

Written Answers to Questions

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Friday 28 February 2014

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

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Allister, Jim (North Antrim)
Anderson, Sydney (Upper Bann)
Attwood, Alex (West Belfast)
Beggs, Roy (East Antrim)
Bell, Jonathan (Strangford)
Boylan, Cathal (Newry and Armagh)
Boyle, Ms Michaela (West Tyrone)
Bradley, Dominic (Newry and Armagh)
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Brady, Mickey (Newry and Armagh)
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Campbell, Gregory (East Londonderry)
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Dunne, Gordon (North Down)
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McLaughlin, Mitchel (South Antrim)
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O'Dowd, John (Upper Bann)
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Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 28 February 2014

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether any advance payments have been made to Ilex Urban Regeneration Company office holders or members; and if so, when the payments were made and for what reason.

(AQW 26650/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): Ilex has confirmed that no advance payments have been made by the company to office holders or members at any time.

Good Relations: Funding

Ms McCorley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Central Good Relations Funding Programme.

(AQO 5006/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Central Good Relations Funding Programme 2013/14 opened for applications on 4 October 2013, closed on 15 November 2013 and funding has been awarded to groups. The 2014/15 Central Good Relations Fund opened for applications on 22 November 2013 and closed at 4pm on 10 February 2014.

The Fund supports productive, time bound projects which contribute to the promotion of good relations and to building a united and shared community as identified in the good relations strategy, Together: Building a United Community, published on 23 May 2013.

Illegal Organisations: Government Funding

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action they are taking to ensure that illegal organisations, such as the IRA, UVF or UDA, do not benefit, directly or indirectly, from any government funding.

(AQW 28729/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our Department does not fund illegal organisations.

OFMDFM undertakes financial and other checks on all groups and organisations in receipt of departmental funding.

Social Mobility

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail how their Department measures social mobility and to provide the indicators of social mobility, for each of the last five years.

(AQW 29504/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive's anti-poverty and social inclusion strategy, Lifetime Opportunities, adopted a 'lifecycle' approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion,

recognising that in order to prevent a cycle of deprivation persisting through generations, issues affecting early years, children and young people are crucial.

The Lifetime Opportunities Monitoring Framework Update Report 1998/99 - 2010-11, published by our department in August 2013, presents a range of statistical targets and indicators endorsed by the Northern Ireland Executive Sub-Committee on Poverty and Social Inclusion in support of Lifetime Opportunities. The report reflects many of the commonly agreed EU and UK indicators, but also includes a number of additional indicators specific to here. A further update is anticipated in 2014.

Delivering Social Change has adopted and extended the lifecycle approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion, aiming to break the cycle of multi-generational problems by improving children and young people's health, well-being and life opportunities and reducing poverty and associated issues across all ages. However, we do not specifically measure social mobility.

Chair of the Community Relations Council

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how many applicants there were for the position of Chair of the Community Relations Council; (ii) how many were interviewed; (iii) who comprised the interview panel; and (iv) whether there was ministerial sign off of the appointment.
(AQW 29748/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have no role in the selection or appointment of the Chair of NICRC.

In accordance with the NICRC's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, the Chair is independently appointed by the NICRC and under the supervision and assurance of the CPANI.

There were 10 applicants for the position of Chair of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council (NICRC); 5 candidates were interviewed.

The interview panel was made up of two CRC Board Members, Hazel Francey and Sylvia Gordon, an independent Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (CPANI) Assessor, Kevin Slowey, and an independent Chair, Bob Collins.

Social Investment Fund Applicants: Belfast North Zone

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the name and address of each of the three successful Social Investment Fund applicants in the Belfast North Zone, announced on 10 February 2014; and to detail the approved proposals.
(AQW 30904/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Local Steering Groups, appointed by us, have nominated lead partners who will be tasked to deliver the approved Social Investment Fund projects, subject to verification of their governance arrangements and delivery capacity. Lead Partners will be responsible for procuring the delivery of each project. OFMDFM is currently undertaking the necessary verification in respect of all potential lead partners.

Information on particular projects to be funded in each zone can be found at:
<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/social-investment-fund/sif-projects.htm>

Social Investment Fund Applicants: Belfast South Zone

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the name and address of each of the three successful Social Investment Fund applicants in the Belfast South Zone, announced on 10 February 2014; and to detail the approved proposals.
(AQW 30905/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Local Steering Groups, appointed by us, have nominated lead partners who will be tasked to deliver the approved Social Investment Fund projects, subject to

verification of their governance arrangements and delivery capacity. Lead Partners will be responsible for procuring the delivery of each project. OFMDFM is currently undertaking the necessary verification in respect of all potential lead partners.

