COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (SELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
Donaghey PS Lissan PS Sacred Heart PS, Rock	Phoenix Integrated PS
3	1

LARNE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
Mullaghdubh PS	Cairncastle PS Glynn PS Seaview PS, Glenarm St Anthony's PS, Larne
1	4

MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
Gaelscoil Na Speirini PS, Draperstown Maghera PS	

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
2	0

MOYLE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
Barnish PS	
1	0

NEWTOWNABBEY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (NEELB)

New schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	New schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
Ballyclare NS	St Mary's-on-the-Hill PS, Newtownabbey Whiteabbey PS
1	2

SUMMARY

Total new schools supported by MASTS since December 2011	Total new schools to the MASTS waiting list since December 2011
12	9

Northern Health and Social Care Trusts: Multi-Agency Support Teams for Schools

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 5090/11-15, whether the Review of the Multi-Agency Support Teams for Schools service within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area has been completed; and whether there are any plans to expand the service to other primary schools.

(AQW 22474/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Review of the Multi-Agency Support Team Service (MASTS) to primary schools is a regional review, undertaken by the Public Health Agency, and is not specific to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

The review is well underway and the regional direction, and any further expansion of the MASTS service, will be considered when the outcomes of the review are delivered.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: Guidance on Fertility

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance on fertility issued in March 2013, how much it would cost to move from one to two full treatment cycles.

(AQW 22480/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department is reviewing clinical guidance CG156 in the local legal and policy context, and is assessing the financial impact of implementing this guidance in Northern Ireland.

Self Harm: Depression

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of cases in which depression was known to be a factor in self harm in 2012, broken down by (i) age; and (ii) Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 22485/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of cases in which depression was known to be a factor in self harm is not available.

Private Care Home Referrals

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what criteria Health and Social Care Trusts use to refer people to private care homes.

(AQW 22515/11-15)

Mr Poots: Circular HSC (ECCU) 1/2010 - Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance was issued by the Department to HSC Trusts and emphasises the importance of client choice in selecting a residential/ nursing home for their placement. The circular states that HSC Trusts must provide clients with a directory of all residential and nursing homes in the local area that are registered with the Regulation Quality Improvement Authority.

HSC Trusts are required to arrange for care in a client's preferred home where possible; however, the guidance also states that Trusts must contract for placements at the most competitive rate available for accommodation which it considers suitable for meeting the service user's need, and reminds the HSC of its overriding duty to procure quality services at a price which represents value for money. The individual will carry the cost differential in the case of their choosing a dearer placement than the Trust can obtain for their level of care need (including, for example, places that provide them with non-care related extras) that would justify a third party top up. However, where there is a resettlement from a statutory home that is closing Trusts will cover this cost differential.

DHSSPS: Paid and Unpaid Invoices

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail, for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, (i) the total number of invoices paid by his Department and its respective Arm's-Length Bodies; (ii) the number of invoices paid within thirty calendar days; (iii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt; (iv) how each of his Department's Arm's-Length Bodies has performed against the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and (v) the number of invoices that remain unpaid.

(AQW 22518/11-15)

Mr Poots: The performance of the Department and its arm's-length bodies (ALBs) in relation to the payment of invoices for the 2012/13 year is shown in the table below.

Department's Arm's-Length Bodies (ALBs)

Prompt Payment 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013

DHSSPS/ALB	Total Invoices paid	No. Paid within 30 calendar days	% Paid within 30 calendar days	% Paid within 30 days or other agreed terms (3)	No. Paid within 10 working days (2)	No of invoices in system but unpaid at 31 March 2013
DHSSPS Core Department	4,219	3,978	94.3	94.3	3,514	7
Northern Trust	144,344	122,459	84.8	92.4	64,211	Not available (1)
Belfast Trust	365,366	278,869	76.3	86.0	141,411	26,050
Western Trust	119,570	108,549	90.8	95.2	76,188	2,245
South Eastern Trust	148,914	129,599	87.0	93.2	74,183	Not available(1)
NIAS	14,690	11,826	80.5	91.9	3,467	Not available(1)
Southern Trust	123,324	103,353	83.8	92.5	59,689	Not available(1)
HSCB	12,407	10,941	88.2	94.7	2,427	1,295
BSO	23,516	20,177	85.8	93.0	5,139	1,575
NIBTS	2,934	2,825	96.3	96.6	2,131	126
NIFRS	12,163	11,370	93.5	95.9	9,535	357
NIGALA	544	513	94.3	97.1	157	34
NIMDTA	2,535	2,424	95.6	95.6	1,669	52
NIPEC	270	241	89.3	93.3	91	16
NISCC	1,080	960	88.9	93.8	221	35
PCC	1,194	1,113	93.2	96.9	299	58
PHA	6,484	6,089	93.9	97.5	1,120	417
RQIA	948	845	89.1	95.8	214	183

Notes:

- (1) Only Western and Belfast, which have gone live with the new FPL system, are able to provide details of invoices in system but unpaid at 31 March 2013.
- (2) The 10 day performance figures for BSO, HSCB, PHA, PCC, NIGALA, NIPEC, NISCC and RQIA relate to the period from 1 November 2012 when new finance payment systems were introduced. Figures for these bodies prior to 1 November can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.
- (3) The majority of payments made by the Department's ALBs are made under the terms and conditions of the Business Services Organisation (BSO) Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS) contracts, which state that payment is due at the end of the month following the month in which the invoice or goods and services are received, whichever is the later. For 2012/13 the Department therefore monitored ALB's prompt payment

performance against the “30 days or other agreed terms” duty and it is against this duty that they report in their annual accounts.

Suicide from Depression

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether depression was known to be a factor in any suicides from 2007 to 2013.

(AQW 22531/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures on the number of registered suicides in 2013 are not yet available. Without examining records on each of the 1,664 deaths by suicide registered from 2007 to 2012, it is not possible to say whether depression was a known factor in any suicides over this period. However, there is extensive research evidence indicating that depression is one of the major risk factors for suicide.

The Northern Ireland National Confidential Inquiry report into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness, published in 2011, examined longitudinal trends in suicide and homicide over the period 2000 to 2008. One of the findings from this study is that 30% of all suicides were by people who had been in contact with mental health services in the 12 months prior to their deaths and, in this group, 36% (one hundred and eighty-eight) of the patients had a primary diagnosis of affective disorder (bipolar disorder and depression).

Social Services: Background Checks

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) under which legislation or regulations social services can require that all members of a family, including uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents coming into contact with a child have background checks; (ii) how these are conducted; and (iii) by which organisation.

(AQW 22560/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) There is no legislation that requires background checks on extended family members solely on the basis that they will come into contact with a child.

However, background checks may be requested on other family members who are living in a household where certain types of home-based care or work is taking place. The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979 and the Police Act 1997(Criminal Records) (Disclosure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 enable criminal record checks to be carried out on other members of a household, and in certain circumstances those working at a home or where home based care is taking place. These checks may be carried out for the purposes of assessing the suitability of an individual to undertake certain types of home-based work or care with children, including childminding and day care and providing care as a foster parent. Criminal record checks may also be requested on other household members when assessing the suitability of a prospective adoptive parent and when placing looked after children with their parents. Checks on other household members will include checks on other family members, including extended family members, if they are living, or likely to be living, in the home where the care is taking place. As well as the facility to check, there are a number of pieces of secondary legislation which require criminal record information on other household members. These are:

- The Child Minding and Day Care (Applications for Registration) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996;
- The Foster Placement (Children) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996;
- The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996; and
- The Placement of Children with Parents etc Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.

In addition, Health and Social Care Trusts will check their own systems for information on other household members for the types of home-based care outlined above.

- (ii) The criminal record checks are conducted by AccessNI.
- (iii) Applications for criminal record checks are made by the Health and Social Care Trust responsible for the registration and inspection of child minders and day care providers and for children who are in their care.

Orthopaedic Posts

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why proposed future consultant orthopaedic posts specialising in foot and ankle surgery have been frozen.

(AQW 22562/11-15)

Mr Poots: The commissioning of services is a matter for the Health and Social Care Board in conjunction with the Public Health Agency. The Health and Social Care Board has advised that during the development of orthopaedic investment proposals the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust was asked by the commissioner, not to prioritise consultants who specialise in foot and ankle surgery. This was in anticipation of the establishment of a podiatric surgical service in Northern Ireland from 2014/15. There will also be investment in three additional consultants for the Belfast HSC Trust with interests in upper limb and knee joints.

Surgical Podiatry

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether Surgical Podiatry is to take on the management of all foot and ankle conditions, including surgery.

(AQW 22563/11-15)

Mr Poots: Podiatric surgeons are podiatrists who specialise in the surgical management of foot and ankle conditions and therefore work to a defined range of procedures. There is a defined list of procedures which the service must be capable of delivering and these are contained in the Health and Social Care Board's commissioning specification which will shortly be issued to Health and Social Care Trusts. The procedures reflect current practice in the UK

Foot and Ankle Surgery

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any new foot and ankle surgery service commissioned will be subject to an open and transparent process involving all stakeholders.

(AQW 22564/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has advised that the podiatric service will be commissioned in an open and transparent manner involving relevant stakeholders.

Orthopaedic Patients

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the need to manage orthopaedic patients with foot and ankle problems within a multidisciplinary team that includes consultant orthopaedic surgeons, podiatrists and surgical podiatrists as well as specialist physiotherapists, orthotists and tissue viability practitioners.

(AQW 22566/11-15)

Mr Poots: The implementation of podiatric surgery provides a significant opportunity to transform the way some foot and ankle surgical services are provided. This service should not be seen as a replacement for consultant led services, rather as a supplement to those services. The Health and Social Care Board's commissioning specification, which will shortly be issued to Health and Social Care Trusts, will make it clear that podiatric surgery team members should be active participants in multi-disciplinary teamwork across their organisation. This relationship should be based on mutual respect and recognition. The objective should be that consultant led and podiatric surgery services complement one another for the benefit of patients.

Residential Care Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety where, within Transforming Your Care, is the closure of residential care homes restricted to 50 percent.

(AQW 22593/11-15)

Mr Poots: In the consultation document published on 9th October 2012 on service change proposals “Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action” in Section 4.3 dealing with “Older People”, it stated that “During the next 3 to 5 years the current number of statutory residential homes, is likely to be reduced by at least 50% across Northern Ireland. The pattern will vary across areas”. This figure was indicative of the degree of change expected.

The policy of “home is the hub of care” is clear but the pace of change and the management of transition needs to be consulted upon. I want to ensure that the voice of older people is heard and that is why I announced on 3 May that the HSC Board will lead on a process of consultation.

Closure of Residential Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to identify, and place in the Assembly Library, the research from within Northern Ireland which demonstrates the absence of a detrimental effect on the life and health prospects of residents arising from the closure of their residential home.

(AQW 22594/11-15)

Mr Poots: The impact of relocation on the health of frail elderly people is always a cause for concern. However, whilst the causes of closure can be many and varied, there is much past experience in achieving successful closure both in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain.

Published UK academic literature reviews on this topic are limited. Recent publications would indicate that a proactive and managed approach to meeting the needs of older people is a key element to success and to reducing stress for individual residents and staff.

For example, I would draw your attention to the findings within An Evaluation of Modernisation of Older People’s Services In Birmingham – Final report and Achieving Closure: Good Practice Guide in Supporting Older People during Residential Care Home Closures. This latter report was produced by the University of Birmingham and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, in association with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).

The DHSSPS formally recognises SCIE as producing best practice guidance for social care.

Closure of Residential Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he reconciles his statement in the Assembly on 19 March 2013 that closures of residential homes would be restricted to 50 percent within three to five years, with the published plans of Health and Social Care Trusts for 100 percent closures on a more imminent timescale.

(AQW 22595/11-15)

Mr Poots: In my Statement to the House on 19 March 2013 on the outcome of the consultation on the service change proposals contained in “transforming Your Care: Vision to Action” I said that, “I propose to reduce the number of statutory residential homes by around 50% over the next three to five years.”

I explained in my statement to the NI Assembly on the 7th May 2013 that the pace of change needs to be planned in a co-ordinated way across all the trusts. I saw that this was not clear. Therefore, on Friday 3 May I called a halt to individual trusts consulting on proposed closures in their areas. I have asked the HSC Board to lead on a new process for consulting and implementing change working closely with trusts to co-ordinate a regional approach on residential care homes

Statutory Residential Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety where the shortfall in respite beds and intermediate care beds that is currently available in statutory residential homes, will be made up in the event of the closure of these homes.

(AQW 22596/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have already suspended the process whereby Trusts were planning to consult on closure of statutory residential care homes for older people in their area.

The HSC Board will lead on the development of a new process for consultation and engagement. It will work with local HSC Trusts to promote best practice in the assessment of need, consultation and communication.

Consultation on change will still be necessary but it will occur at a pace that will allow more time for engagement with individuals, families, community and staff. It will also be taken forward within the wider policy context of improving the quality of care for all older people. This includes the provision of appropriate models of respite/short breaks and intermediate care.

Residential Care Home Provision: Private Sector

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the experience of the collapse of Southern Cross in Great Britain in 2011, for his assessment of a policy that would see all residential care home provision moving into the private sector.

(AQW 22597/11-15)

Mr Poots: The driving force behind Transforming Your Care is the aim to deliver better outcomes and choice for everyone, with the individual at the heart of the model of care. I want to ensure that older people receive the best care possible, within available resources, and in an environment that meets their care needs. There has been a decline in the need for residential options as we move to support more people at home.

We enjoy a successful mixed economy of care with the vast majority of residential care home provision already in the independent and voluntary sector. In terms of residential care, the statutory sector currently provides less than 25% of residential packages. Nursing Home provision here has evolved outside the statutory sector.

My decision on 3 May that HSCB will take a regional approach to the process of consultation will allow appropriate attention to be paid to the wider market implications of reductions in "in house" provision.

Closure of Residential Homes

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will suspend any decisions around the closure of residential homes and put in place a robust consultation process.

(AQW 22598/11-15)

Mr Poots: My overall aim is to improve the quality of care for all older people in Northern Ireland. It is regrettable to me that the positive intentions of our policy became lost in the distressing sequence of events that transpired over the last two weeks.

I do not want to cause any anxiety to older people or their relatives. I have already suspended the process whereby some Trusts were planning to consult on the closure of statutory elderly residential care homes in their area.

I have asked the HSC Board to lead on a new process for local consultation and engagement. The HSC Board will work closely with local Trusts, and there will be more time to engage with individuals, families, community and staff.

Consultation on change will still be necessary, but is likely to be over a longer period of time.

Health and Social Care Trust Staff: Private Medical Insurance

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many employees in each Health and Social Care Trust have private medical insurance that is paid for, either partially or in full, from the public purse; and at what cost.

(AQW 22609/11-15)

Mr Poots: Each of the Health and Social Care Trusts have confirmed that none of their employees have private medical insurance that is paid for, either partially or in full, from the public purse.

Chief Executive of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the post in the Health and Social Care Board, to which the former Chief Executive of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust has been transferred, was advertised; and what is the salary package for this post.

(AQW 22617/11-15)

Mr Poots: The post of Regional Director of eHealth and External Collaboration to which Mr Donaghy has been appointed was not advertised. The post was developed to enhance the strategic leadership in the high priority area of eHealth and external collaboration.

Following this move Mr Donaghy will maintain his existing terms and conditions of service including his salary.

Foot and Ankle Surgery

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how any new foot and ankle surgery activity will be regulated.

(AQW 22623/11-15)

Mr Poots: Podiatric surgeons are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The service will also come under the clinical governance arrangements of the providing Trust as is the case with other services.

Trachea, Bronchus and Lung Cancer Deaths

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22082/11-15, given that the rate of trachea, bronchus and lung cancer deaths among females has increased by more than 20 percent in the last ten years, what action is being taken to ensure a reduction in these rates.

(AQW 22630/11-15)

Mr Poots: The increase in lung cancer deaths among females is due largely to the numbers of young women who started smoking in the 1960s and 1970s, in comparison with earlier generations. These women are now in their fifties and sixties and many are being diagnosed with lung cancer and other tobacco related cancers.

Smoking is a leading factor in around 90% of lung cancer cases and is also a contributory factor in a number of other types of cancer. A reduction in smoking prevalence is, therefore, a key priority for my Department. The Tobacco Control Strategy 2012-2022 aims to: prevent people from starting to smoke; support smokers to quit; and protect the population from tobacco-related harm. Ongoing action includes: delivery of smoking cessation services; development of legislation aimed primarily at preventing young people from taking up smoking; and public awareness-raising campaigns on the harm caused by tobacco use.

Early detection of lung cancer greatly increases the chances for successful treatment. Although symptoms can be quite general people with any of the following should see their GP as soon as possible.

- A cough that doesn't go away after three weeks.

- Coughing more often and more severely than usual.
- Coughing up blood.
- Shortness of breath.
- Feeling weak or more tired than usual.
- Losing weight without knowing why.
- Pain in the ribcage and/or shoulder.
- Chest infections that won't go away, even with antibiotics.
- Hoarseness

In order to promote early detection of cancer, the Public Health Agency plans to deliver a new publicity campaign next year. The campaign will focus on improving public knowledge and awareness of the early signs and symptoms of cancer, and will encourage those with specific symptoms to seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The UK National Screening Committee has advised that screening for lung cancer should not be offered at present.