Information on particular projects to be funded in each zone can be found at:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/social-investment-fund/sif-projects.htm>

Social Investment Fund Applicants: Belfast East Zone

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the name and address of each of the three successful Social Investment Fund applicants in the Belfast East Zone, announced on 10 February 2014; and to detail the approved proposals.

(AQW 30906/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Local Steering Groups, appointed by us, have nominated lead partners who will be tasked to deliver the approved Social Investment Fund projects, subject to verification of their governance arrangements and delivery capacity. Lead Partners will be responsible for procuring the delivery of each project. OFMDFM is currently undertaking the necessary verification in respect of all potential lead partners.

Information on particular projects to be funded in each zone can be found at:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/social-investment-fund/sif-projects.htm>

Social Investment Fund Applicants: Belfast West Zone

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the name and address of each of the three successful Social Investment Fund applicants in the Belfast West Zone, announced on 10 February 2014; and to detail the approved proposals.

(AQW 30907/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Local Steering Groups, appointed by us, have nominated lead partners who will be tasked to deliver the approved Social Investment Fund projects, subject to verification of their governance arrangements and delivery capacity. Lead Partners will be responsible for procuring the delivery of each project. OFMDFM is currently undertaking the necessary verification in respect of all potential lead partners.

Information on particular projects to be funded in each zone can be found at:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/social-investment-fund/sif-projects.htm>

Social Investment Fund Applicants: Derry/Londonderry Zone

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the name and address of each of the three successful Social Investment Fund applicants in the Derry/Londonderry Zone, announced on 10 February 2014; and to detail the approved proposals.

(AQW 30908/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Local Steering Groups, appointed by us, have nominated lead partners who will be tasked to deliver the approved Social Investment Fund projects, subject to verification of their governance arrangements and delivery capacity. Lead Partners will be responsible for procuring the delivery of each project. OFMDFM is currently undertaking the necessary verification in respect of all potential lead partners.

Information on particular projects to be funded in each zone can be found at:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/social-investment-fund/sif-projects.htm>

Social Investment Fund Applicants: Northern Zone

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the name and address of each of the three successful Social Investment Fund applicants in the Northern Zone, announced on 10 February 2014; and to detail the approved proposals.

(AQW 30937/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Local Steering Groups, appointed by us, have nominated lead partners who will be tasked to deliver the approved Social Investment Fund projects, subject to verification of their governance arrangements and delivery capacity. Lead Partners will be responsible for procuring the delivery of each project. OFMDFM is currently undertaking the necessary verification in respect of all potential lead partners.

Information on particular projects to be funded in each zone can be found at:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/social-investment-fund/sif-projects.htm>

Social Investment Fund Applicants: South Eastern Zone

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the name and address of each of the three successful Social Investment Fund applicants in the South Eastern Zone, announced on 10 February 2014; and to detail the approved proposals.

(AQW 30939/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Local Steering Groups, appointed by us, have nominated lead partners who will be tasked to deliver the approved Social Investment Fund projects, subject to verification of their governance arrangements and delivery capacity. Lead Partners will be responsible for procuring the delivery of each project. OFMDFM is currently undertaking the necessary verification in respect of all potential lead partners.

Information on particular projects to be funded in each zone can be found at:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/social-investment-fund/sif-projects.htm>

Social Investment Fund Applicants: Southern Zone

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the name and address of each of the three successful Social Investment Fund applicants in the Southern Zone, announced on 10 February 2014; and to detail the approved proposals.

(AQW 30940/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Local Steering Groups, appointed by us, have nominated lead partners who will be tasked to deliver the approved Social Investment Fund projects, subject to verification of their governance arrangements and delivery capacity. Lead Partners will be responsible for procuring the delivery of each project. OFMDFM is currently undertaking the necessary verification in respect of all potential lead partners.

Information on particular projects to be funded in each zone can be found at:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/social-investment-fund/sif-projects.htm>

Active Aging Strategy

Mr Brady asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Active Ageing Strategy.
(AQO 5611/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Draft Active Ageing Strategy was launched for public consultation on 21 February 2014.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Single Farm Payments: Remote Sensing

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail when Single Farm Payments were paid to applicants included in the 2012 remote sensing pilot, broken down by month. **(AQW 30705/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): 248 Businesses were inspected via Control with Remote Sensing for the 2012 scheme year, their Single Farm Payments were issued as follows:-

Month	Number of payments issued
December 2012	8
January 2013	29
February 2013	59
March 2013	56
April 2013	56
May 2013	28
June 2013	4
July 2013	1
August	1
Total	242*

*The remaining 6 businesses were not due a payment in 2012.

Departmental Collaboration with Ordnance Survey

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail outline the relationship, with regard to farm mapping, between her Department and Ordnance Survey; and for a breakdown of the costs associated with this collaboration, in each of the last three years. **(AQW 30706/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: A Service Level Agreement (SLA) exists between Land & Property Services (LPS) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) which formalises the relationship between LPS and Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) Improvement Branch in relation to on-going map data improvement activity.

LPS provides the following services to DARD:-

- The ongoing review of field boundaries and features;
- Delivery of datasets to DARD;
- New ortho-photography (aerial) as it becomes available
- Deployment of LPS staff to DARD Direct offices when required to meet with farm businesses;
- Accommodation where applicable;
- Software licenses and hardware for the duration of the SLA;
- Technical advice and guidance;
- Management Information.

DARD has the following responsibilities under the SLA:-

- To provide and agree a written, clear, concise and definitive request for all services required from LPS;
- To pay for Services provided by LPS

The costs associated with this work during each of the past 3 years are:

Financial Year	Amount (£K)
2011-12	4,623
2012-13	4,902
13-14 at Jan 14	2,052
Total	11,577

Areas of Natural Constraint

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the options provided by the EU in their guidance on fine tuning Areas of Natural Constraint.

(AQW 30725/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The current draft guidance from the EU Commission provides options for fine tuning to identify those areas constrained by biophysical criteria that have overcome the constraint by investment or economic activity, or by evidence of normal land productivity or by production methods or farming systems that have offset the constraint.

In respect of fine tuning regarding investments, regions can use information related to levels of irrigation, artificial drainage or greenhouse cover. In respect of fine tuning regarding economic activity, etc, regions can use information related to standard output, average yield of a dominant crop, livestock density, tree density, normal land productivity or farming systems and production methods. The guidance provides thresholds that should be used when fine tuning.

The guidance also states that fine tuning must be carried out, must be complete, and must be done correctly with adequate objective criteria, otherwise the delimitation will not be deemed credible.

Work exploring the use of fine tuning is continuing and my officials are currently seeking clarification from the EU Commission on a number of issues related to the application of the fine tuning methodology. The guidance is subject to ongoing debate between Member States and the Commission and a revised version is expected in the coming week.

Areas of Natural Constraint: Severely Disadvantaged Areas and Disadvantaged Areas

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the existing Severely Disadvantaged Areas and Disadvantaged Areas cannot be used as an administrative unit in defining Areas of Natural Constraint.

(AQW 30726/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The methodology defined by Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 and EU Commission guidance for designation of Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) is fairly prescriptive. The designation is a two stage process, the first stage being the application of biophysical criteria to eligible agricultural land to identify those administrative units affected by biophysical constraints and the second a fine tuning exercise to remove those administrative units where it can be demonstrated that the constraint has been overcome.

In both these stages, designation must be “ensured at the level of local administrative units (“LAU 2” level) or at the level of a clear delineated local unit which covers a single clear contiguous geographical area with a definable economic and administrative boundary”. This requirement derives from a similar

World Trade Organisation obligation. That, therefore, requires designation at the electoral ward or townland level.

The existing Severely Disadvantaged Areas and Disadvantaged Areas do not meet this definition and, therefore, cannot be used as an administrative unit in defining the new Areas of Natural Constraint. Moreover, attempting to use such an approach would defeat the objective of the EU redesignation programme, as it would simply confirm or reject the current LFA designated areas as meeting the set of ANC designation criteria rather than enabling boundaries to be recast within Member States based on a common methodology.

Flooding in Southern England

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has contacted her counterpart in the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to see if her Department can provide any assistance to alleviate any of the problems caused by flooding in southern England.