Donaghadee Health Centre

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to upgrade facilities at Donaghadee Health Centre.

(AQW 22642/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Trust has spent £40,000 in 2012/13 to refurbish Donaghadee Health Centre. There are no plans to further upgrade these premises at present.

Regional Director of eHealth and External Collaboration

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) when the process began for the appointment of Sean Donaghy to the Health and Social Care Board as Regional Director of eHealth and External Collaboration; (ii) on which date the post first became available; and (iii) on which date the decision to appoint Mr Donaghy was taken.

(AQW 22650/11-15)

Mr Poots: There have been discussions between my Department, the HSC Board and the PHA for some time about the need to devote resources to enhance the strategic leadership in this important area of high priority work.

In view of the developments taking place at the Northern Trust Mr Donaghy had agreed to step aside. This new post offered suitable alternative employment to which he could move and his appointment to this new post as regional Director of eHealth and External Collaboration at the HSC Board was based on mutual agreement.

The decision to appoint Mr Donaghy was made on 1 May.

Salary Differences

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the difference in the salary scale for the post of Chief Executive of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and the Regional Director of eHealth and External Collaboration in the Health and Social Care Board.

(AQW 22651/11-15)

Mr Poots: The post of Regional Director of eHealth and External Collaboration in the Health and Social Care Board is a new post which has been developed to enhance the strategic leadership in the high priority area of eHealth and external collaboration.

Following his move to this new post Mr Donaghy will maintain his existing terms and conditions including salary.

Small Care Homes in Residential Areas in South Antrim

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he has taken, since the adjournment debate on 12 February 2013 on small care homes in residential areas in South Antrim, regarding the guidelines for consultation with residents and the other matters raised in the debate.

(AQW 22693/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Guidelines on Consultation of Care Homes in Residential Areas in South Antrim are a matter for the Department for Social Development, which regulates housing associations and sets the criteria for community consultation on all new social housing schemes.

As I indicated in the Adjournment Debate on 12 February 2013 however, I want people who have a learning disability to be fully integrated into our communities with all of the support required to meet their assessed needs.

I am continuing to encourage colleagues and public representatives to engage with members of local communities to alleviate concerns and encourage participation, so that individuals are better informed with regard to those people with a learning disability who may be placed in their area, in line with Delivering the Bamford Vision and Transforming Your Care.

Effective consultation is about information and problem resolution and for the views of all stakeholders to be heard so that the process can be advanced.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Ambulances

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of ambulances in the Health Service fleet, broken down by age; and whether there are any plans to replace any of the ambulances.

(AQW 22700/11-15)

Mr Poots: An age profile of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) fleet, as at 31st March 2013, is detailed below for each vehicle type:

Age of Vehicle (Years)	Vehicle Type			
	A&E Ambulance	Non-Emergency Patient Care Service Vehicle	Rapid Response Vehicle	Other (Officer Cars, Emergency Planning etc)
0-1	2	6	0	0
1-2	36	21	8	3
2-3	8	37	7	5
3-4	34	4	7	9
4-5	17	25	7	5
5-6	0	8	9	10
6-7	18	3	2	2
7-8	0	1	1	1
8-9	1	0	1	11
9-10	0	0	0	0

Age of Vehicle (Years)	Vehicle Type			
	A&E Ambulance	Non-Emergency Patient Care Service Vehicle	Rapid Response Vehicle	Other (Officer Cars, Emergency Planning etc)
10-11	0	0	0	3
11-12	0	0	0	1
Total	116	105	42	50

Source: Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS)

Currently, the NIAS has a fleet replacement programme in place that replaces its vehicles on a 5 year cycle, ensuring that a safe and reliable fleet is maintained.

Over the last 5 years my Department has invested almost £21.5m in the NIAS, of which £16m has been spent on its fleet. A further £6.5m is profiled to be spent on fleet over the next two years.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Multiple Sclerosis Nurses

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Multiple Sclerosis nurses are employed in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 22702/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of dedicated Multiple Sclerosis (MS) nurses in each HSC Trust is shown in the table below.

HSC Trust	Headcount	Whole-time equivalent
Belfast	6	5.1
Northern	1	0.5
South Eastern	0	0.0
Southern	1	1.0
Western	2	1.5

Source: Health & Social Care Trusts

Note: A further Band 6 nurse (1.0 WTE) will start with the Belfast HSC Trust in July 2013.

Care Home Residents

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the process by which engagement will occur with statutory care home residents to ensure that their views are taken into consideration in any future decisions by Health and Social Care Trusts to close care homes.

(AQW 22703/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am putting in place a managed, HSCB-led regional oversight process that adheres to best practice in consultation and change management. I am confident that the oversight arrangements which I will put in place will assure us that residents views and wishes are being heard and accommodated where reasonably possible.

I have asked the HSCB to set clear criteria on which Trusts should base any proposal following on from such a consultation.

Availability of Treatment for MS Patients

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the Multiple Sclerosis Society report 'A lottery of treatment and care: MS Services across Northern Ireland and the UK', what steps he is taking to improve access to treatment for MS patients, especially to Tysabri and Fingolimod.

(AQW 22719/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care is committed to ensuring that all suitable patients in Northern Ireland have timely access to effective, evidence-based specialist treatments for MS. Currently the range of specialist treatments for MS include: Copaxone, Rebiff 22, Rebiff 44, Betaferon, Avonex, Extavia, Tysabri and Fingolimod. All of these regimes are routinely commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board and therefore available to patients in Northern Ireland.

I am pleased to advise that Northern Ireland has the highest uptake rate for specialist MS drugs in the UK: at February 2013, there were over 1,350 people on active treatment. Significant annual investment is made every year in MS specialist drugs for patients in Northern Ireland and the current budget for the service is in excess of £9m. In 2012/13 over £1m of additional funding was made available to support the provision of additional MS drugs in Northern Ireland.

The Health and Social Care Board works closely with MS clinicians to support effective planning and commissioning of new regimes, and investment in 2013/14 will be in line with needs identified through this process.

Duplicate Bookings of Daycase Procedures

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total number of duplicate bookings of daycase procedures in Health Service hospitals and independent healthcare providers, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 22754/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the total number of duplicate bookings of day case procedures in Health Service hospitals and independent healthcare providers, in each of the last five years is not available.

Each of the five HSC Trusts have advised that processes are in place to ensure that patients are not booked for procedures with both a Health Service provider and an Independent Sector provider. As such duplicate bookings are rare and due to administrative error.

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

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22170/11-15, why no appointment was made to the vacant post of Director of Performance Planning and Corporate Affairs at the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

(AQW 22768/11-15)

Mr Poots: NIFRS has advised that the interviewing Panel did not consider any of the candidates to be suitable for appointment.

Specialist Mental Health Provision for Deaf Children

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that deaf children are four times more likely to experience issues within their emotional health and wellbeing, what plans he has to develop further tiers two and three specialist mental health provision for deaf children.

(AQW 22770/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and Trusts have commenced implementation of the Regional Service Model for CAMHS which my Department published in July 2012. The CAMHS Service Model aims to promote consistency in service provision across Northern Ireland. Improvements

to services will include an increased focus on early intervention, better multi-disciplinary working and better collaboration with the community and voluntary, education and youth justice sectors.

The HSCB has recently invested an additional £2.27M (recurrent) in CAMHS, which in the main will be used to establish Primary Mental Health Teams (PMHT) and Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Services (Tier 2) across all Trusts. Development of the PMHT in particular will extend provision directed towards prevention and early intervention and targeting particularly vulnerable groups of children, including children who are deaf. PMHT will liaise with Sensory Impairment teams and engage in assessment and joint working as well as raise awareness of issues regarding the mental health needs of children and young people who are deaf or with hearing difficulties.

Since 2011 each Trust has an identified lead practitioner within CAMHS whose role is to provide referral co-ordination liaison and support to children's and sensory impairment services in response to children who are deaf and are presenting with mental health difficulties. Funding is also provided for provision regionally of specialist assessment, consultation and advice (Tier 3) from Dr. Robert Walker, Consultant Psychiatrist and his team from Dudley and Walsall Primary Mental Health Trust which is one of four regional centres in England commissioned to provide a National Deaf Service for children up to 18 years and their families.

Free Health Care

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22303/11-15, whether people, who are not entitled to free health care. who show up at an Accident and Emergency department or a maternity unit are turned away if they do not have the means to pay for treatment.

(AQW 22837/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the Provision of Health Services To Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations 2005 treatment provided to any person (regardless of their status) in an Accident and Emergency department is exempt from charges. Furthermore maternity treatment will always be provided on an immediately, necessary basis ensuring that any person who requires maternity care at a maternity unit (even where such a person is non-entitled) will still receive it.

Maternity care should never be withheld pending payment, however, HSC Trusts are entitled to raise bills for maternity care provided to any person with non-entitled status.

Social Care Funding

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he proposes to introduce a cap on the cost of social care funding, similar to the proposed cap in England; and what discussions he has had with the Minister of Finance and Personnel on the matter.

(AQW 22858/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am aware of the intention of the Coalition government to introduce, in 2016, a cap of £72,000 on individual contributions to the cost of any social care received. As social care is a devolved matter this cap will apply in England only.

However, I recognise that this is an issue about which people feel strongly and that is why I have committed to a three stage process of reform in Northern Ireland. Stage One, a six month consultation on the discussion document "Who Cares?" The Future of Adult Care and Support in NI", concluded on 15 March 2013. The consultation was very successful, with 185 responses received and over 600 people attending public meetings and focus group events.

Once I have had the opportunity to consider the views and opinions of the people of Northern Ireland my Department will develop proposals for reform, which will include changes to how care and support is funded. Until then it would be inappropriate to decide whether a cap should be implemented in Northern Ireland.

My Department will work closely with other government departments, including the Department of Finance and Personnel, as we take the reform process forward.

Lagan Search and Rescue

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps his Department has taken to support Lagan Search and Rescue; and when the the service will be fully operational.
(AQW 23036/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care organisations in Northern Ireland have no responsibility for search and rescue services.

However, it is anticipated that NIFRS will be able to engage at Operational and Tactical levels with Lagan Search and Rescue on completion of outstanding issues which are beyond the control of my Department.

Implementation of the Dementia Strategy

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the implementation of the dementia strategy.
(AQW 23097/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC Board and Public Health Agency jointly lead a regional group , which includes, people with dementia and their carers, to oversee implementation of the Dementia Strategy and its recommendations across NI. The group has drawn up an Action Plan which is used to report progress in the implementation of the strategy to the Department. The action plan contains 45 initiatives which are being progressed under various headings such as Reducing the Risk or Delaying the Onset of Dementia, Raising Awareness, Promoting Early Assessment and Diagnosis, Supporting People with Dementia and Supporting Carers. The HSCB has secured £1m, recurrent funding, to help with the implementation.

Department of Justice

Offender Levy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much has been accrued through the offender levy since its introduction; and which agencies have benefited from the funding, and to what extent.
(AQW 22231/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): Since its introduction in June 2012, the levy initiative has generated £55,000. Of this total, £35,000 has so far been provided to local groups working in the community, channelled through the Police and Community Safety Partnerships, in support of a range of victim related initiatives.

Firearm Certificate Conditions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people are currently in the court system on charges connected to failing to comply with the conditions of a firearm certificate, broken down by court division.
(AQW 22235/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no cases currently before the courts for the offence of failing to comply with the conditions of a firearm certificate.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission: Pay Scales

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice why the pay scales of staff in the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission are no longer in line with those in the Northern Ireland Civil Service; and what steps are being taken to address this issue.

(AQW 22254/11-15)

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; at that time pay scales within the NILSC were analogous to those in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. 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 NILSC to address the outstanding issues and to ensure that, when completed, any agreed Pay Strategy is passed to DFP for financial approval.

Abuse of the Legal Aid System

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice what steps he is taking to prevent the continued abuse of the legal aid system; and whether there are limits on the level of aid provided to claimants.

(AQW 22279/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (the Commission) is required to apply the statutory criteria set out in the Legal Aid legislation to all applications for Civil Legal Aid and to fund those applications which satisfy that criteria.

There is no limit on the number of occasions on which an individual can apply or be granted Civil Legal Aid. This means that, provided an applicant can satisfy the statutory tests for obtaining Civil Legal Aid, there is no limit on the level of aid which can be provided to applicants. Fees in respect of each case in which Civil Legal Aid is granted will be paid by the Commission based on the payment arrangements which are in place for the particular type of case.

Under the provisions of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Commission will introduce a Funding Code which will revise and strengthen the criteria for the granting of Civil Legal Aid.

Criminal Legal Aid is granted by the court where an individual's means are insufficient to pay for his own legal representation and it is in the interests of justice that he should be represented. As is the case with Civil Legal Aid, there is no limit on the number of occasions on which an individual facing criminal charges can apply and be granted Criminal Legal Aid. The vast majority of fees paid to legal representatives in criminal cases are fixed and are prescribed in Rules.

The Commission is required to protect the public funds it administers. The Commission participates in the National Fraud Initiative and shares information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, in order to prevent and detect fraud.

The Commission has a Counter Fraud team to investigate any allegations or suspicion of fraudulent activity in the legal aid system. The Commission treats any allegations or information of fraudulent activity very seriously and will implement a thorough investigation. The outcomes of such investigations can have a wide range of outcomes from finding no evidence of fraudulent activity to referral to the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The Commission is developing a statutory Registration Scheme for all suppliers of publicly funded legal services. This means that all providers wishing to provide publicly funded legal services will have to register with the Commission and adhere to a Code of Practice. The Code of Practice will set out the

suppliers' duties to the Commission. Suppliers will have to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Practice thereby enhancing the Commission's controls and visibility in the expenditure of public funds.

Taxation Masters

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice whether it is the practice for Taxation Masters to adjudicate adverse legal costs awards in camera and for the determinations, of legal costs, not to be published and accessible for public viewing.

(AQW 22282/11-15)

Mr Ford: Where a provisional taxation assessment by the Taxing Master is not accepted, a hearing will be arranged for the parties to attend. This hearing is open to the public. The taxation outcome is not routinely published, public access to records is dependent on the type of case being assessed and whether any Data Protection issues apply.

Professional Standards Unit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17980/11-15, whether he proposes to employ former police officers in the Professional Standards Unit, as recommended in the Pearson Team Report of 9 June 2009.

(AQW 22288/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my response to AQW/18261/11-15.

Criminal Justice System for Offenders and Witnesses: Speech and Language Support

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what speech and language support exists within the criminal justice system for offenders and witnesses; and what funding is set aside to assist young offenders with communication difficulties.

(AQW 22290/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am committed to ensuring that vulnerable people, including those with speech and language difficulties, are better supported throughout the criminal justice system. My Department introduced the Registered Intermediaries pilot scheme in May 2013, to support victims, witnesses and defendants in communicating more effectively when giving evidence in police custody and at court.

The Youth Justice Agency (YJA), working in partnership with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), is piloting 'the Box', an e-learning tool enabling staff to identify young people experiencing communication difficulties and ensure that they receive appropriate support. In recognition of this work, the YJA won the National Partner Award category of the RCSLT's Giving Voice Awards in November 2012.

Within the criminal justice system support for young people with communication difficulties is normally provided from within existing resources. However, additional assistance is provided for young people through the PSNI-Mindwise 'Linked- In' project, being piloted in Belfast, Antrim and Londonderry. Linked-In provides tailored support to young people and young adults in contact with the PSNI, including assistance with speech, language and communication difficulties. The project was awarded £488,863 funding through the Big Lottery's Empowering Young People Programme.

Within custody, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) provides a range of programmes addressing prisoners' speech, language and communication needs. Prisoners are screened on committal to identify indicators of speech, language and communication difficulties. Those requiring support are offered an appropriate course, delivered in a method best suited to their learning style. Funding for such courses is met from within existing learning and skills provision.

Court Divisions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether all court divisions align with corresponding policing districts.

(AQW 22319/11-15)

Mr Ford: County Court Divisions and Petty Sessions Districts reflect existing local government districts and do not directly align with corresponding policing districts.

Non-Contested Preliminary Enquiries at Magistrate Court Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he has given consideration to abolishing non-contested preliminary enquiries at magistrate court cases transferring to crown court, in which approximately £800 in Legal Aid is paid, in most instances, for a defence solicitor or a barrister to appear, and state that no contrary submission is being offered on behalf of their client.

(AQW 22357/11-15)

Mr Ford: As advised in my answer to AQW/15563/ 11-15, I intend to legislate in the 'Faster, Fairer Justice' Bill to reform committal proceedings. In particular, the Bill will propose the abolition of the use of oral evidence and cross examination of witnesses at committal and provide for the transfer of certain cases directly to the Crown Court, without first holding a preliminary inquiry. I also intend to make provision for the direct transfer of cases where the accused indicates their guilt prior to committal.

Prison Governor: Theft Convictions since 2000

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether a prison Governor has been convicted of theft since 2000, and to detail (i) the date of conviction and sentence imposed; (ii) whether the Governor was dismissed on a disciplinary charge of gross misconduct; (iii) the date of dismissal; and (iv) whether the person was retired on health grounds and received a relevant pension.

(AQW 22358/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested has been withheld as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Code of Conduct and Discipline: Change Managers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 20595/11-15, whether any Change Managers have been consulted, or provided input or opinion, on the proposed new Code of Conduct and Discipline.

(AQW 22361/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Change Managers have not been consulted, nor have they provided input or opinions, in relation to the new Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Enforcement of Judgements Office

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice how many homes were repossessed as a result of the Enforcement of Judgements Office in 2012, compared to 2008.

(AQW 22366/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information is not available in the format sought. Repossession data includes domestic property, commercial property and land. The number of repossessions by the Enforcement of Judgments Office increased from 210 in 2008 to 1,121 in 2012.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission: Pay Progression

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice why the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has not addressed pay progression for staff, separately from the issue of pay increases.

(AQW 22408/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC) is an executive Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and, on devolution in April 2010, it became an arms length body of the Department of Justice. As an executive NDPB, the NILSC is a separate bargaining unit for the purposes of terms and conditions of service including pay.

The NILSC presently has three pay remits outstanding covering the periods 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 (with the pay progression element for its 2009/10 pay settlement also outstanding).

The NILSC submitted a Pay Strategy Business Case to the Department of Justice on 22 January 2013 for consideration. A number of queries are still to be resolved between the NILSC and my officials.

My Department will continue to work with NILSC to address the outstanding issues, including pay progression. When completed, any agreed Pay Strategy will be passed to DFP for financial approval.

Permanent Staff: Contractual Right to Pay Progression

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, in seeking legal advice on the subject of the contractual right of staff to pay progression, why a sample letter of offer in respect of temporary staff was used, rather than on letter of offer in respect of permanent staff; and to confirm whether permanent staff have a contractual right to pay progression.

(AQW 22409/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has sought legal advice on the contractual right of staff to pay progression. These advices have been shared with the Department of Justice and the NILSC is seeking to bring to a conclusion the ongoing pay discussions. As the legal advices provided are covered by legal professional privilege the Chief Executive has advised that he is not in a position to comment on the specific points raised.

Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Justice in relation to The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre at Antrim Area Hospital, what progress his Department is making to ensure that Independent Sexual Violence Advisers or Independent Domestic Violence Advisers are part of the centre.

(AQW 22425/11-15)

Mr Ford: Work has been ongoing with my Department, the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety and the Police Service for Northern Ireland to define and develop the roles of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service and the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service. The business case for the IDVA service has recently been approved and work to source a service provider is underway. A similar process will be required for the ISVA service.

It is expected that the IDVA and ISVA roles will evolve as the Rowan becomes more embedded within Northern Ireland.

Breach of Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21645/11-15, to outline how this person was charged with assault on 7 October 2012 when he was not released from his custodial sentence until 8 October 2012.

(AQW 22432/11-15)

Mr Ford: Whilst Mr Townsend was involved in an incident at Hydebank Wood on the 7 October the incident was not reported until after his release from custody.

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21379/11-15, in relation to part (v) of the question, whether the individual has breached any terms of release and/or Sexual Offences Prevention Orders on any occasion since his release.

(AQW 22436/11-15)

Mr Ford: Mr McCabe is not the subject of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order. He is in contravention of the terms of his court imposed licence by removing himself from his specified address and from supervision. As a consequence, the court granted the Probation Board's application for a warrant for his arrest to face breach proceedings before the court. He has subsequently been arrested by PSNI.

Magilligan Prison

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice when he expects work to commence on the new build of Magilligan Prison.

(AQW 22450/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following my update to the Assembly on 19 March 2013, Northern Ireland Prison Service officials continue their work in developing the plans for all the projects included in the Estate Strategy including that of the rebuilding of Magilligan. Until the outcome of this exercise is concluded, I am not able to provide exact details as to when works at Magilligan will commence.

Prisoners: Pay and Privileges

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice to outline the guidance issued on the requisite level of (i) behaviour; and (ii) the work that should be completed by prisoners in return for pay and privileges; and to what extent decisions on this are discretionary.

(AQW 22454/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service is committed to developing and embedding opportunities for prisoners that contribute to effective resettlement and rehabilitation. An important aspect of this is managed through the Progressive Regimes and Earned Privileges Scheme (PREPS).

PREPS privileges and incentives are allocated according to three different regime levels - Standard, Enhanced and Basic. PREPS underlines the Prison Service's investment in preparing prisoners for release by encouraging, motivating, supporting and rewarding them for:

- working to an agreed Offender Management plan to address their offending behaviour and in preparation for release;
- demonstrating good behaviour within the prison and compliance with prison rules;
- demonstrating respectful relationships with staff, other professionals, visitors and prisoners;
- remaining drug and alcohol free;
- engaging in activities and work opportunities as identified in their plan; and
- reducing their risk of reoffending.

There is no automatic entitlement to privileges since these may be granted or removed depending on the regime level attained by the prisoner.

PREPS is operated consistently and is delivered equitably to all prisoners irrespective of their gender, religious belief, political opinion, racial group, disability, age, marital status or sexual orientation to comply with their statutory equality duty set out in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Prisoners: Pay and Privileges

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice whether there are plans to introduce changes to prisoner pay and privileges similar to changes to the incentives and earned privileges schemes announced for England and Wales.

(AQW 22455/11-15)

Mr Ford: A Comprehensive review of the current Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) Progressive Regime and Earned Privileges (PREPS) Policy is being taken forward and will examine prisoner payment structures for each regime level with the intention of making the PREPS system even more incentive and motivational based. The current PREPS system used by NIPS is however largely incentive-based with prisoners only progressing to enhanced status who meet the standards outlined in my answer to AQW/22454/11-15.

NIPS will continue to monitor developments in neighbouring jurisdictions. However, it is intended to develop the best scheme for Northern Ireland. There are no plans to introduce changes to prisoner pay and privileges similar to changes announced for England and Wales.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commissions Staff: Equal Pay Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether equal pay arrangements, as applied in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, have been implemented for staff of the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commissions and if not, to outline the reasons for this.

(AQW 22482/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission was established as an executive Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) in 2003 under Article 3 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. Upon devolution in April 2010 the NILSC became an arms length body of the Department of Justice.

Employees of the NILSC are not part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and are therefore not on the same pay arrangements or pay scales as civil servants. Staff in NILSC have no entitlement to the NICS equal pay settlement.

The NJLSC is a separate bargaining unit for the purposes of terms and conditions of service including pay. NILSC employees are paid by reference to NILGOSC pay scales and are covered by the NILCOSC pension scheme for superannuation purposes.

Young Conference Orders in Fermanagh/Tyrone Court Division

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many juvenile offenders were given Young Conference Orders in Fermanagh/Tyrone Court Division in each of the last two years and of these, how many reoffended (i) during the duration of the Young Conference Order; and (ii) on completion of the Order.

(AQW 22490/11-15)

Mr Ford: There were 52 Youth Conference Orders (YCOs) granted in the Fermanagh/Tyrone Court Division during calendar year 2011 and 64 in 2012.

The reoffending information requested is not yet available. Reoffending rates are calculated on the basis of tracking a group of individuals for a period of one year after the completion of a disposal. As the YCOs can

themselves be up to one year in length, insufficient time has elapsed to enable 2011 or 2012 reoffending rates to be calculated.

Londonderry Magistrates Court: Contested Domestic Violence Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the pilot listing arrangement at Londonderry Magistrates Court for contested domestic violence cases and to outline whether he

plans to introduce this in other court divisions, particularly in areas where there are high incidences of domestic violence cases.

(AQW 22493/11-15)

Mr Ford: The current pilot listing arrangement at Londonderry Magistrates' Court is undergoing independent evaluation by the University of Ulster and it is anticipated that initial results will be available by October 2013.

Any decision to extend the pilot listing arrangements to other court venues will be informed by this evaluation report in consultation with the judiciary and with input from other key stakeholders.

Enforcement of Judgements Office: Repossessed Houses

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many houses have been repossessed as a result of the Enforcement of Judgements Office in the last twelve months, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 22509/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information is not available in the format sought. Repossession data includes domestic property, commercial property and land.

Information based on the correspondence address of the debtor is available and set out in the table below, this may not always be the same address as the property to be repossessed.

ASSEMBLY AREA	Number of Repossessions by Correspondence Address in 2012
Belfast East	39
Belfast North	58
Belfast South	59
Belfast West	64
East Antrim	56
East Londonderry	63
Fermanagh & Tyrone	63
Foyle	67
LaganValley	67
Mid Ulster	56
Newry & Armagh	103
North Antrim	58
North Down	56
South Antrim	53
South Down	73
Strangford	52
Upper Bann	62
West Tyrone	61
Outside Northern Ireland	11
Total	1,121

Note:

Each repossession is allocated a unique reference number and therefore any involving a landlord and multiple properties are individually counted.

Probation Board Administrative Personnel

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the proposals to change the terms and conditions of Probation Board administrative personnel to bring them in line with those of the Northern Ireland Civil Service; and to outline when he expects this process to be completed as well as the reasons for the delay.

(AQW 22550/11-15)

Mr Ford: Work has been ongoing between Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop a new pay strategy for these staff and to obtain the necessary approvals from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) to implement it. Unfortunately the process involved to achieve this has proven to be particularly complex and as a result very time consuming.

DFP approved the business case relating to the administration staff in October 2012. PBNI was subsequently required to prepare and submit a number of pay remits to cover the period from 2010 for DOJ and DFP approval.

This process is ongoing with a number of queries having been raised by DFP on the documentation received.

This matter is now in its final stages. Every effort continues to be made by the Department, working closely with PBNI, to bring this issue to a satisfactory conclusion.

Television Licence Fee

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice how many people, on average, were in prison in (i) 2007; and (ii) 2012 as a result of failure to pay a television licence fee.

(AQW 22580/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is impossible to provide the average number of persons who were in prison solely as a result of failure to pay a television licence fee. Prisoners in custody for this offence are often on remand or serving concurrent sentences for other offences.

Taking this into consideration, in 2007 the average number of persons serving a sentence for non payment of fines was one out of 146. This number rose to one out of 104 prisoners in 2012.

Eligibility Criteria for Jury Service

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21728/11-15, how the eligibility criteria for jury service differs between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom; and for his assessment of the risk posed to the economy by the current criteria.

(AQW 22603/11-15)

Mr Ford: In Northern Ireland, all persons on the electoral register aged between 18 and 70 are qualified for jury service, except those categories of person that are specified as disqualified or ineligible. In addition, there are categories of person that are specified as excusable as of right. The same eligibility criteria apply in England and Wales, except that there are no categories of person specified as ineligible (save for mentally disordered persons) or excusable as of right. In Scotland, all persons aged 18 and over are qualified for jury service, and there are similar categories of person specified as disqualified, ineligible and excusable as of right as in Northern Ireland.

I am unaware of any study that has quantified the economic impact of jury service in Northern Ireland or elsewhere, but I do not consider that the current criteria pose any significant risk to the economy,

given the very small number of working days lost relative to the total number of days worked in Northern Ireland.

Civil Service Equal Pay

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice what action he has taken, in conjunction with the Minister of Finance and Personnel, to find a solution for current and former staff from his Department and its Arm's-Length Bodies with unresolved issues stemming from the Civil Service equal pay issue.

(AQW 22648/11-15)

Mr Ford: The County Court decision on 7 March established that the NICS equal pay settlement applied only to periods of service in the 11 NICS departments. It did not apply to bodies such as the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and PANI/PSNI who had lawfully received a delegation for pay matters which was still in effect during the relevant time period.

Therefore staff in the Department of Justice who were former members of the NIO prior to devolution as well as those in PSNI support grades have no legal entitlement to have the terms of the settlement applied to them. However, settlement payments for individuals with periods of eligible service in NICS departments are still available should individuals wish to avail of them.

In the circumstances there is no further action being taken in respect of the equal pay issue.

Contiguous Policing Districts and Court Divisions

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to outline any plans to ensure that policing districts and court divisions are contiguous.

(AQW 22666/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have no plans to make court boundaries contiguous with policing districts. Rather, I intend to bring forward legislation to create a single jurisdiction for Northern Ireland for County Court and Magistrates' Court business. This will allow court business to be managed with greater flexibility. A Bill to bring about this change will be introduced into the Assembly later this year.

In the meantime, I am introducing secondary legislation which will temporarily merge some court districts in order to allow greater flexibility in the management of court business during the period of the G8 Summit to be held in Co. Fermanagh next month.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission: Pay Increase

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice when staff in the NI Legal Services Commission were last awarded a pay increase.

(AQW 22735/11-15)

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 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 NILSC specific pay scales from August 2009.

The NILSC presently has three pay remits outstanding covering the periods 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13. 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.

Imprisonment for Failure to Pay Fines

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice how many people have served a period of imprisonment for failure to pay fines, apart from for television licence offences, in (i) 2007; and (ii) 2012.

(AQW 22739/11-15)

Mr Ford: The numbers of people who have served a period of imprisonment for failure to pay fines, apart from television licences, are 1824 in 2007 and 2444 in 2012.

Probation Board Administrative Personnel

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the business case submitted to his Department in 2010 that recommended administrative personnel in the Probation Board have their employment terms transferred to Civil Service terms and conditions.

(AQW 22822/11-15)

Mr Ford: Work has been ongoing between Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop a new pay strategy for these staff and to obtain the necessary approvals from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) to implement it. Unfortunately the process involved to achieve this has proven to be particularly complex and as a result very time consuming.

DFP approved the business case relating to the administration staff in October 2012. PBNI was subsequently required to prepare and submit a number of pay remits to cover the period from 2010 for Department of Justice (DOJ) and DFP approval. This process is ongoing with a number of queries having been raised by DFP on the documentation received.

This matter is now in its final stages. Every effort continues to be made by the Department, working closely with PBNI, to bring this issue to a satisfactory conclusion.

Animal Cruelty Offences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what plans his Department has to increase sentencing tariffs for people convicted of animal cruelty offences.

(AQW 22841/11-15)

Mr Ford: As Minister of Justice my role is to ensure that any proposals from Departments for new offences or penalties sit appropriately within the existing framework of criminal sanctions. In that context the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has policy responsibility for tackling animal cruelty.

Within the legislative framework, sentencing in individual cases is a matter for the judiciary. In this regard, sentencing guidelines have recently been published for animal offences, including cruelty offences, heard in Magistrates' Courts.

Security Gates on Londonderry's Walls

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice what assurance he can give that the security gates on Londonderry's walls, close to the Fountain estate, will not be removed without the prior consent of residents and community leaders.

(AQW 22856/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are five gates at the Walls in Derry that are locked overnight. These are adjacent to the Fountain Estate at Bishop Street. I can give an assurance that, in line with general practice, the views of residents and others will be sought should the future of these gates be considered.

Maghaberry Prison: Roe 1 and Roe 2 Accommodation Units

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department accepts the outcome of the Steele Review regarding Maghaberry Prison and why Roe 1 and Roe 2 accommodation units are not being used specifically for separated prisoners as outlined in the Review report.

(AQW 22895/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am satisfied that the findings of the Steele Review 2003, relating to separation of paramilitary prisoners, have been implemented at Maghaberry Prison.

Roe 1 and Roe 2 currently house sentenced and remand prisoners. The review did not specify this accommodation for separated prisoners.

PSNI Serious Organised Crime Branch: Seized Assets

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the impact on the circa £25,000,000 of seized assets currently held by PSNI Serious Organised Crime Branch, if the National Crime Agency is not introduced as planned on the second week of October 2013.

(AQW 22995/11-15)

Mr Ford: I believe the figure referred to is £23,400,000 which is an approximate gross amount relating to Northern Ireland civil recovery cases that are currently under investigation or currently in litigation by the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA).

As things stand, when the National Crime Agency (NCA) is established it will take over responsibility for civil recovery cases from SOCA in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but its work will be limited in Northern Ireland to non-devolved cases.

Work is ongoing to ensure that we have a mechanism of civil recovery in Northern Ireland to tackle the assets of organised criminals.

G8 Summit

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) what agreements or discussions has he or departmental officials had in connection to the G8 Summit and the placing of a moratorium on all road works and contracts over the period of the Summit; (ii) whether this moratorium will be confined to strategic areas and routes that may be used; and (iii) the length of time the moratorium will be in place and the rationale for this.

(AQW 23008/11-15)

Mr Ford: The moratorium on road works over the period of the G8 Summit is not a matter for the Department of Justice.

You may wish to direct your question to the Department for Regional Development.

Lagan Search and Rescue

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail what steps have been taken to support Lagan Search and Rescue and when he expects the service to become fully operational.

(AQW 23010/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice has responsibility for the policy and strategy for land-based and inland water search and rescue (SAR) in Northern Ireland. However, this does not extend to funding or support of the voluntary groups.

The Department is about to initiate a review of the framework arrangements for search and rescue in Northern Ireland, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2013.

Decisions on the operational status of voluntary search and rescue organisations are a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

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

Operation Loft: Debriefing

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22115/11-15, for an update on the debriefing recently held in association with Operation Loft, in particular, any details of discussions on the possibility of insider information being passed to suspects.

(AQW 23057/11-15)

Mr Ford: It would not be appropriate to release the detail of any operational debrief as to do so might impact on future operations or investigations.