(AQW 30731/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have had no direct contact with any Westminster Minister on this matter, but I understand that a senior official in Rivers Agency has had discussions with their counterparts in the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the English Environment Agency, as part of their normal business. I would be cautious about releasing resources from here to assist with the flood emergency, as we are also experiencing higher than normal quantities of rainfall, surge tides and coastal storms, and therefore need to keep the finite resources available to us on hand to respond to local threats of flooding.

Areas of Natural Constraint: Criteria

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the definition of Areas of Natural Constraint, (i) whether there will be a criterion to bring in hotspots that have low production in otherwise high production electoral wards; (ii) if so, how will that criterion be developed; and (iii) what measures will be used to determine the criterion.

(AQW 30734/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The methodology defined by Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 and EU Commission guidance for designation of Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) is prescriptive. It requires compliance "at the level of a clearly delineated local unit which covers a single clear contiguous geographical area with a definable economic and administrative identity". This requirement derives from a similar World Trade Organisation obligation. That, therefore, requires designation at the electoral ward or townland level.

The Regulation does not provide for the development of a criterion that will bring in hotspots that have low production in otherwise high production administrative units.

Approved Water Courses: Cleaning

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many times approved water courses have been cleaned in each of the last five years, broken down by river.

(AQW 30738/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Having received clarification on the information required, I can advise as follows; Rivers Agency's Maintenance Programme for all watercourses that have been designated under the terms of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973 incorporates a 6 year rolling inspection and maintenance programme for watercourses affecting rural areas, and an annual rolling inspection and maintenance programme for urban watercourses. Watercourses which are prone to siltation or dumping are inspected and maintained more frequently. In addition, culvert inlet grilles are inspected and maintained on a frequent basis, many of them weekly. Additional grille inspections are also undertaken where heavy rainfall is forecast and after heavy rainfall events, as debris can often be carried downstream by a high river flow and cause an obstruction. In assessing maintenance needs, consideration is given to whether any

obstructions to flow, or reduction in channel dimensions, will have a significant impact on drainage and flood defence standards.

Land in North Down: Cereal, Grass and Horticultural Crops

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the area of land in North Down used for (i) cereal; (ii) grass; and (iii) horticultural crops; and what these figures represent as a proportion of the total land used for each of these crops.

(AQW 30739/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on land use is collected by DARD as part of the annual June Agricultural and Horticultural Survey. The total area of cereal, grass and horticultural crops grown in North Down and the north of Ireland is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Area of cereals, grass, horticultural crops in North Down (ha), June 2013.

Farms	Cereal	Grass	Horticulture ¹
North Down	671	4,238	7
North of Ireland	35,931	787,954	3,047
Per cent in North Down	1.9	0.5	0.2

Note 1: Includes fruit, vegetables and flowers

Abandoned Horses

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what action she is taking regarding the large number of abandoned horses; (ii) whether she intends to conduct any investigation into this issue; and (iii) whether any enforcement action will be taken.

(AQW 30770/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The welfare of animals here, including non-farmed animals such as horses, is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act 2011. Section 14 of that Act makes it an offence for a person to abandon an animal for which that person is responsible. Enforcement responsibility under the Act in respect of non-farmed animals rests with Councils and my Department provides annual funding to enable Councils to undertake this work.

When an incident of suspected abandonment of an equine is reported to the Council this will be investigated. In such cases Councils can take a range of actions, which will be determined by the circumstances of the case. Where the animal is suffering or likely to suffer if its circumstances do not change, the animal may be taken into the possession of the Council. The Council's Animal Welfare Officers will also try to establish the actual owner of the animal. The circumstances of each case will determine what enforcement action the Council will take.

In addition to an offence of abandonment, the 2011 Act provides strong powers to deal with any person responsible for an animal, who fails to meet the needs of that animal to the extent required by good practice, or causes that animal to suffer unnecessarily. Fines and penalties have been significantly increased from those available under the previous Act. The Courts can also deprive a person convicted of a serious animal welfare offence for such a period as it sees fit, from owning, keeping, participating in the keeping, control, or influencing the way an animal is kept. The maximum penalty for any person convicted of causing unnecessary suffering is 2 years imprisonment and, or, an unlimited fine.

In the current economic climate I am very conscious that some horse owners are struggling financially to care for their animals. Where this is the case I would encourage any person who finds themselves in this position to speak to their vet or an animal charity to obtain advice on how to resolve the problem before the animal becomes a welfare issue.