Department for Regional Development

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued by each council in the last three years; and how many of these are still outstanding.

(AQW 22130/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Details of PCNs issued in each district council area in each of the last three years and the number outstanding as at 29 April 2013 are as follows:-

Council	PCNs 2010/11	Outstanding At 29/4/13	PCNs 2011/12	Outstanding At 29/4/13	PCNs 2012/13	Outstanding At 29/4/13
Antrim	1061	72	1526	105	1332	131
Ards	4067	172	3923	204	3232	265
Armagh	2687	215	2706	245	2984	337
Ballymena	4592	201	6587	319	4551	349
Ballymoney	1166	54	1341	81	1125	99
Banbridge	1078	59	1747	76	3102	193
Belfast *	36873	2361	36572	2484	28871	2878
Carrick-fergus	1345	77	1645	87	1201	88
Coleraine	3884	205	4151	225	4804	381
Cookstown	1988	91	1796	77	1535	110
Craigavon	3668	212	3841	209	7107	588
Derry	10892	1612	11436	1691	9504	1737
Down	2756	157	2965	183	3220	292
Dungannon	2139	117	2528	177	2104	217
Fermanagh	7153	940	6497	853	5453	855
Larne	709	33	1396	78	1169	70

Council	PCNs 2010/11	Outstanding At 29/4/13	PCNs 2011/12	Outstanding At 29/4/13	PCNs 2012/13	Outstanding At 29/4/13
Limavady	1057	77	1361	74	1188	92
Lisburn	10318	552	7718	452	6824	570
Magherafelt	2329	120	2371	119	1809	148
Moyle	349	22	268	22	408	42
Newry & Mourne	5636	581	9031	983	5724	866
N'town-abbey	622	21	609	24	567	30
North Down	5021	199	5068	276	4511	329
Omagh	4597	319	5219	398	4041	449
Strabane	2582	430	2674	475	2084	427
Total	118569	8899	124976	9917	108450	11543

* Belfast includes Castlereagh

Ulsterbus Rural Network Coverage

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the rural network coverage by Ulsterbus, excluding the coverage provided by the school bus network.

(AQW 22191/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Ulsterbus provides a comprehensive rural network of bus services throughout Northern Ireland as well as cross-border services into the Republic of Ireland. The periods of operation and frequency of individual services are continually reviewed and maintained to meet optimum customer demand. This remains largely the same throughout the year, albeit the frequency of some routes is reduced (as one would reasonably expect) to reflect reduced demand, largely as a result of school holidays.

In addition Translink receive support from the Rural Transport Fund, which is administered by my Department, to provide rural services that would not be economically viable without a level of subvention. Currently support from the Fund supports 38 bus routes across Northern Ireland with annual patronage of around 170,000 passenger journeys.

Illegal Monuments

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many illegal monuments have been identified by his Department, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 22239/11-15)

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.

In the last two years, officials have identified four illegal monuments on property which is owned by Roads Service.

Given these circumstances, like my predecessors Mr Conor Murphy MP, Mr Gregory Campbell MP and Mr Peter Robinson, I am unable to instruct my officials to remove terrorist commemorations on

departmental controlled or associated property, unless such structures pose a danger to road users, or there is clear indication that removing them would have widespread local support

Unauthorised memorials on the property of the Department's arms-length bodies are matters for the Boards of those organisations.

Illegal Monuments

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to ensure that illegal monuments are removed.

(AQW 22240/11-15)

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, like my predecessors Mr Conor Murphy, Mr Gregory Campbell and Mr Peter Robinson, I am not in a position to advise of plans to ensure illegal monuments are removed.

Asbestos Water Pipes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development which roads in the (i) Ards; and (ii) North Down Borough Council areas are served by asbestos water pipes.

(AQW 22247/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the roads listed in the table below are served or partially served by asbestos cement water mains.

(i) ARDS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Road Name	Town
Abbey Close	Greyabbey
Abbey Road	Millisle
Abbot Crescent	Newtownards
Alexandra Road	Donaghadee
Ardminnan Road	Portaferry
Ardnalvalley Park	Comber
Ardview Park	Killinchy
Ardview Road	Killinchy
Back Road	Ballyhalbert
Bairdstown Road	Ballywalter
Balliggan Road	Kircubbin
Ballyblack Road	Portaferry
Ballyblack Road East	Carrowdore
Ballybunden Road	Comber
Ballycastle Road	Newtownards
Ballydoonan Road	Greyabbey

Road Name	Town
Ballydorn Road	Killinchy
Ballydrain Road	Comber
Ballyeasborough Road	Portavogie
Ballyfounder Road	Portaferry
Ballygelagh Road	Kircubbin
Ballyglighorn Road	Comber
Ballygowan Road	Comber
Ballyhaft Road	Newtownards
Ballyhaskin Road	Ballywalter
Ballyhay Road	Donaghadee
Ballyhemlin Road	Kircubbin
Ballyhenry Road	Comber
Ballymaleddy Road	Comber
Ballyrawer Avenue	Carrowdore
Ballyreagh Road	Newtownards
Ballyrolly Cottages	Millisle
Ballyvester Road	Donaghadee
Ballywalter Road	Greyabbey
Bar Hall Road	Portaferry
Barn Hill	Donaghadee
Bayview Road	Killinchy
Beechvale Road	Killinchy
Belair Avenue	Newtownards
Belfast Road	Newtownards
Bennetts Avenue	Donaghadee
Blackstaff Road	Kircubbin
Bowtown Road	Newtownards
Brae Park	Ballygowan
Brooklands Road	Newtownards
Bruce Avenue	Comber
Bush Road	Ballyhalbert
Cannyreagh Road	Donaghadee
Cardy Road	Greyabbey
Cardy Road East	Greyabbey

Road Name	Town
Carrickmannon Road	Ballygowan
Castle Manor	Carrowdore
Castle Meadows	Newtownards
Castle Place	Carrowdore
Cherryvalley Crescent	Comber
Cherryvalley Drive	Comber
Church Hill	Killinchy
Church Lane	Donaghadee
Church Road	Newtownards
Church Street	Portaferry
Churchill Park	Killinchy
Cloughey Road	Portaferry
Coastguard Cottages	Ballyhalbert
Cook Street	Portaferry
Cotton Road	Bangor
Cuan Gardens	Greyabbey
Cunningburn Road	Newtownards
De Wind Drive	Comber
Deer Park Road	Portaferry
Donaghadee Road	Newtownards
Drumardan Road	Cloughey
Drumfad Road	Millisle
Drumhirk Avenue	Newtownards
Drumhirk Way	Newtownards
Drumreagh Road	Ballygowan
Dunevly Road	Newtownards
Dunover Road	Greyabbey
Dunover Road North	Carrowdore
East Street	Donaghadee
Finlays Road	Newtownards
Florida Road	Comber
Ganaway Road	Ballywalter
Generals Walk	Donaghadee
Glastry Road	Kircubbin

Road Name	Town
Gloucester Avenue	Donaghadee
Grangee Road	Carrowdore
Green Road	Bangor
Greengraves Road	Dundonald
Greenlea Crescent	Newtownards
Gregstown Park	Newtownards
Greyabbey Road	Greyabbey
Greystone Road	Ballywalter
Harbour Road	Ballyhalbert
High Bangor Road	Groomsport
High Street	Donaghadee
Hillsborough Road	Moneyreagh
Hogstown Road	Donaghadee
Hunters Lane	Donaghadee
Inishargy Road	Kircubbin
Islandhill Road	Millisle
Kempe Stones Road	Newtownards
Kilbright Road	Millisle
Kilcarn Road	Ballygowan
Killaughey Road	Donaghadee
Killinakin Road	Killinchy
Killinchy Road	Comber
Kilmood Church Road	Killinchy
Kylestone Road	Donaghadee
Lawson Park	Portavogie
Lemons Road	Portavogie
Leslie Hill	Donaghadee
Leslie Hill Crescent	Donaghadee
Lisbane Road	Kircubbin
Lisbarnet Road	Killinchy
Longlands Road	Comber
Loughdoo Road	Portaferry
Main Street	Killinchy
Manor Road	Comber

Road Name	Town
Manse Road	Ballygowan
Millisle Road	Donaghadee
Moat Road	Ballyhalbert
Mountain Road	Newtownards
Movilla Road	Donaghadee
Murdocks Lane	Bangor
New Line	Ballygowan
New Road	Carrowdore
Newcastle Road	Portaferry
Newtownards Road	Donaghadee
Nursery Road	Kircubbin
Old Ballygowan Road	Comber
Park Crescent	Comber
Park Way	Comber
Pattons Grove	Newtownards
Portaferry Road	Cloughey
Portavogie Road	Ballyhalbert
Quarry Road	Greyabbey
Ringcreevy Road	Comber
Roddans Road	Kircubbin
Rowreagh Road	Newtownards
Sandylands	Ballyhalbert
Shore Road	Portaferry
Springfield Gardens	Portavogie
Springfield Road	Portavogie
Station Road	Saintfield
Stockbridge Road	Donaghadee
Strangford View	Killinchy
Stump Road	Greyabbey
The Brae	Ballygowan
The Chase	Donaghadee
The Cranagh	Donaghadee
The Square	Portaferry
Tullykevin Road	Newtownards

Road Name	Town
Tullymally Road	Portaferry
Tullynagee Road	Killinchy
Tullynakill Road	Comber
Upper Ballygelagh Road	Newtownards
Upper Crescent	Comber
Upper Gransha Road	Donaghadee
Vestry Road	Ballygowan
Wallace Gardens	Comber
Wallace Park	Comber
Warren Avenue	Donaghadee
Warren Drive	Donaghadee
Warren Gardens	Donaghadee
Warren Lane	Donaghadee
Warren Road	Donaghadee
Warren Villas	Donaghadee
Westmount Park	Newtownards
Whitecherry Lane	Killinchy
Whitechurch Road	Ballywalter
Woburn Road	Millisle

(ii) NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Road Name	Town
Abbey Drive	Bangor
Abbey Hill Drive	Bangor
Abbey Park	Bangor
Ashley Drive	Bangor
Ballycrochan Avenue	Bangor
Ballycrochan Park	Bangor
Ballycrochan Road	Bangor
Ballymaconnell Road	Bangor
Bangor Road	Groomsport
Belfast Road	Bangor
Burnside Park	Crawfordsburn
Cedar Grove	Hollywood
Cherrymount Park	Bangor

Road Name	Town
Chippendale Avenue	Bangor
Churchill Crescent	Bangor
Churchill Park	Bangor
Churchland Close	Hollywood
Clarehill Lane	Hollywood
Coastguard Lane	Groomsport
Cooleen Gardens	Crawfordsburn
Cootehall Park	Crawfordsburn
Cootehall Road	Crawfordsburn
Crawfordsburn Road	Bangor
Demesne Road	Hollywood
Drumhirk Avenue	Bangor
Drumhirk Way	Newtownards
Firmount Crescent	Hollywood
Gibson's Lane	Bangor
Green Road	Bangor
Groomsport Road	Bangor
Groomsport Road Roundabout	Bangor
Hawe Road	Bangor
High Bangor Road	Groomsport
Jackson's Road	Hollywood
Killaire Park	Bangor
Kinnegar Close	Hollywood
Kinnegar Court	Hollywood
Kinnegar Drive	Hollywood
Kylestone Road	Groomsport
Meadow Grove	Crawfordsburn
Meadow Park	Crawfordsburn
Meadow Park North	Crawfordsburn
Meadow Way	Crawfordsburn
Newtownards Road	Newtownards
Old Hollywood Road	Hollywood
Orlock Road	Groomsport
Wellington Park	Bangor

There is not a specific programme to replace asbestos cement mains and they will be replaced over time as part of NIW's normal water mains rehabilitation programme.

Visually Impaired Bus Users

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration is being given to introducing audio announcements in buses to aid people who are visually impaired.

(AQW 22250/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Last year the Department, in conjunction with Guide Dogs and Translink, completed the evaluation of a pilot project involving the provision of audio visual systems on a Metro bus service and at bus stops. The evaluation highlighted the benefits of audio visual systems for all passengers but particularly for people with visual impairments and older people. An unsuccessful bid was previously made for resources to implement audio visual systems on buses. However, the Department and Translink, will continue to explore potential funding for the provision of audio visual systems on the bus network, including any additional solutions that could be provided through advances in technology, particularly through the use of smart phones.

Visually Impaired Bus Users

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps are being taken to improve access to bus transport for people who are visually impaired.

(AQW 22251/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is proactive in seeking measures to improve access to all public transport, including bus services, through the implementation of the Accessible Transport Strategy. The latest Action Plan for 2012-2015 to deliver the strategy includes a task to identify and assess barriers to travel faced by disabled people which includes people who are visually impaired.

Last year my Department, in conjunction with Guide Dogs and Translink, completed the evaluation of a pilot project involving the provision of audio visual systems on a Metro bus service and at bus stops. The evaluation highlighted the benefits of audio visual systems for all passengers and particularly for people with visual impairments and older people.

An unsuccessful bid was previously made for audio visual systems on buses and the Department is continuing to pursue sources of possible funding. Additionally, the Department will explore solutions that could be provided through advances in technology, particularly with the use of smart phones.

Discussions have taken place between officials from my Department and The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) to discuss the merits of developing a Northern Ireland Travel Aid to alert drivers to a passenger's possible need for assistance.

Translink have been working in conjunction with the RNIB on the Northern Ireland Vision Strategy and hope to achieve centre of excellence accreditation for Lisburn Bus and Rail centres. If successful, it is intended to roll this out throughout Translink's companies. Translink are currently working with Guide Dogs to help facilitate guide dog travel training on buses and trains.

Translink staff receive training in respect of providing assistance to persons with disabilities, particularly those with visual and hearing disabilities. This subject is also covered on mandatory internal Certificate of Professional Competence driver training days.

Public Inquiry System

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the findings of the Judicial Review challenge to the A5 road scheme, whether he will conduct a review of the adequacy of the public inquiry system and the approach of inspectors, in light of the Inquiry's failure to properly address issues, such as those under the Habitats Directive, as exposed by the Judicial Review.

(AQW 22365/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department appoints an independent Inspector, or Inspectors if required, to take charge of public inquiries. The Inspector is responsible for the orderly conduct of the inquiry and is appointed to hear all representations/objections in respect of the proposed scheme, impartially consider them and make recommendations to the Department.

In the Judicial Review, the A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC) project was challenged on twelve grounds, only one of which was successful. In upholding the one ground, which related to the Habitats Directive and the need for an Appropriate Assessment, the Judge gave greater weight to the argument based on the Loughs Agency's submission to the public inquiry hearing than to the views of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Republic of Ireland. Both of these statutory consultees agreed with the project consultants that an Appropriate Assessment was not required.

With regard to the Public Inquiry into the A5WTC, the Inspectors accepted the commitment given by my Department in relation to concerns raised by the Loughs Agency and saw no reason to consider any further recommendations. While expressing concerns, Loughs Agency did not suggest that an Appropriate Assessment was required.

In light of the issues raised at the Inquiry and the Inspectors' comments, as well as the subsequent legal challenge and findings of the court, my Department will be reviewing its processes to ensure that any lessons learned can and will be applied to other roads projects. However, I do not consider it necessary to carry out a review of the A5WTC Public Inquiry process which resulted in over 100 recommendations, the majority of which were accepted.

Dunhill Road, Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the nature of the proposed works at the Dunhill Road, Coleraine which will necessitate road diversions for over a six month period.
(AQW 22367/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) works are currently ongoing at Dunhill Road to facilitate the installation of a high voltage underground electricity cable that will serve the proposed Dunmore Wind Farm. The works, which are expected to be completed by mid-November, require the installation of approximately 9km of 33kv cable along the existing hard shoulders and verge of the A37 Dunhill Road, between the electricity sub-station at Power Station Road and the top of Coleraine Mountain Road at Springwell Forest. My Department has agreed traffic management plans with NIE to minimise disruption to the travelling public. This plan restricts the contractor's working hours, allowing traffic to flow unhindered in both directions during the morning and evening peak hours. At other times, short lane closures will be necessary and these will be controlled by manually operated Stop/Go signs. No works will be undertaken during public or bank holidays and no traffic diversions are required.

I should explain that utilities do have a statutory right under their enabling legislation, to install equipment in a public road. Under The Street Works (NI) Order 1995, they also have a duty to co-operate with the Department in the interests of safety, to minimise inconvenience and to protect the structure of a street.

Due to the scale of the operation and NIE technical restrictions associated with the laying of a cable of this nature, my officials are satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure the works programme is efficient and the period of construction is minimised to limit disruption.

Vehicles Damaged by Badly Maintained Roads

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what payments his Department has made in compensation to drivers whose vehicles have been damaged by badly maintained roads, in the past two years.
(AQW 22391/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not maintain details of compensation payments to drivers specifically in relation to damage to vehicles arising from badly maintained roads.

Roads Service: Preliminary Adoption Certificate

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development which developments in the Strangford constituency have been issued with a preliminary adoption certificate by Roads Service, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 22393/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Developments in the Strangford constituency, where preliminary certificates have been issued from 1 April 2012, are listed below:

70-90 Bangor Road, Newtownards

Aldergrange, Manse Road, Newtownards

Bartleys Grange, Greyabbey

Roads Service: Final Adoption Certificate

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development which developments in the Strangford constituency have been issued with a final adoption certificate by Roads Service, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 22394/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The developments in the Strangford Constituency which have been issued with a final adoption certificate since 1 April 2012, are listed below:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ Mount Pleasant, Newtownards | ■ The Gables, Portaferry |
| ■ 39/40 Bristol Park, Newtownards | ■ Seaview Court, Portavogie |
| ■ Helensview Park, Newtownards | ■ Millisle Road, Donaghadee |
| ■ Turnstone, Newtownards | ■ Cuan View, Lisbane |
| ■ Lansdowne Road, Newtownards | ■ Briarwood Park, Ballywalter |
| ■ 1-6 Upper Crescent, Comber | ■ The Forge, Ballygowan |
| ■ Crescent Mews, Comber | ■ Crossgar Road, Ballynahinch |
| ■ Albion Court, Comber | ■ Drummond Brae, Ballynahinch |

Strangford Constituency: Article 11 Enforcement Notices

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development which developments in the Strangford constituency have been issued with Article 11 enforcement notices in the last twelve months; and to outline the action that has been taken.

(AQW 22395/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the developments in the Strangford Constituency where Article 11 enforcement notices have been issued from 1 April 2012 and an outline of the actions taken at those developments, are provided in the table below:

Article 11 Enforcement Notices	Action
Old Shore Road, Newtownards	Developer has recommenced work on site.
East Street Court, Newtownards	As a result of the Article 11 notice, Developer has agreed to complete the work.

Article 11 Enforcement Notices	Action
Stanfield Court, Newtownards	Roads Service Contractor appointed to complete work.
South of Judes Crescent, Newtownards	Roads Service Contractor appointed to complete work.
Teal Rocks, Portaferry Road, Newtownards	Work completed awaiting NI Water clearance.
Briar Park, Ballywalter	Adopted 28 February 2013.
Princetoon, Portavogie	As a result of the Article 11 notice, Developer has agreed to complete the work.
The Tides, Portavogie	As a result of the Article 11 notice, Developer has agreed to complete the work.
Fox Hollow, Ballygowan	Roads Service to appoint contractor to complete the work.
Ardmore Manor, Ballygowan	As a result of the Article 11 notice, Developer has agreed to complete the work.

Traffic Calming Measures: West Belfast Constituency

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on traffic calming measures planned for the West Belfast constituency.

(AQW 22426/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will recall our meeting of 16 April 2013, when I gave an undertaking to provide an update on requests for a traffic calming scheme in Brooke Park.

Since our meeting, I have instructed officials in my Department's Roads Service to carry out a reassessment of Brooke Park, to see if local traffic conditions have changed significantly, since the previous assessment was carried out. I will advise the Member further once the assessment has been completed.

As I advised the Member, my Department assesses all requests for traffic calming measures on a systematic and consistent basis. This ensures the locations that will benefit most from such measures are treated first. Based on the prioritisation process, it is not envisaged that any schemes in the West Belfast constituency will be implemented during this financial year.

The detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Strangford Constituency: Outstanding Water Surety Bond

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development which developments in the Strangford constituency have an outstanding water surety bond; and for how long each has been outstanding.

(AQW 22451/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that they hold 'sewer only' bond securities for 48 nr developments in the Strangford constituency where Developer entered into an Article 161 agreement including the provision of a bond security, for the adoption of sewers at a future date.

The adoption of completed sewerage systems is a Developer led process and the onus is on the Developer to advise NI Water when the development sewers have been completed to the prescribed construction standard. Where developers are still trading, the development is considered to be a live on-going development.

Year	Agreements including Bond Security	Sites Adopted	Agreements/ Bonds Currently Held	Preliminary Certificates of Adoption issued	Enforcement procedures commenced	Developments in Strangford Constituency with sewer agreements and bonds
2007	6	4	2	2	0	Church Road, Moneyreagh Main Street, Carrowdore
2008	13	1	12	4	2*	McKenna Road, Kircubbin* Drumadoon Drive Dundonald Church Road Dundonald West Street, Newtownards Bridge St Comber Alder Grange Darragh Cross* Malcolmsons Ph1 N'ards Ballykeel Road, M'reagh Gleneagles Gdns D'donald Manor Lane Kilmoor Forge Hill Close, S'field Ardnalvalley Park Ph1 Comber
2009	5	1	4	2	0	Queensfort Pk South, Carryduff Lakeview Ph 1, Newtownards Birch Lane, Belfast Rd, Saintfield Millmount Village Dundonald
2010	8	1	7	5	0	Millmount Ph2 Dundonald Old Dundonald Road, Dundonald Belfast Road, Saintfield Donaghadee Road, N'ards Millmount Ph 2 /2a Dundonald Millreagh, Phase 2 Carrowreagh Road, Dundonald -
2011	7	0	7	3	0	Dunsy Way Comber Mountpleasant Ph1 N'ards Olivers Close Ballygalget Old Grand Jury Lane, Saintfield Millmount Phase 3, Dundonald The Straits, Lisbane Greyabbey Road Ballywalter

Year	Agreements including Bond Security	Sites Adopted	Agreements/ Bonds Currently Held	Preliminary Certificates of Adoption issued	Enforcement procedures commenced	Developments in Strangford Constituency with sewer agreements and bonds
2012	12	0	12	1	0	Kelly's Yard, Carryduff Old Coach Lane, Saintfield Newtownards Road Comber Rockfield, Crossgar Tullynagardy Rd Ph1, N'ards Annesfield Close, Killyleagh Ballyregan Road, Dundonald Millmount Ph 4 Dundonald Millmount Ph5 Dundonald St Andrews Ave Ballyhalbert Millers Lane, North Rd, N'Ards Glenbrook Road, Newtownards
2013	4	0	4	0	0	Killynure Road ph1 Carryduff Tullynagardy Road, N'Ards Millmount Village pt 2b/3a Dundonald Blenheim Drive, Newtownards
TOTAL			48			

Street / sewer bond securities for developments pre April 2007 are held and administered by DRD Roads Services

Unadopted Roads in the Strangford Constituency

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the unadopted roads in the Strangford constituency with an outstanding road bond, where housing have been occupied for more than one year.

(AQW 22452/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the unadopted roads in the Strangford constituency with an outstanding road bond, where housing have been occupied for more than one year, are listed below:

- Old Coach Way, Saintfield;
- Olivers Close, Ballygalget, Portaferry;
- 79-90 Bangor Road, Newtownards;
- Graysfield, Downpatrick Road, Crossgar;
- Shorelands, Main Road, Cloughey;
- Tullynagardy Road, Newtownards;
- Bartleys Grange, Ballywalter; and
- Aldergrange Avenue, Newtownards.

Roads Service: Capital and Structural Maintenance

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent by Roads Service on capital and structural maintenance in the Fermanagh District Council area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 22466/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Firstly, I should explain that Structural Maintenance includes capital and resource expenditure. Capital structural maintenance activities include resurfacing for roads and footways, surface dressing and structural drainage. Resource structural maintenance includes patching on roads and footways and refurbishment.

Details of expenditure in Fermanagh District Council for the various categories in the last three completed financial years are set out in the tables below:

Table 1

District Council	Description	£k		
		09-10	10-11	11-12
Fermanagh	Capital Structural Maintenance	3,664	5,467	7,541
	Resource Structural Maintenance	1,287	1,402	2,328
	Total Structural Maintenance	4,951	6,869	9,869

Table 2

District Council	Description	£k		
		09-10	10-11	11-12
Fermanagh	Capital Expenditure (including Structural Maintenance)	7,276	7,667	12,404
	Operational Resource Expenditure (including Structural Maintenance)	3,274	3,328	4,545
	Total Capital and Operations	10,550	10,995	16,949

By way of clarification, Roads Service does not routinely apportion its total budget for capital and maintenance expenditure equally across all district council areas. In particular, major road improvements are prioritised on a country-wide basis, not a district council basis. This takes account of a broad range of criteria, such as strategic planning policy, traffic flows, number of accidents, potential travel save times, environmental impact and value for money. In addition, whilst the actual spend on a major works scheme may be within one council area, the benefits of such schemes are not confined to the district council area, in which they are located.

Article 11 Enforcement Notices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development which developments in the North Down constituency have been issued with Article 11 enforcement notices in the last twelve months; and to outline the action that has been taken.

(AQW 22505/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of developments in the North Down constituency, where Article 11 enforcement notices have been issued in the last 12 months, and actions taken are listed below:

Upritchard Court/Crescent, Bangor – An Article 11 enforcement notice dated 7 November 2012 was served on the developer, MAR Properties Ltd. The developer has responded to the enforcement notice and adoption of the streets will follow in the very near future.

Upritchard Court/Gardens, Bangor – An Article 11 enforcement notice dated 25 March 2013 was served on the developer, New Quay Developments Ltd. The developer has not responded to the

enforcement notice and Roads Service will therefore undertake the necessary pre-adoption repairs. It is envisaged these repairs should be completed by the end of August 2013.

Roads Service: Preliminary Adoption Certificate

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development which developments in the North Down constituency have been issued with a preliminary adoption certificate by Roads Service, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 22507/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of developments in the North Down constituency, where preliminary certificates have been issued in the last twelve months, are listed below:

- Ballycrochan Road, Bangor;
- Bridge Road, Helens Bay;
- Gransha Road, Bangor;
- Myrtle Grove, The Beeches, Bangor;
- Old Belfast Road, Bangor;
- Pinewood, Groomsport Road, Bangor;
- Riverwood Vale, Bangor;
- Rossinver Gardens, Bangor; and
- Stonebridge Row, Green Road, Conlig.

Roads Service: Final Adoption Certificate

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development which developments in the North Down constituency have been issued with a final adoption certificate by Roads Service, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 22508/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of developments in the North Down constituency, which have been issued with a final adoption certificate in the last twelve months, are provided in the table below:

Location	Extent of Adoption
Ballycrochan Avenue, Bangor	187m of traditional carriageway, associated footway and turning head. 37m of shared surface carriageway associated service strip and turning head.
Ballymenoch Park, Holywood	97m of traditional carriageway and associated footway.
Breezemount Grove, Bangor	Breezemount Grove (at Community Centre): 289m ² of carriageway and 82m of footway.
Bridge Road, Helens Bay	House No. 6A + 8: 29m of service verge and 5m of driveway entrance.
Brook Lane, Bangor	110m of traditional carriageway, associated footway and turning head.
Downshire Lane, Bangor	134m of traditional carriageway, associated footway, 26m ² of grass/shrub forward sightline and turning head.

Location	Extent of Adoption
Rathgill Avenue, Bangor	No.2 – 2b: 95m of shared surface carriageway, associated service strip, hard margin, footway and 92m ² of communal parking. Link between No. 18 – rear House No. 14 Arleigh Court: 3m of isolated footway. No. 28 – 38: 45m of shared surface carriageway, associated service strip, hard margin and turning head.
Rathgill Parade, Bangor	Rathgill Parade: 50m of traditional carriageway, associated footway (including storm drainage system), 57m of footway and 101m ² of associated grass verge. Linen Road: 161m of carriageway, associated footway, 928m ² grass area, 36m ² of shrub centre island, 50m of traditional carriageway, associated footway, (including storm drainage system),
Stonebridge, Conlig	Stonebridge Avenue: 60m of traditional carriageway and associated footways. Stonebridge Drive: 108m of traditional carriageway and associated footways.
Victoria Mill, Bangor	55m of shared surface carriageway, associated footway, hard margin, turning head (including 1m ² at atplax boxes), 1.5m ² at street light No. 2 (including drainage system).

DRD: Invoices Paid and Unpaid

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail, for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, (i) the total number of invoices paid by his Department and its respective Arm's-Length Bodies; (ii) the number of invoices paid within thirty calendar days; (iii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt; (iv) how each of his Department's Arm's-Length Bodies has performed against the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and (v) the number of invoices that remain unpaid.

(AQW 22522/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's prompt payment performance for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 is set out below:

Department and Arms Length Bodies	Number of Invoices Paid	Number of Invoices Paid within 30 Days	Number of Invoices Paid within 10 Days	30 Day Prompt Payment %	Number of Invoices unpaid (as at 31/03/13)
DRD	32,883	32,358	30,958	98.4%	135
Translink/NITHCo*	59,516	56,965	48,963	95.7%	1,070
NI Water	33,492	31,232	22,528	93.3%	845

*Please note that Translink's payment system does not support the exact measurement of 10 day prompt payment. Therefore, the figure provided for the number of invoices paid within 10 days is the number of invoices approved for payment within 0-7 days from registration.

Private Disabled Parking Spaces

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how his Department assesses whether there are sufficient private disabled parking spaces available for use; and (ii) whether his Department is aware of the problem of private disabled parking spaces being used by people who do not require them.

(AQW 22551/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is not responsible for the provision or assessment of private disabled parking spaces. Responsibility for such provision rests with the service provider.

However, officials are aware, from the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee's (IMTAC) recent Baywatch campaign, that bays are being abused. The campaign ran for three years, between 2006 and 2009, with the aim of gauging the level of abuse, and highlighting to service providers the difficulties arising from such abuse.

Private Companies: Disabled Car Parking Spaces

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether under EU equality law, private companies are required to provide disabled car parking spaces.

(AQW 22553/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, service providers must make reasonable adjustments so that a disabled person can use the service. If car parking facilities are provided, accessible bays should also be available for use by disabled people.

This need is reflected in the planning system, which requires developers to reserve an appropriate proportion of parking spaces, to meet the needs of disabled people.

Pothole Repairs

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on repairing potholes in each of the last three years.

(AQW 22568/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The information requested by the Member is not available, as my Department does not maintain an analysis of expenditure or statistics specifically relating to the repair of potholes.

Pothole Repairs

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department will spend on repairing potholes over the next two years.

(AQW 22569/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 22568/11-15

Unrepaired Potholes

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the number of potholes that will remain unrepaired after the schedule of repairs over the next two years is complete.

(AQW 22570/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 22568/11-15

Reservoirs: Private and Public Ownership

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the reservoirs that are (i) used and under public ownership; (ii) unused and under public ownership; and (iii) under private ownership.
(AQW 22592/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are a total of 151 reservoirs in Northern Ireland. 76 are in public sector ownership, 65 are in private ownership and the ownership of 10 has not been established.

Of the 76 in Public Ownership, Northern Ireland Water owns 45, 23 of which are in use and 22 are not in use.

Bus Turning Circle: Maintenance Costs

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the average annual cost of maintenance of a bus turning circle.
(AQW 22645/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Road defects and subsequent maintenance costs are recorded against individual stretches of road. As bus turning circles form part of the road, it is not possible to readily extract information on costs for individual areas, such as bus turning circles.

Victoria Park Railway Station on the Bangor Line

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration has he given to reinstating the railway station at Victoria Park on the Bangor Line.
(AQW 22656/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am supportive of proposals to develop new halts to improve capacity on the rail network, where a viable passenger demand can be demonstrated and a positive business case can be made to justify the investment.

At the current time, Translink has no plans to reinstate the former halt at Victoria Park on the Belfast to Bangor railway line.

Wastewater Treatment Works in Ballynahinch

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed work to upgrade the Wastewater Treatment Works in Ballynahinch.
(AQW 22669/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that construction work on a £5 million upgrade to Ballynahinch Wastewater Treatment Works commenced in June 2012 and is currently 60% complete.

The work, which includes the construction of a new inlet works, storm water storage and primary sludge treatment facilities (including the addition of tertiary treatment to meet longer-term standards), is scheduled for completion in March 2014. However, it is anticipated that the Works will be fully compliant with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's stipulated Registered Discharge Standard by December 2013.

Mains Extension: Ballygorian Road, Hilltown

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide a timescale for a mains extension to be carried out on the Ballygorian Road, Hilltown.
(AQW 22682/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the planned water mains extension at Ballygorian Road, Hilltown will be undertaken as part of a larger project to replace 12 kilometres of water mains in the area.

Preliminary work on the project is well underway and is due to be completed in September 2013. Construction work is expected to commence in November 2013 subject to the statutory approvals and the availability of funding. The water main extension at Ballygorian Road will be undertaken first and is expected to be completed by the end of December 2013.

Department for Social Development

Derelict and Vacant Sites in Carrickmore

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development what proposals his Department has in conjunction with the Department of the Environment and Omagh District Council to deal with a number of derelict and vacant sites in Carrickmore.

(AQW 21446/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): Carrickmore has a population of approximately 600 and is therefore defined as rural. Responsibility for the regeneration of rural areas lies with the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Universal Credit

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how much it would cost his Department to provide claimants with the option, under universal credit, to have (i) split payments where there are no dependents in a household; (ii) payment to the primary carer in the case of dependents; and (iii) fortnightly payments.

(AQW 21993/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Universal Credit process for the payment of twice monthly payments and split payment has not yet been fully defined. This is the subject of continuing consultations.

Housing Association Properties: Under Occupancy Penalty

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of tenants living in housing association properties that will be exposed to the under occupancy penalty, broken down by district housing area.

(AQW 22006/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that the table below details the breakdown of working age Housing Benefit claimants that appear to be under occupying a Housing Association property, broken down by district housing area.