At this point in time I do not see the need for a general investigation into the issue of abandoned horses. Councils are very active on the ground investigating equine welfare incidents and abandonment cases and my officials are in regular contact with Councils on this and other animal welfare issues. In addition, this is an issue that I have already discussed with my southern counterpart, Simon Coveney TD and we have agreed that if significant equine welfare and abandonment issues arise over the coming months, any required action will be on an all-island basis. Officials north and south continue to engage on this issue and monitor the level of equine welfare and abandonment cases; I am also keeping the need for further action under review.

Penalties for Packaging Failures Imposed on Meat Plants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether there have been any fines or penalties for packaging failures imposed on meat plants in the last twelve months; (ii) when the fines were levied; and (iii) for what reason.

(AQW 30788/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the central competent authority in matters of food safety and authenticity in the north of Ireland.

DARD is the competent authority in the north of Ireland for the Beef Labelling Regulations. DARD officers undertake regular unannounced inspections of the traceability and labelling of beef and beef products, both fresh and frozen, in abattoirs and approved cutting plants across the north of Ireland under the Beef Labelling Regulations.

No fines or penalties have been applied for beef labelling failures in any approved slaughter house, cutting plant or cold store in the north of Ireland in the past 12 months.

District Councils are responsible for implementing Beef Labelling Regulations on processed meat products, in cold stores and at retail level. They are also responsible for enforcement of food labelling requirements under food compositional and labelling legislation.

District Councils are required to report all enforcement activity to the FSA on an annual basis. These returns are made to the FSA at the end of May following the end of the financial year. FSA is not aware of any fines or penalties for labelling failures having been imposed on meat plants in the last twelve months.

Packaging and Processing of Meat

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether any improperly packaged meat has been detected in connection with any local meat plants in the last twelve months; (ii) if so, when the detection occurred; and (iii) to outline the extent of the problem.

(AQW 30789/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the central competent authority in matters of food safety and authenticity in the north of Ireland.

DARD is the competent authority in the north of Ireland for the Beef Labelling Regulations. DARD officers undertake regular unannounced inspections of the traceability and labelling of beef and beef products, both fresh and frozen, in abattoirs and approved cutting plants across the north of Ireland under the Beef Labelling Regulations.

During the past year 121 inspections were conducted to check beef labelling information. Beef labelling was found to be unsatisfactory on 3 occasions: 23 April 2013, 20 September 2013 and 24 January 2014. In all cases the traceability of the beef could be confirmed. The problems detected related to deficiencies such as incomplete information and the use of abbreviations for information which should have been given in full. In all cases the problems had been corrected when a follow-up inspection was conducted.

District Councils are responsible for implementing Beef Labelling Regulations on processed meat products, in cold stores and at retail level. They are also responsible for enforcement of food labelling requirements under food compositional and labelling legislation.

District Councils are required to report all enforcement activity to the FSA on an annual basis. These returns are made to the FSA at the end of May following the end of the financial year. FSA is not aware of improperly labelled meat having been detected by District Councils in connection with any local meat plants in the last twelve months.

Improperly Packaged Meat

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether any improperly packaged meat from Poland has been detected in connection with any local meat plants in the last twelve months; if so, (ii) when the detection occurred; (iii) where the meat was detected; and (iii) to outline the extent of the problem.

(AQW 30790/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the central competent authority in matters of food safety and authenticity in the north of Ireland.

DARD is the competent authority in the north of Ireland for the Beef Labelling Regulations. DARD officers undertake regular unannounced inspections of the traceability and labelling of beef and beef products, both fresh and frozen, in abattoirs and approved cutting plants across the north of Ireland under the Beef Labelling Regulations.

During the past year 121 inspections were conducted to check beef labelling information. No improperly packaged beef from Poland was detected during the past twelve months.

District Councils are responsible for implementing Beef Labelling Regulations on processed meat products, in cold stores and at retail level. They are also responsible for enforcement of food labelling requirements under food compositional and labelling legislation.

District Councils are required to report all enforcement activity to the FSA on an annual basis. These returns are made to the FSA at the end of May following the end of the financial year. FSA is not aware of improperly labelled meat from Poland having been detected by District Councils in connection with any local meat plants in the last twelve months.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many times she has appeared before her Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30793/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since taking up post in May 2011 I have appeared before the Department's Statutory Assembly Committee on eight occasions.

In addition, I have also held separate meetings with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Department's Statutory Assembly Committee as appropriate.

Farm Labour Workforce: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an estimate of the total farm labour headcount in North Down; and what this figure represents as a proportion of the total farm labour workforce.