District/Council Area	Total under-occupied
Belfast	2736
Bangor	108
Newtownards	113
Castlereagh	69
Lisburn	521
Downpatrick	151
Banbridge	59

District/Council Area	Total under-occupied
Newry	283
Armagh	61
Lurgan	121
Portadown	93
Dungannon	177
Fermanagh	152
Ballymena	60
Antrim	32
Newtownabbey	78
Carrickfergus	28
Larne	10
Ballycastle	22
Ballymoney	12
Coleraine	60
Londonderry	960
Limavady	83
Magherafelt	36
Strabane	149
Omagh	71
Cookstown	21
Total	6266

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.

Women's Aid Craigavon/Banbridge

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of Supporting People funding provided by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to Women's Aid Craigavon/Banbridge in each of the last five years; and to explain the rationale behind the cessation of this funding.

(AQW 22093/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The level of Supporting People funding over the last five years to Women's Aid Craigavon & Banbridge is as follows;

- Year 08/09 = £160,875 plus a one off non recurrent payment of £16,000 (The non-recurring payment of £16k was a one-off payment to assist the organisation in upgrading its administration and funding deficits)
- Year 09/10 = £160,875
- Year 10/11 = £160,875
- Year 11/12 = £160,875
- Year 12/13 = £160.875

Total to date paid over last five years = £804,375 plus £16,000 non recurrent funding = £820,375

The decommissioning of services provided by Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid at Annagh House, Portadown was initiated by reports highlighting that Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid were not meeting minimum quality standards. During this period Supporting People attended 10 meetings with Craigavon & Banbridge

Women's Aid. The key reports and documents were as follows;

- Visit carried out 22/2/10 to determine staffing/occupancy and referrals,
- Performance visit carried out 9/6/10
- A validation report issued 14/4/11. This report highlighted that Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid were failing to meet minimum standards across the six core objectives of the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF)
- Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid validation progress visit report carried out 7/12/11.

In response to concerns highlighted Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid entered into a process of developing action plans to resolve the issues highlighted. The documents are as follows;

- 21/10/11 Submission issued by Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid to address issues / options and action planning
- 13/12/11 - Letter to Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid recognising improvements but expressing concerns regarding under occupancy
- 30/3/12 — Refuge Sustainability paper forwarded by Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid and carried out by Venture Network. Venture Network is a consultancy agency commissioned and paid for by Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid who provides support in the areas of strategy development, planning and facilitation (no request was made for the funding of this exercise from NIHE).
- 26/9/12 — Letter from Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid confirming working with Women's Aid Federation (NI) to carry out a detailed review of organisational practices, policies and procedures

Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid had been a member of Women's Aid Federation (NI). Together with Womens Aid Newry and Womens Aid Ballymena they put together the group to review governance, funding and sustainability of the organisation as well as other issues around support planning.

Following this stage of the process, Supporting People acknowledged an improvement in the quality of the service however there remained concerns around the long term viability of the scheme with regard to occupancy and throughput. Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid recognised that these issues would make the scheme unsustainable. There were also concerns about governance and these concerns were also expressed by the Women's Aid Federation (NI).

The needs assessment process is ongoing, however one of the main concerns for Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid related to significant under occupancy in Annagh House. Current analysis indicates an increase in the demand for floating support services as opposed to refuges in the area.

Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid then decided to look at 2 options, the first being closure and the second involved undertaking an intensive review process with Women's Aid Federation (NI). After a series of meetings with Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid, Women's Aid Federation (NI) and NIHE Supporting People it was agreed that it was not possible to keep the service open. Formal notification of closure was received by Supporting People on 15/2/13. The decision to cease funding was taken by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive following their analysis of a number of performance issues and reports.

All residents in Annagh House have successfully been relocated with the last resident moving out on 2/05/13. New service users will be signposted through Women's Aid Federation (NI), Domestic Violence Helpline and other existing Women's Aid groups.

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.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what steps are being taken by his Department to consult tenants regarding the planning process to reform the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
(AQW 22172/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The planning phase for the Social Housing Reform Programme has been initiated. A programme team encompassing DSD staff, the Housing Executive and the Strategic Investment Board has been established. This team will consider my proposals for reform and develop an associated programme plan.

This exploration and development of the proposals cannot, and will not, be done in isolation. Regular engagement with key stakeholders (of which NIHE tenants are one) will take place throughout the programme. My officials are currently preparing a stakeholder engagement strategy and communications plan by which they will detail how and when tenants will be engaged as the Programme progresses.

In the coming weeks, I will be meeting with the Central Housing Community Network. This organisation was established in partnership with NIHE as a mechanism to ensure tenants have meaningful involvement with them. The Housing Community Network has indicated their willingness to act as a conduit between my Department, NIHE and tenants.

This meeting is the first step in direct engagement with tenants and their representatives; beginning discussions on how the process of engagement will work moving forward to ensure tenant views are built into proposal options.

Decent Homes Standard

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) percentage; and (ii) number of private rented sector properties that failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 22173/11-15)

Mr McCausland: This information is not available in the requested format. However, the House Condition Survey figures relating to failure of the Decent Homes Standard for 2009 and 2011 are as follows:

- 2009 -17% (21,200) private rented sector properties
- 2011 -10% (12,800) private rented sector properties

It is important to note that the decent homes standard is not a statutory standard but an administrative standard which applies to social housing stock.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System in England and Wales

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development for an estimate of the number of private rented sector properties locally that would fail the fitness standards contained in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System in England and Wales.
(AQW 22175/11-15)

Mr McCausland: According to the 2011 House Condition Survey the proportion of properties in the private rented sector in Northern Ireland which would fail the Housing Health & Safety Rating (i.e. has a category 1 hazard) is 7.5%, or 9,350 properties.

It should be noted that unfitness is not measured as part of the Housing Health & Safety Rating System.

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Private Sector Landlords: Notice of Unfitness and Disrepair

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many private sector landlords were served with a (i) notice of unfitness; and (ii) notice of disrepair, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 22176/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The number of private sector landlords who were served with either a notice of unfitness or a notice of disrepair, by a council under the Private Tenancies Order 2006, in each of the last three years is detailed below:

Year	Notice of Unfitness	Notice of Disrepair
10/11	17	73
11/12	3	99
12/13	9	69

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Executive Properties: East Belfast and South Belfast

Mr Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the nature of any outstanding repairs and maintenance required on Housing Executive properties in the (i) East Belfast; and (ii) South Belfast constituencies.

(AQW 22314/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate data by Parliamentary Constituency. However, the tables below detail the nature of any outstanding repairs and maintenance required on Housing Executive properties in the Housing Executive's (i) East Belfast District Office; and (ii) South Belfast District Office areas. It should be noted that this information changes on a daily basis.

East Belfast: -

Job Type	Number Issued	Number Overdue
Change Of Tenancy	53	26
Disabled Showers	13	5
Other Disabled	35	20
Routine	640	307
Urgent/Emergency/Immediate Call Out	131	92

South Belfast: -

Job Type	Number Issued	Number Overdue
Change of Tenancy	33	4

Job Type	Number Issued	Number Overdue
Disabled Adaptations	10	1
Routine	425	28
Urgent/Emergency/Immediate Call Out	69	19

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.

St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development when families will be able to move into the houses in St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena.

(AQW 22341/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Fold Housing Association anticipate that the newly refurbished housing on the St Patrick's Barracks site, Ballymena will be ready for occupation in time for the contract completion date of December 2013.

Northern Ireland Executive: Financial Penalty

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Northern Ireland Executive has been issued with any financial penalties to date as a consequence of the delay in the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 22378/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Statement of Funding Policy, which governs how Northern Ireland is funded, makes clear that United Kingdom Ministers can make an adjustment to the Northern Ireland Block Departmental Expenditure Limit where the Northern Ireland Executive makes decisions on social security policy which differs from the rest of the United Kingdom and which results in additional costs to HM Treasury.

United Kingdom Ministers have highlighted their concerns about the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill (NI) 2012 and have reserved their position on any potential adjustment to the Northern Ireland Block Grant until the legislation has completed its passage through the Northern Ireland Assembly. At this time the Northern Ireland Executive has not therefore been issued with any financial penalty.

The level of any adjustment is ultimately a matter for United Kingdom Ministers however as the welfare reforms are already being implemented in Great Britain and further delays in the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill (NI) 2012 could lead to increased adjustments to the Northern Ireland Block Departmental Expenditure Limit.

Northern Ireland Executive: Financial Penalty

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the last date by which the Welfare Reform Bill can receive Royal Assent before the Northern Ireland Executive has to pay a financial penalty for failure to implement the Bill.

(AQW 22382/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Welfare Reform Act (GB) 2012 is already law in the rest of the United Kingdom with the reforms starting to go live from April 2013 onwards.

United Kingdom Minister's have already highlighted their concerns about the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill (NI) 2012 and have reserved their position with regard to any adjustment to the Northern Ireland Block Grant until the legislation has completed its passage through the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The level of any adjustment would ultimately be a matter for United Kingdom Ministers as the welfare reforms are already being implemented in Great Britain and the delay in implementation in Northern Ireland is resulting in additional costs being incurred by HM Treasury.

West Belfast Window Replacements

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development what plans the Housing Executive has to replace windows in the West Belfast constituency, broken down by district electoral area.

(AQW 22427/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely record data by electoral area. However, the Housing Executive has provided the table below showing its double glazing programme (2013/14) for its West Belfast, Shankill and Lisburn Dairy Farm District Office areas, that fall within the West Belfast constituency area:

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Latest Programme Date
Kenard/ Ramoan	166	01 Nov 13
Anderstonstown Ex Corp	202	01 Dec 13
Whiterock	150	01 Jan 14
Brooke/Greenane	164	01 Jan 14
Doon Road Flats/ Carrigart Avenue	130	01 Feb14
Glencairn	182	01 Nov 13
Lisburn Dairy Farm Windows Mop-up	89	06 Jan 14
Total	1083	

The Housing Executive advises that the dwelling numbers are indicative and will be confirmed at survey stage.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Strategic Regeneration Frameworks

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the priorities under the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks that have received support from all Departments; and the priorities that have yet to receive support from all Departments.

(AQW 22491/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Since 2009 BRO, in conjunction with Belfast City Council and the Belfast Area Partnerships, undertook a process of engagement across government departments to communicate the aims of the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRF) and agree shared priorities. BCC has now incorporated the strategic themes from SRFs into their draft Masterplan Review for the city.

Physical Regeneration Concept Masterplans

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the timeframe for the adoption and implementation of the Physical Regeneration Concept Masterplans for (i) Lower Shankill; (ii) Inner East Belfast; (iii) Shore Rd/York Road; (iv) Crumlin Road; and (v) Lower Falls.

(AQW 22492/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Physical Regeneration Concept Masterplans were commissioned following a recommendation within the Renewing Communities Action Plan to target areas with the worst

dereliction, through a strategic approach. The aim of each Masterplan is to provide a vehicle to coordinate and orchestrate public sector investment and leverage in the private sector. However, the recent challenging economic times has meant that the Masterplans in their current form are not practical and further consideration is being given to how any final plans might look. Furthermore, following public consultation, the Department has adopted a new approach to area planning for the Lower Shankill area and a working group, which has both community and statutory membership, is taking forward a revised plan. The timeframe for the publication of these Masterplans has not yet been decided.

DSD: Paid and Unpaid Invoices

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development to detail, for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, (i) the total number of invoices paid by his Department and its respective Arm's-Length Bodies; (ii) the number of invoices paid within thirty calendar days; (iii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt; (iv) how each of his Department's Arm's-Length Bodies has performed against the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and (v) the number of invoices that remain unpaid.

(AQW 22520/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Minister of for Social Development to detail, for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, (i) the total number of invoices paid by his Department and its respective Arm's-Length Bodies; (ii) the number of invoices paid within thirty calendar days; (iii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt; (iv) how each of his Department's Arm's-Length Bodies has performed against the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and (v) the number of invoices that remain unpaid.

Answer

For ease of reference, the information is set out in table below:

Business Area	(i) Total number of invoices	(ii) Invoices paid within 30 days	(iii) Invoices paid within 10 days
Department	14,026	13,679	12,846
Housing Executive (iv)	591,249	571,312	499,552
ILEX, Urban Regeneration Company (iv)	846	838	680
Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (iv)	585	585	576

(v) The number of invoices that remain unpaid within the Department at the 31 March is 349. In relation to the Arm's-Length Bodies, the Housing Executive has 970 invoices that remain unpaid and ILEX has 28, while the Charity Commission has none.

Boiler Installer Forms: Waiting Times

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current average waiting time for a boiler installer form to be (i) processed; and (ii) approved, by each district office.

(AQW 22524/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The average processing time between the receipt of a boiler installer form and the issue of a formal approval to commence boiler replacement works is currently 6 days across all Housing Executive Grants Offices.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Universal Credit Claimants

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to his Department were split payments to be paid to Universal Credit claimants; and for an estimate of the cost of making this payment to a single person per household should the Welfare Reform Bill proceed as drafted.

(AQW 22544/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The process for splitting the Universal Credit payment between both parties in a household is the subject of continuing consultations. These consultations will inform the final eligibility criteria thereby enabling the development of the related IT functionality. Our working assumption is that the IT functionality will be available by April 2014 to enable Universal Credit to be delivered in accordance with the agreed flexibilities.

ATOS Assessment Process

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Social Development whether he is aware of the growing concerns of medical professionals over the ATOS assessment process, in particular people presenting for assessment with mental health problems being allocated zero, or a low number of, points; and what training ATOS assessors receive to enable them to appropriately interpret the impact of mental illness on an individual's capacity for employment.

(AQW 22554/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Work Capability Assessment process has been developed with the support of healthcare professionals and the involvement of a number of different charities. In accordance with the legislative requirement set out in Section 10 of the Welfare Reform Act (Northern Ireland) 2007 the Department has been involved in three reviews of the Work Capability Assessment process, the latest of which was laid before the Assembly in November 2012.

In addition to the wide and varied responses to the review's annual call for evidence, members of the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Psychiatrists have also been consulted and contributed to each review. A further independent review is planned for later in 2013.

Healthcare Professionals carrying out Work Capability Assessments receive mental health training relating to the mental health descriptors as part of their initial training programme.

A yearly training needs analysis is undertaken by Atos Healthcare who are contracted to undertake the Work Capability Assessment, and this is approved by the Social Security Agency. This informs the development of a professional development programme, which includes ongoing mental health training for Health Care Professionals.

Mental Health Champions are in place to support mental health training and provide appropriate advice. Part of their role is to provide specialist mental health training to the Health Care Professionals employed to undertake Work Capability Assessments.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many homes in each Parliamentary constituency had their boiler replaced under the boiler replacement scheme by 31 March 2013.

(AQW 22579/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not collate information by Parliamentary Constituency. However the table attached shows details of boiler replacement completions from September 2012 to the 31st March 2013 by District Council area.

District Council Area	Boiler Replacement Scheme Completions
Antrim Borough Council	114

District Council Area	Boiler Replacement Scheme Completions
Ards Borough Council	76
Armagh City & District Council	171
Ballymena Borough Council	261
Ballymoney Borough Council	111
Banbridge District Council	142
Belfast City Council	485
Carrickfergus Borough Council	49
Castlereagh Borough Council	100
Coleraine Borough Council	173
Cookstown District Council	89
Craigavon Borough Council	181
Derry City Council	225
Down District Council	72
Dungannon & South Tyrone BC	141
Fermanagh District Council	119
Larne Borough Council	94
Limavady Borough Council	85
Lisburn Borough Council	167
Magherafelt District Council	124
Moyle District Council	62
Newry & Mourne DC	352
Newtownabbey Borough Council	146
North Down Borough Council	82
Omagh District Council	140
Strabane District Council	59
Total	3,820

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.

‘The benefit system is changing – you need to know’ Information Leaflet

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development why the information leaflet ‘The benefit system is changing – you need to know’ was published before the Welfare Reform Bill was passed by the Assembly.

(AQW 22607/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Since the introduction of the Welfare Reform Bill into the Assembly in October 2012, my Department has been researching levels of awareness amongst the general public on the different aspects of Welfare Reform. The initial findings from the published research were that up to 60% of

people had not heard of or understood the details of the proposed reforms. I also received numerous representations from different bodies about the importance of informing people about the changes and indeed I came to this chamber on the 4th March and informed the Assembly about my plans to publish the leaflet and to distribute it to all homes in the Spring of 2013.

The Welfare Reform information leaflet, 'The benefit system is changing – What you need to know' was intended to inform the Northern Ireland public on the proposed changes which are being considered by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The leaflet set out the main proposals, contained within the Bill, and outlined who might be affected if those proposals became law. It also told people where they could find further information and told them not to contact local Social Security or Housing Executive offices as they would be contacted if the reforms directly impacted on them. The leaflet also made it clear that the Northern Ireland Assembly has responsibility for approving Northern Ireland legislation in relation to welfare changes and that this process is still ongoing.

Following concerns expressed by the Social Development Committee I decided that the distribution of the leaflets should be stopped and that I would only issue further information about Welfare Reform once I was able to come back to the Assembly with my proposals for moving forward.

Welfare Reform Information Booklets

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many welfare reform information booklets his Department has printed; (ii) what the cost was to have these printed; and (iii) how much it will cost to distribute the booklets.

(AQW 22629/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) 774,000 copies of the Welfare Reform Information Leaflet were printed.
- (ii) The cost of printing these Leaflets was £50,240.13.
- (iii) Distribution of the Leaflets has currently been put on hold however Royal Mail has estimated the cost for distribution to be £50,413.96.

Banbridge District Council Area: Income Based Benefit

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department identify and target social need in Banbridge; and to list the number of people in receipt of an income based benefit in the Banbridge District Council Area.

(AQW 22641/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) My Department provides a wide range of support to individuals, families and households and communities through: the provision of decent and affordable housing; action to address fuel poverty; the delivery of child maintenance arrangements; comprehensive social security provisions, including the delivery of a major welfare reform agenda; and supporting the voluntary and community sector. My Department also supports area based interventions designed to target substantive concentrations of deprivation within settlements over a particular population threshold. These are all key to addressing poverty and social disadvantage and will help individuals, families and communities in the Banbridge District Council Area as they will throughout Northern Ireland.

It was through one of the area based interventions (Areas at Risk) that the Gilford area within Banbridge District Council was targeted for support from 2010 to 2013.

- (ii) As at November 2012 within the Banbridge District Council Area, there were 4,990 people in receipt of an income based benefit. The table below provides a breakdown by benefit.

Benefit	Number of People
Income Support	1,150
Pension Credit	2,290
JSA Income Related and Contributory and Income Related	950
ESA Income Related and Contributory and Income Related	610
Total	4,990

In addition to the benefits listed in the table above a total of 3,085 people were in receipt of Housing Benefit at 1st May 2013.

Funding and Upgrading of Randalstown Main Street

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to outline his plans for the funding and upgrading of the main streets in Randalstown; (ii) what funds are available; (iii) what actions are being taken to allocate these funds; and (iv) what are the timescales involved.

(AQW 22691/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has been working with a range of stakeholders including the Randalstown Chamber of Trade for some time to take forward the next phase of environmental improvements for Randalstown town centre. The scheme has had to be delayed to enable the Department to deal with concerns raised on behalf of retailers through Randalstown Chamber of Trade. A number of options have been identified and these will be discussed with interested stakeholders.

Subject to a satisfactory appraisal being carried out to confirm a suitable option, the cost, sufficient funding and all necessary approvals being in place, it is expected that construction could commence by spring next year.

Housing Executive: Underspend

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the Housing Executive's underspend in each of the last five years.

(AQW 22697/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive did not declare any year end underspends in the last 5 years.

However, during 2012/13 monitoring rounds the Housing Executive declared in-year easements totalling £31 million (£12 million Capital and £19 million Revenue).

The capital funding was reallocated within Housing to the Co-Ownership Housing Association budget to help bolster effective demand by assisting deposit-constrained first time buyers and those returning to the market struggling to purchase a home and also to help the wider economy.

The declared easement of £19 million revenue funding was due largely to significant procurement efficiencies achieved in-year as well as contractor difficulties which the Housing Executive experienced in 2012/13.

'The benefit system is changing – you need to know': Costs of Producing and Distributing

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total projected costs of (i) producing; and (ii) distributing the information leaflet 'The benefit system is changing – you need to know'.

(AQW 22761/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

(iv) The total cost of producing the information leaflet was £50,240.13.

(v) Royal Mail estimated the cost for distribution of the information leaflet to be £50,413.96.

180 Unit Social Housing Development, Ballymagowan in Creggan, Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the rationale used for the implementation of service charges on the new 180 unit social housing development at Ballymagowan in the Creggan, Derry.

(AQW 22762/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Apex Housing Association has advised me that the planning permission received for the development of the Ballymagowan site included the provision of an urban park consisting of parkland, playing pitches, children's play area and allotments. The service charge being set by Apex is to help defray the cost of maintaining this area. The basic rent charge allows for the Association's housing management and maintenance costs but not the maintenance of extensive open space areas.

Universal Credit

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether their Department is seeking to ensure that money is available to allow the payment of universal credit directly to the main carer.

(AQW 22782/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I recognise that in certain situations a single household payment of Universal Credit may lead to finances being controlled by one member of the household who does not have responsibility for managing household finances, in particular, adequately providing for the needs of children. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate to split the Universal Credit payment between the main carer and the other party in the household. Work is ongoing in this area.

Mesothelioma Support Scheme

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his Department's plans to bring forward a Legislative Consent Motion on the mesothelioma support scheme.

(AQW 22836/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Consideration is being given as to whether a Legislative Consent Motion in relation to the proposed mesothelioma support scheme is required and, if so, whether other Departments have an interest.

Farming Communities in North and East Antrim

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has had any engagement with the farming communities in North and East Antrim, who were affected by the severe winter weather in March 2013, in relation to crisis loans or assistance that could be offered.

(AQW 22883/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There have been no specific engagement activities between my Department and the farming communities in North and East Antrim as a result of the severe weather in March this year. Under the Social Fund Scheme anyone aged 16 or over can apply for a Crisis Loan. Crisis Loans are designed to assist people who need to meet expenses in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster. They are repayable interest free loans and can be paid where they are the only means of preventing a serious risk to health and safety.

Written Answers Index

Department for Regional Development	WA 103	Employment: Community-based Schemes	WA 38
Article 11 Enforcement Notices	WA 118	Pathways to Success	WA 36
Asbestos Water Pipes	WA 105	People Moved from Welfare into Employment	WA 34
Bus Turning Circle: Maintenance Costs	WA 122	People Moved from Welfare into Employment	WA 35
DRD: Invoices Paid and Unpaid	WA 120	Proposed Royal Exchange Development	WA 33
Dunhill Road, Coleraine	WA 113	Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College: Merger	WA 37
Illegal Monuments	WA 104	SAE Education Ltd	WA 35
Illegal Monuments	WA 105	Stranmillis University College: Annual Report	WA 39
Mains Extension: Ballygorian Road, Hilltown	WA 122	Stranmillis University College: Chairperson of Governing Body	WA 38
Penalty Charge Notices	WA 103	Universities: Student Numbers	WA 35
Pothole Repairs	WA 121	Utilising Workers from A8 Countries	WA 33
Pothole Repairs	WA 121	Youth Employment Scheme	WA 33
Private Companies: Disabled Car Parking Spaces	WA 121	Department for Social Development	WA 123
Private Disabled Parking Spaces	WA 121	180 Unit Social Housing Development, Ballymagowan in Creggan, Derry	WA 135
Public Inquiry System	WA 112	ATOS Assessment Process	WA 131
Reservoirs: Private and Public Ownership	WA 122	Banbridge District Council Area: Income Based Benefit	WA 133
Roads Service: Capital and Structural Maintenance	WA 117	Boiler Installer Forms: Waiting Times	WA 130
Roads Service: Final Adoption Certificate	WA 114	Boiler Replacement Scheme	WA 131
Roads Service: Final Adoption Certificate	WA 119	Decent Homes Standard	WA 126
Roads Service: Preliminary Adoption Certificate	WA 114	Derelict and Vacant Sites in Carrickmore	WA 123
Roads Service: Preliminary Adoption Certificate	WA 119	DSD: Paid and Unpaid Invoices	WA 130
Strangford Constituency: Article 11 Enforcement Notices	WA 114	Farming Communities in North and East Antrim	WA 135
Strangford Constituency: Outstanding Water Surety Bond	WA 115	Funding and Upgrading of Randalstown Main Street	WA 134
Traffic Calming Measures: West Belfast Constituency	WA 115	Housing Association Properties: Under Occupancy Penalty	WA 123
Ulsterbus Rural Network Coverage	WA 104	Housing Executive Properties: East Belfast and South Belfast	WA 127
Unadopted Roads in the Strangford Constituency	WA 117	Housing Executive: Underspend	WA 134
Unrepaired Potholes	WA 121	Housing Health and Safety Rating System in England and Wales	WA 126
Vehicles Damaged by Badly Maintained Roads	WA 113	Mesothelioma Support Scheme	WA 135
Victoria Park Railway Station on the Bangor Line	WA 122	Northern Ireland Executive: Financial Penalty	WA 128
Visually Impaired Bus Users	WA 112	Northern Ireland Executive: Financial Penalty	WA 128
Visually Impaired Bus Users	WA 112	Northern Ireland Housing Executive	WA 126
Wastewater Treatment Works in Ballynahinch	WA 122	Physical Regeneration Concept Masterplans	WA 129
Department for Employment and Learning	WA 33	Private Sector Landlords: Notice of Unfitness and Disrepair	WA 127
Disability Employment Service	WA 33		
Disability Employment Service	WA 37		

St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena	WA 128	Central Procurement Directorate	WA 13
Strategic Regeneration Frameworks	WA 129	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and Northern Ireland	
'The benefit system is changing – you need to know': Costs of Producing and Distributing	WA 134	Council for Integrated Education: Automatic Pay Increments	WA 29
'The benefit system is changing – you need to know' Information Leaflet	WA 132	DE: Accounting Officers	WA 24
Universal Credit	WA 123	DE: Invoices Paid and Unpaid	WA 17
Universal Credit	WA 135	Education and Library Boards: Automatic Pay Increments	WA 28
Universal Credit Claimants	WA 131	Education and Library Boards: Key Stage 1 and 2 Performance of Pupils	WA 31
Welfare Reform Information Booklets	WA 133	Education and Library Boards: Quality and Effectiveness of Services	WA 25
West Belfast Window Replacements	WA 129	Education and Library Board Staff	WA 16
Women's Aid Craigavon/Banbridge	WA 124	Education and Library Boards: Teachers and Principals on Long-Term Sick Leave	WA 19
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	WA 5	Education and Skills Authority: Automatic Pay Increments	WA 28
Agri-Food Branch Inspectors: Enforcement Training	WA 7	Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team: Non-School Based Staff	WA 24
Agri-Food Branch Inspectors: Enforcement Training	WA 10	Individual School Governors	WA 27
Applications for Hardship Payments	WA 9	Integrated Schools	WA 28
Destruction of Native Trees	WA 9	Joint Faith Schools	WA 27
Farmers' Markets: Upper Bann constituency	WA 7	Number of Mobile Classrooms in Use	WA 26
Hardship Payments to Farmers	WA 11	Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre	WA 32
Land Parcel Identification System: Farm Maps	WA 8	Projected Capital Spend	WA 25
Land Parcel Identification System: Farm Maps	WA 8	Re-Introduction of Specialist Schools	WA 30
Livestock Injuries	WA 5	Removal of Modular Examinations	WA 18
Neonicotinoid Pesticides	WA 10	Rural Development Council's Rural Proofing Assessment	WA 19
Neonicotinoid Pesticides	WA 11	Savings Delivery Plans	WA 12
Neonicotinoids	WA 10	Schools Access Team: Admission to Local Schools	WA 12
Pollarding and Felling of Trees	WA 9	Schools Enhancement Programme	WA 24
Regenerating Villages and Small Towns in West Tyrone	WA 6	School Uniform Costs	WA 31
Scrapies in Sheep Herds	WA 7	School Uniform Guidelines	WA 30
Single Farm Payment	WA 5	School Uniform Guidelines	WA 31
Single Farm Payments and Agri-Environment Scheme Funding	WA 6	Sperrinview Special School, Dungannon	WA 23
Use of Imidacloprid, Clothianidin and Ttmx	WA 10	Sperrinview Special School, Dungannon	WA 23
Young Farmer Incentive Schemes	WA 6	Teachers Deemed Unsatisfactory	WA 13
		Teachers Deemed Unsatisfactory	WA 14
		Teachers Deemed Unsatisfactory	WA 15
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	WA 11	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	WA 39
Efficiency Savings: Job Losses	WA 11	Credit Union in Portadown	WA 48
Department of Education	WA 12	Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive	WA 49
Belfast Education and Library Board Staff: Automatic Pay Increments	WA 28	Economic Strategy	WA 47
Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Programme: Funding	WA 29	G8 Summit	WA 49
Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Programme: Funding	WA 29	Grid Connections for Wind Turbines	WA 45
		Home Energy Efficiency Measures	WA 50
		Horizon 2020 and Other EU Funding Streams	WA 44

Horizon 2020 and Other EU Funding Streams	WA 45	Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training: North Down	WA 62
Indigenous Business	WA 46		
Integrated Economic Strategy: Ireland	WA 47		
InvestNI	WA 41		
Jobs Fund: Tourism Sector Jobs	WA 48		
Jobs Promoted and Jobs Created	WA 42		
Jobs Promoted and Jobs Created	WA 42		
Jobs Promoted and Jobs Created	WA 43		
Mechanisms to Enhance Trade	WA 46		
Mechanisms Used to Lower Unemployment	WA 47		
Northern Ireland Events Company	WA 48		
Off Shore Wind Turbines	WA 45		
Petroleum Prospecting Licence	WA 43		
Planning Application M/2011/0126/F	WA 48		
Reduce Electricity Costs for Businesses	WA 50		
Single Wind Turbines	WA 49		
South Down Offshore Wind Farm	WA 45		
South Down Offshore Wind Farm	WA 46		
Top Five Tourist Destinations	WA 39		
Unanswered Question: AQW 14189/11-15	WA 41		
Department of Finance and Personnel	WA 59		
Agency Workers Regulations: 12 Week Qualifying Period	WA 65		
Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board	WA 59		
Asthma Deaths	WA 63		
Business Rates in Major Towns and Cities	WA 63		
Civil Service Equal Pay Issue	WA 65		
Civil Service Staff: Agency Workers Regulations	WA 64		
Defamation Bill	WA 65		
European Funding Receipts	WA 60		
EU Sources: Funding	WA 59		
Faulty Cavity Wall Insulation	WA 62		
Financial Measures in Place to Assist the Unemployed	WA 61		
Garden Centre and Nursery Losses: Extreme Weather	WA 60		
Garden Centre Losses: Extreme Weather	WA 60		
Multiple Deprivation	WA 62		
NAMA: Ramada Hotel, Portrush	WA 65		
Northern Ireland Civil Service: Equal Pay Entitlement Claims	WA 61		
Public Service Pensions Bill	WA 66		
Rates: Empty Properties	WA 66		
Review of Economic Indicators	WA 64		
Small Business Rate Relief Scheme	WA 66		
Suicide from Depression	WA 63		
Treasury Discussions	WA 66		
		Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	WA 67
		Adult Mental Health Services	WA 75
		Availability of Treatment for MS Patients	WA 89
		Backlog of Cancer Patients Awaiting Scans	WA 75
		Beech Hall Centre, West Belfast	WA 74
		Care Home Residents	WA 88
		Care of the Elderly	WA 72
		Chief Executive of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust	WA 85
		Closure of Care Homes	WA 74
		Closure of Residential Homes	WA 83
		Closure of Residential Homes	WA 83
		Closure of Residential Homes	WA 84
		Closure of Skeagh House	WA 70
		Community Based Care Packages	WA 72
		Community Based Care Packages: Full-Time Medical Support or Supervision	WA 73
		DHSSPS: Paid and Unpaid Invoices	WA 79
		Donaghadee Health Centre	WA 86
		Duplicate Bookings of Daycase Procedures	WA 89
		Foot and Ankle Surgery	WA 82
		Foot and Ankle Surgery	WA 85
		Free Health Care	WA 90
		Health and Social Care Trusts: Ambulances	WA 87
		Health and Social Care Trusts: Multiple Sclerosis Nurses	WA 88
		Health and Social Care Trusts: Non-Recurrent Funding	WA 70
		Health and Social Care Trusts: Service and Budgets Agreements	WA 67
		Health and Social Care Trusts: Service and Budgets Agreements	WA 69
		Health and Social Care Trust Staff: Private Medical Insurance	WA 85
		Implementation of the Dementia Strategy	WA 91
		Lagan Search and Rescue	WA 91
		Mid Ulster Hospital	WA 67
		Muckamore Abbey Hospital	WA 75
		Muckamore Abbey Hospital	WA 75
		National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: Guidance on Fertility	WA 78
		Northern Health and Social Care Trusts: Multi-Agency Support	
		Teams for Schools	WA 76