(AQW 30804/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on agricultural labour is collected by DARD as part of the annual June Agricultural and Horticultural Survey. Total farm labour (headcount basis) in the north of Ireland

including farmers and spouses was 47,796 in June 2013. Of this an estimated 252 people, equivalent to 0.5 per cent, worked in the North Down constituency.

Farms in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of (i) cattle; (ii) sheep; (iii) pig; and (iii) poultry farms in North Down; and what these figures represent as a proportion of the total number of each farm type.

(AQW 30805/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on farm numbers is collected by DARD as part of the annual June Agricultural and Horticultural Survey. The number of farms with cattle, sheep, pigs, or poultry in North Down and the north of Ireland is presented in Table 1 below.

Due to data confidentiality restrictions, information on geographies where less than five farms occur is suppressed. Therefore it is not possible to provide information on the number of farms with Pigs or Poultry in North Down.

Table 1: Number of Farm in North Down, be enterprise type, June 2013

Farms	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry
North Down	82	22	n/a	n/a
North of Ireland	20,201	8,852	418	740
Per cent in North Down	0.4	0.2	n/a	n/a

Dog Licences

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many dog licences have been issued in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30846/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Dog control is legislated for here by the Dogs Order 1983, as amended by the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011. Councils implement this legislation and provide statistics to my Department regarding its operation.

The number of dog licences issued here in each of the last three years is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Dog licences issued

Year	Number of dog licences issued
2011	130,667
2012	123,034
2013	129,180

Single Farm Payments: Upper Bann

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many Single Farm Payments to farmers are still outstanding, for the year 2013, within the Upper Bann Constituency.

(AQW 30853/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has delivered a record payment performance for the 2013 year with 96% of Single Farm Payment claims paid by February 2014.

32 Single Farm Payments to farmers are outstanding for the 2013 year within the Upper Bann Constituency.

Funding to Agricultural Shows

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the amount of funding her Department awards on an annual basis to agricultural shows; and (ii) which agricultural shows have benefited from this funding.

(AQW 30854/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Each year my Department provides £5000 funding to agricultural shows.

The agricultural shows which have benefitted from this funding are Balmoral Show, NI International Ploughing Championships, Mullahead Ploughing Championships, the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and local agricultural shows at Ballymena, Ballymoney, Lurgan, Armagh, Lisburn & Saintfield District, Newry, Omagh, Castlewellan, Derry/Limavady, Antrim, Clogher and Fermanagh.

Help for Flood Victims

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline what elements of the Prime Minister's declaration that money is no object in relation to help for flood victims, she plans to replicate and adapt locally.

(AQW 30861/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: First of all, I should say that the scale and extent of the recent flooding in England has been hugely different from anything that has been experienced here and therefore the British Prime Minister's comments need to be understood in that context. Funding for flooding has always been a priority for me and that will continue to be the case. You will be aware that over the past 2-3 years I have been able to secure significant additional funding to allow a number of capital schemes to be undertaken and I shall continue to commit resources to ensure that the risk we face from flooding is adequately managed.

Central Investigation Services: Grant

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 30449/11-15, to outline the details of the £125k grant that was withheld due to recommendations made by Central Investigation Services.

(AQW 30862/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The £125,000 grant withheld due to recommendations made by Central Investigation Service related to three NI Rural Development Programme (RDP) grant funding prosecution cases and one land subsidy scheme. The amounts withheld were £49,500, £47,000 and £7,500 in respect of the RDP cases and £21,000 in respect of the land subsidy scheme.

Remote Sensing Inspections: Farm Maps

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, with regard to the Icon Group contract, to detail any clauses whereby the Department could seek financial recompense when remote sensing imagery does not match farm maps held by the Department.

(AQW 30863/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The purpose of the remote sensing contract is to assist the Department in undertaking a number of On-the-Spot checks remotely to determine land eligibility. It is not to match imagery with farm maps held by the Department. Within the contract, there are clauses that clearly set out procedures to be followed where there are performance issues on the part of the contractor in relation to standards of service, a material breach or default of the contract all of which can lead to financial recompense.

Single Farm Payment Recipients

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the risk analysis processes used to identify Single Farm Payment recipients who are chosen for inspection.

(AQW 30864/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: EU rules require on-the-spot eligibility checks to be carried out on 5% of claimants. Of this 5%, the Commission require that between 1% and 1.25% should be selected randomly and the remainder should be selected on the basis of a risk analysis.