Northern Health and Social Care Trusts: Multi-Agency Support Teams for Schools	WA 78	Imprisonment for Failure to Pay Fines	WA 101
Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service: Director of Performance Planning and Corporate Affairs	WA 89	Lagan Search and Rescue	WA 102
Orthopaedic Patients	WA 82	Londonderry Magistrates Court: Contested Domestic Violence Cases	WA 97
Orthopaedic Posts	WA 82	Maghaberry Prison: Roe 1 and Roe 2 Accommodation Units	WA 102
Ovarian Cancer	WA 74	Magilligan Prison	WA 96
Paediatric Heart Patients	WA 74	Non-Contested Preliminary Enquiries at Magistrate Court Cases	WA 94
People using Communication Devices	WA 73	Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission: Pay Increase	WA 100
People with a Communication Disability	WA 67	Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission: Pay Progression	WA 95
Private Care Home Referrals	WA 79	Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission: Pay Scales	WA 92
Regional Director of eHealth and External Collaboration	WA 86	Northern Ireland Legal Services Commissions Staff: Equal Pay Arrangements	WA 97
Residential Care Home Provision: Private Sector	WA 84	Offender Levy	WA 91
Residential Care Homes	WA 83	Operation Loft: Debriefing	WA 103
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children: Clark Clinic	WA 73	Permanent Staff: Contractual Right to Pay Progression	WA 95
Salary Differences	WA 86	Prisoners: Pay and Privileges	WA 96
Self Harm: Depression	WA 79	Prisoners: Pay and Privileges	WA 97
Skeagh House Staff	WA 71	Prison Governor: Theft Convictions since 2000	WA 94
Small Care Homes in Residential Areas in South Antrim	WA 87	Probation Board Administrative Personnel	WA 99
Social Care Funding	WA 90	Probation Board Administrative Personnel	WA 101
Social Services: Background Checks	WA 81	Professional Standards Unit	WA 93
Specialist Mental Health Provision for Deaf Children	WA 89	PSNI Serious Organised Crime Branch: Seized Assets	WA 102
Statutory Residential Homes	WA 84	Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre	WA 95
Suicide from Depression	WA 81	Security Gates on Londonderry's Walls	WA 101
Surgical Podiatry	WA 82	Sexual Offences Prevention Orders	WA 96
Tab A	WA 76	Taxation Masters	WA 93
Trachea, Bronchus and Lung Cancer Deaths	WA 85	Television Licence Fee	WA 99
Department of Justice	WA 91	Young Conference Orders in Fermanagh/Tyrone Court Division	WA 97
Abuse of the Legal Aid System	WA 92	Department of the Environment	WA 50
Animal Cruelty Offences	WA 101	Approved Planning Applications	WA 51
Breach of Sexual Offences Prevention Orders	WA 95	Areas of Special Scientific Interest	WA 56
Civil Service Equal Pay	WA 100	Ballymena Borough Council: Adults with Special Needs	WA 52
Code of Conduct and Discipline: Change Managers	WA 94	DOE: Invoices Paid and Unpaid	WA 53
Contiguous Policing Districts and Court Divisions	WA 100	Driver and Vehicle Agency	WA 58
Court Divisions	WA 94	Driver and Vehicle Agency, Coleraine	WA 51
Criminal Justice System for Offenders and Witnesses: Speech and Language Support	WA 93	Full Driving Licence	WA 52
Eligibility Criteria for Jury Service	WA 99	Full-Time and Part-Time Council Staff	WA 53
Enforcement of Judgements Office	WA 94	Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils: Merger	WA 56
Enforcement of Judgements Office: Repossessed Houses	WA 98	Local Councils: Publish Minutes of Council Proceedings	WA 54
Firearm Certificate Conditions	WA 91		
G8 Summit	WA 102		

Local Government Employees	WA 53
Non-Farming Rural Dwellers	WA 57
Northern Ireland Red Squirrel Forum: Funding	WA 52
Planning Permission: House in the Countryside	WA 50
Post-Excavation Storage and Archiving	WA 50
Removal of References to Community Benefits	WA 55
Shadow Councils	WA 57
Single-use Carrier Bag Levy	WA 56
Single Use Carrier Bag Levy	WA 55
Single-Use Plastic Bag Levy	WA 55

**Office of the First Minister and
deputy First Minister**

	WA 1
Disability Strategy: Implementation Budget	WA 3
'Economy and Jobs Initiative' Document	WA 4
Historical Child Abuse Inquiry	WA 3
Ilex: Chairperson, Board Members and Chief Executive Officer	WA 4
Maze Development: Road Infrastructure Proposals	WA 1
Maze/Long Kesh Regeneration Site	WA 4
Ministry of Defence: Decontamination and Maintenance Costs of Former Security Sites	WA 1
Ministry of Defence: Decontamination and Maintenance Costs of Former Security Sites	WA 2
Northern Ireland Memorial Fund Education and Training Grants	WA 2
Planning Appeals Commission: Appeals and Article 31 Hearings	WA 3
Shackleton Army Barracks at Ballykelly	WA 2
Social Investment Fund: Successful Projects	WA 3

Revised Written Answers

Friday 17 May 2013

(AQW 4785/08)

My Department employed the services of consultancy firms on 26 assignments in the financial year 2007-08 in relation to external consultancy, as classified in accordance with the guidance set out by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

The table below sets out the work completed and the total costs incurred on external consultancy. Clearly, such firms may also be engaged on other areas of work, which are not classified as external consultancy in accordance with DFP guidelines. Spend in relation to such activities is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Name of Project	£'000
Additional HR Support	26
Audit of the Youth Estate	35
Chartermark Re-Assessment	1
Communications Support	9
DE Catering Advisor	9
Development of ETI Communication Styles	6
Development of RPA Outline Business Case	40
Education and Skills Authority	26
Financial Management Scoping Study	24
Frameworks Project	975
Governor Handbook	15
ICT Audit	32
IIP re-accreditation	1
Independent Evaluation of the Inspection Process	30
Independent Strategic Review of Education	21
Independent Validation of the Operational requirement for the Teachers' Pensions Replacement System	9
Network Health Check	3
Post-primary Facilitation Exercise	1
Preparation and production of a revised Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	12
Preparation of Outline Business Cases for 2004 Announced Schools Sector PPP Projects	21
Review of Irish Medium Education	15
Revision of DE Circular 99/10: Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection	7
Specialist School Assessment Panel	19
Support to assist with the implementation of RPA	10

Name of Project	£'000
To facilitate the Department of Education with Public Consultation Meetings on, English as an Additional Language (EAL) - Draft Policy	17
Workforce Planning	24
Total	1,388

(AQW 5121/08)

The amount spent by the Department of Education on external consultants relating to the Review of Public Administration for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial years are set out in the tables below.

2006/07

Name of Project	Consultant	£'000
EQIA Training	Key Consulting	1
Preparing RPA Workshop materials	Mentoring Connection	3
Printing RPA Newsletter	Commercial Graphics	1
Programme Management Support	PA Consulting	235
Recruitment of ESA CE Designate	Capita Resourcing	24
Review of Research, Monitoring & Advice	PA Consulting	60
RPA Element of a larger commissions iro DE Communications Audit	Weber Shandwick	2
RPA Newsletter Design	Lesley Stannage Design	1
Total		327

2007/08

Name of Project	Consultant	£'000
Communications Support	PA Consulting	9
ESA 2nd Tier Structure & Location Strategy	Deloitte	20
HR Support	Deloitte	26
ICT Audit	PWC	32
Joint consultancy with NILA – Finance Systems Development Work	PWC	6
Outline Business Case	Deloitte	40
Programme Management Support (continuation of Item 1)	PA Consulting	10
Total		143

(AQW 7835/09)

Expenditure by my Department on external consultancy between 2005/06 and 2008-09 is set out in the table below. Spend in relation to internal consultancy is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Year	£'000
2005-06	532
2006-07	906
2007-08	1,388
2008-09	843

(AQW 70/10)

The amounts spend by my Department on external consultants and events companies in each of the financial years from 2004-05 to 2008-09 are set out in the table below.

Private consultancy firms may also be engaged on other areas of work, which are not classified as external consultancy in accordance with guidance issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). Spend in relation to such activities is no readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Year	Amount spent on external consultants £'000	Amount spent on events £'000 Companies companies
2004-05	766	-
2005-06	532	4
2006-07	906	1
2007-08	1,388	5
2008-09	843	4

(AQW 7269/10)

The Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team has spent the following on external consultancy in the 2007-08 to 2009-10 financial years:

Year	£'000
2007-08	143
2008-09	162
2009-10	218

(AQW 7313/10)

The departmental Review of Public Administration implementation bodies has spent the following on external consultancy in the 2007-08 to 2009-10 financial years:

Year	£'000
2007-08	143
2008-09	162
2009-10	218

(AQW 7356/10)

Expenditure on external consultancy by the Department between 2007-08 and 2009-10 is as follows:

Year	£'000
2007-08	1,388
2008-09	843
2009-10	260

(AQW 8017/10)

Expenditure by the Department on consultants is not recorded on an Education and Library Board area basis but rather is recorded on the basis of the nature of the consultancy expenditure in line with relevant guidance. The Department does not hold details of expenditure on consultancy prior to 2001-02. Details of expenditure incurred by the Department on external consultancy from 2001-02 to 2009-10 are provided in the table below.

Year	£'000
2001-02	141
2002-03	217
2003-04	510
2004-05	766
2005-06	532
2006-07	906
2007-08	1,388
2008-09	843
2009-10	260

(AQW 40/11)

Details of expenditure by my Department (DE) and the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) on external consultancy from 2005-06 to 2008-09 are provided in the tables below. Expenditure in relation to PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), Deloitte and Ernst & Young are separately identified.

DE

Year	Total £'000	PWC £'000	Deloitte £'000	Ernst & Young £'000
2005-06	532	164	-	-
2006-07	906	68	-	-
2007-08	1,388	88	146	-
2008-09	843	99	28	-

ELBs

Year	Total £'000	PWC £'000	Deloitte £'000	Ernst & Young £'000
2005-06	1,442	980	20	64
2006-07	1,965	1,664	-	-
2007-08	1,895	1,552	-	-
2008-09	613	460	-	-

(AQW 163/11-15)

Details of expenditure by the Department on external consultants in each financial year from 2007-08 to 2010-11 are provided in the table below.

Although costs were requested from May 2007, the total expenditure for 2007-08 includes April 2007 expenditure as departmental records are in financial years.

Year	£'000
2007-08	1,388
2008-09	843
2009-10	260
2010-11	84

(AQW 699/11-15)

Details of the project title, the consultants engaged and the costs incurred in each financial year from 2007-08 to 2010-11 are provided in the tables below.

Although costs were requested from May 2007, the total expenditure for 2007-08 includes April 2007 expenditure as departmental records are held in financial years.

2007-2008

Name of Project	Consultant	£
Additional HR Support	Deloitte	26,000
Audit of the Youth Estate	Grant Thornton	34,827
Chartermark Re-Assessment	East Midlands Quality Centre	825
Communications Support	PA Consulting	9,350
DE Catering Advisor	Mrs P McCusker	9,374
Development of ETI Communication Styles	Mind Associates Ltd	5,871
Development of RPA Outline Business Case	Deloitte	39,761
ESA	PWC	5,500
ESA	Deloitte	20,000
Financial Management Scoping Study	Deloitte	24,210
Frameworks Project	EC Harris LLP	252,588

Name of Project	Consultant	£
Frameworks Project	Addleshaw Goddard LLP	102,923
Frameworks Project - Court Proceedings	Addleshaw Goddard/Chandler KBS	619,969
Governor Handbook	B Burnison A Rainey S McCall J Beattie	15,372
ICT Audit	PWC	32,250
IIP re-accreditation	Kenny Consultancy	860
Independent Evaluation of the Inspection Process	PWC	29,928
Independent Strategic Review of Education	Bain Review Team	20,820
Independent Validation of the Operational requirement for the Teachers' Pensions Replacement System	Software Quality Systems Ltd	8,750
Network Health Check	Echelon Consulting Ltd	2,590
Post-primary Facilitation Exercise	Mr A McVeigh	1,368
Preparation and production of a revised Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	Dan McCall	12,294
Preparation of Outline Business Cases for 2004 Announced Schools Sector PPP Projects	PWC	20,634
Review of Irish Medium Education	Deloitte MCS Ltd	11,663
Review of Irish Medium Education	Thomas J Shaw	3,150
Revision of DE Circular 99/10: Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection	Betty Robinson	7,035
Specialist School Assessment Panel	M Murray B Salisbury G McCafferty R Fitzpatrick G Tigchelaar D Thompson R Downey S McElwee M Cowan	19,454
Support to assist with implementation of RPA	PA Consulting	10,090

Name of Project	Consultant	£
To facilitate Department of Education with Public Consultation Meetings on English as an Additional Language	Flex Language Services, University of Ulster	16,673
Workforce Planning	Deloitte	23,990
	Total	1,388,119

2008-09

Name of Project	Consultant	£
Audit of ESAIT accommodation	Deloitte	3,618
Audit of Teacher Training for CR Review	Bearing Point	8,716
Balmoral High School - options for future use	KPMG and A&L Goodbody	50,138
Charter Mark Assessment	East Midlands Quality Centre Ltd	750
Children and Young People Consultation: Literacy & Numeracy Strategy	Barnardo's	10,000
Community Relations Review	FGS McClure Watters	33,107
Consultation with children, parents and staff in early years settings	NIPPA - the early years organisation	700
Consultation with Parents on draft Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) Regulations	Parenting Forum/Parents' Advice Centre	7,400
Consultation with Parents: Literacy & Numeracy Strategy	Parent Advice Centre	7,400
DE School Meals Adviser	Patricia McCusker	9,197
Developing Policy Codes for use by the proposed Educational and Skills Authority	Jackie Simpson	1,969
Effective Use of Data	PWC	43,400
ESA	Parity Solutions	70,000
ESA	Deloitte	14,000
ESA	PWC	200
Fees	Professor Bernard Cullen	1,000
Full Service School Evaluation	FGS McClure Watters (formally Bearing Point)	47,475
Independent Advisor to Consider Discretionary Cases relating to the Unsuitable person's (to work with children) List	Richard Black	9,748

Name of Project	Consultant	£
Independent Evaluation of the Inspection Process	PWC	35,000
Independent Evaluation of the Inspection Process	PWC	19,952
Legal assistance for Frameworks	Addleshaw Goddard	48,191
Legal assistance for legal challenge	Addleshaw Goddard	27,534
Legal assistance for legislation	Addleshaw Goddard	2,541
Lisanelly	MURRAY, M H	960
NASA Visit	Int Space School Education Trust	6,000
Organisational Design	PA Consulting	60,698
Procurement assistance Modernising Schools Programme	EC Harris	215,639
Provision of HR expertise for the RPA Programme in Education	Vivienne Walker	11,496
Review of North South Co-operation on Educational Exchanges and Supporting Mechanisms	Matt Murray & Pauline Gildea	17,906
Revision of DE Circular 99/10: Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection	Betty Robinson	1,971
Scoping Study of Financial Management process in DE	Deloitte	6,052
Speaker - ETI	The Sir B Lovell School	847
Specialist Schools Pilot	MURRAY, M H	2,181
Specialist Schools Pilot	R Downey	2,048
Specialist Schools Pilot	D J Thompson OBE, MA, Dip Ed	1,927
Specialist Schools Pilot	Mr P H McCann	916
Specialist Schools Pilot	Mr R Fitzpatrick	1,321
Specialist Schools Pilot	Mrs Grainne McCafferty	1,258
Specialist Schools Pilot	Mrs N Campbell	1,168
Specialist Schools Pilot	Sean McElwee	1,160
Specialist Schools Pilot	Mrs M Cowan	2,441
Technical assistance for legal challenge	EC Harris	28,673
Technical assistance for legal challenge	Rowell Wright	22,638
To Undertake the examination of the Review of Irish Medium Education	Deloitte MCS Ltd	3,997
	Total	843,333

2009-10

Name of Project	Consultant	£
Chartermark Re-assessment	EMQC	801
Child Protection Training	Marcella Leonard	672
Consultation on Transfer	Parents' Advice Centre	2,300
Consultation with Children and Young People on draft Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) Regulations	Barnardos	6,000
Determination of terms & conditions of ESA directors	Hays Group	12,315
Discretionary cases relating to working with children	Richard Black	5,646
Diversity training needs in early years sector, schools and youth	FSG McClure Watters	3,678
ESA	Parity Solutions	65,745
ESA Corporate identity & education brand	Frank	3,750
ESA Corporate identity & education brand	Hamill Bosket	2,750
ESA Corporate identity & education brand	McCadden	3,960
ESA Corporate identity & education brand	Tandem Design	3,755
ESAIT delivery models and location options	Deloitte	44,926
Implementation of RPA Programme	QBM	7,400
Parenting Forum	Parents Advice Centre	1,250
PEHAW Homework diary inserts	Papermouse Design Work	2,275
Provision of an assessment centre ESA	Price Waterhouse Coopers	60,855
Readiness Change	Milward Brown	2,015
Schools Administration Branch	The Connectives	3,413
Schools Modernisation Programme	Addleshaw Goddard	8,698
Security validation of new systems	Class Consultancy	4,163
Speakers Fee Autism Conference	Goteborg University	1,930
Speakers Fee Autism Conference	Kings College	974
Speakers Fee Autism Conference	Prof Fiona McNicholas	225
Speakers Fee Autism Conference	Donal Rogan	100
Speakers Fee Autism Conference	Robert Savage	193
Speakers Fee Autism Conference	Patricia Daly	221
Strategic HR/Workforce Issues	Vivienne Walker	10,113
	TOTAL	260,123

2010-2011		
Name of Project	Consultant	£
Homework diary inserts	Papermouse Design & Advertising	1,860
Appointment of Independent Procurement Expert to SEELB	Martin Sykes	4,450
CLAS	Goldblatt McGuigan	2,813
Controlled Schools Sectoral Body Working Group	Chambre of Public Affairs	2,807
CRED Public Consultation	Participation Network	6,705
Customer Service Excellence Model	EMQC Ltd	2,014
Governance & Accountability Training Seminars	Brian Whalley	11,742
Lisanelly	KPMG	24,287
Lisanelly	Arthur Cox	7,027
Needs assessment and Feasibility Study	FGS McClure Watters	16,500
Programme Manager (Scullion)	Parity Solutions Limited	275
Turbary	Jacqui Simpson	3,500
	Total	83,980



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