For the 2013 SFP scheme year, 1.25% (approximately 475 businesses) were selected randomly by automatically selecting 1 in every 80 applications received. The remaining 3.75% (approximately 1,425 farm businesses) were selected using a risk-based methodology.

In addition, in 2013, inspections on 1,139 farm businesses were undertaken by remote sensing. All remote sensing inspections are undertaken within randomly selected zones. The remaining classic inspections are undertaken outside the zones.

Most of the risk factors applied by the Department are based on those suggested by the Commission. A risk weighting is attributed to each of the risk criteria and claims that accrue the highest total score are subject to an inspection. The same risk criteria and risk weightings are applied to all claims. Once a claim has been selected for inspection, it cannot be removed.

Single Farm Payments: Remote Sensing Inspection

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 30525/11-15, for a breakdown of the number of farm businesses in the Mid Ulster constituency that did not received their Single Farm Payment as a result of the Remote Sensor Inspections.

(AQW 30924/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has delivered a record payment performance for the 2013 year with 96% of Single Farm Payment claims paid by February 2014.

3947 farm businesses in the Mid Ulster constituency have received their Single Farm Payment. 123 farm businesses in the Mid Ulster constituency are still to be paid following a Control with Remote Sensing Inspection.

Control with Remote Sensing has contributed to the 2013 payment performance and has speeded up payments to farmers overall.

Funds Provided under the European Programme FP7

Mr Attwood asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the funds provided under the European Programme FP7 to (i) her Department; (ii) arm's-length bodies; and (iii) any third party in (a) 2010/11; (b) 2011/12; and (c) 2012/13 financial years.

(AQW 30964/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below sets out funding provided under the European Programme FP7 to the Department, its arm's length bodies (ALB) and any relevant third party.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
DARD	£0	£0	£0
ALB	£31,215	£99,973	£87,732
Relevant 3rd party	£0	£0	£0

Single Farm Payment: Land Prone to Flooding

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether land that is prone to flooding will continue to be eligible for Single Farm Payment.

(AQW 30983/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The EU rules only allow payment on land used for an eligible agricultural activity for the entire calendar year (1 January – 31 December).

It is generally expected that eligible land will, within the last 2 years, have been grazed or used to grow and harvest an agricultural crop or have been maintained through normal agricultural operations, such as moving or topping of grass.

If land is prone to short term flooding, and the activities outlined above take place, it is likely that it will be eligible for SFP purposes.

Single Boat Payment

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has had discussions with European colleagues regarding the possibility of developing a Single Boat Payment, similar to the Single Farm Payment.

(AQW 31033/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) came into operation on 1 January 2014. Europe will provide financial assistance to the sea fishing sector to help it to achieve the objectives of the new CFP, and the rules governing this assistance will be set out in the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) which is expected to be formally adopted by mid 2014. I am not aware of any discussion amongst Member States relating to a type of assistance similar to a single farm payment for fishing vessels at this time.

Farm Safety Measures

Mrs Dobson asked inister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 30202/11-15, to provide a full breakdown of all funding provided by her Department for farm safety measures.

(AQW 31034/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In response to the worsening situation in relation to fatalities on farms, the Farm Safety partnership was established in May 2012. The Partners include the Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI), DARD, Ulster Farmers Union (UFU), NFU Mutual, Young farmers Clubs of Ulster and NIAPA.

Through its participation in the Farm Safety Partnership my Department, in 2013/14, provided £139k funding to HSENI towards the cost of producing the highly successful Farm Safety Multi Media Campaign.

During the Period 2011 to 2013 my Department has awarded £3.352m of financial support under the second and third tranches of the Farm Modernisation Programme to farm businesses for the purchase of items that promote safer working practices on farms.

A breakdown by year is as follows:

1 Farm Modernisation Programme – All items

Farm Modernisation Programme Tranche	Financial Year	Financial Support Awarded in Letters of Offer £m
2	2010/11	6.894
2	2011/12	0.975

Farm Modernisation Programme Tranche	Financial Year	Financial Support Awarded in Letters of Offer £m
3	2012/13	7.016
3	2013/14	0.010
3 (Extension)	2013/14	2.880
	Total	17.775

2 Farm Modernisation Programme – Items promoting safer working practices on farms

Farm Modernisation Programme Tranche	Financial Support Awarded for Items Promoting Safer Farm Working Practices £m
2	1.519
3	1.329
3 (Extension)	0.504
Total	3.352

My Department has also made funding available through the Rural Development Programme for the Farm Safe Awareness training. A breakdown of the funding by year is as follows:

	12/13	13/14	Total
Administration	£21,584.37	£77,726.11	£99,310.48
Programme Costs	£13,583.93	£47,718.59	£61,302.52
Total	£35,168.30	£125,444.70	£160,613.00

Projects Supported in North Antrim and Northern Ireland

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 30133/11-15 and in relation to the two project officers assigned, to detail (i) the officers role; (ii) the officers funding; (iii) how churches and faith-based groups can apply for assistance; and (iv) the projects supported in (a) North Antrim; and (b) Northern Ireland.

(AQW 31066/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The project officers' role is to encourage community development work in the life of churches and faith based organisations across the rural north.
- (ii) The project officer posts are funded through the Churches' Community Work Alliance (CCWA) and represent an additional investment of £173k in rural areas over the next two years.
- (iii) Churches and Faith Based groups can apply for assistance by contacting the Churches' Community Work Alliance.
- (iv) Since their appointment in November 2013 the project officers have supported a number of groups including:
 - (a) Ballycastle Church Action – Support to access suicide awareness training for church volunteers;

St Jude's, Muckamore – Working with a group of church leaders examining the potential future use of the old rectory on a neighbouring disadvantaged estate; and

Duneane Parish, Toome – Working with the Parish Council around the needs of isolated older people.

- (b) Cleenish Parish, Bellnaleck – Facilitated discussion and action planning with church leaders around local poverty issues, including debt.

Derrylin – Assistance with the development of a church led Social Farming Project.

Omagh and Fermanagh Church Fora – workshops around the potential pro-active role of the church in light of local government reform.

Final Judgment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 30333/11-15, when she expects a full and final judgement.

(AQW 31145/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Lord Chief Justice's conclusion on the case, setting out his reasoning and the outcome, has been published on the NI Court and Tribunal Service website. I understand it is possible that a more comprehensive version of the judgement may be given in due course.

River Maintenance Work

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has considered completing additional river maintenance work, specifically river dredging to help avoid flooding.

(AQW 31153/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rivers Agency has an extensive inspection programme for all watercourses designated under the terms of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973, to determine if they are free flowing and performing their drainage function. Maintenance works often entail silt removal or dredging and, in certain circumstances, Rivers Agency may consider re-profiling the river bed as a means of increasing the flow capacity to reduce flood risk.

Single Farm Payment Applicants

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she is aware of the confusion amongst Single Farm Payment applicants relating to making applications from 1 April 2014; and to detail the written communication she will send to claimants to clarify any changes to enable them to complete their claims and avoid any delay in payments.

(AQW 31255/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: 2014 is the final year of the Single Farm Payment (SFP) scheme. As in previous years, farmers will receive a Single Application pack which includes a booklet: "Guide on how to complete your 2014 Single Application Form (SAF1) and Field Data Sheet (FDS)".

This booklet contains important advice to farmers to help them complete their 2014 SAF accurately. This booklet, along with other relevant information, is also available on the DARD website at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/grants-and-funding.htm>

Following the recent press statement in which I provided an update on the definition of active farmer that will apply under CAP reform from 2015, there has been considerable interest from claimants as to whether it is to their advantage to trade entitlements in 2014. I am in the process of writing to all farm businesses that hold SFP entitlements in 2014 to tell them how they can access up-to-date information on this issue, but the Department cannot ultimately advise them on business decisions as to whether to trade entitlements or otherwise.

The letter will also confirm that I have extended the deadline for trading SFP entitlements in 2014 until 2 May. This will give farmers more time to consider their options taking account of the active farmer issue and decide whether or not they wish to trade their entitlements for the 2014 scheme year.

Local Fishing Fleet: Assistance

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance her Department is providing to the local fishing fleet following the recent months of adverse weather.
(AQW 31322/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I announced on 25th February that I would bring forward proposals to the Executive for some immediate help for the fishing industry. I also plan to appoint a Fishing Industry Taskforce to undertake a fundamental examination of the challenges and opportunities facing the industry and to identify options for reform to help to ensure the future sustainability of the local fishing sector. This Taskforce will help my Department to identify the key priorities under the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and advise how this fund can best help to assist the industry meet its obligations under the reformed Common Fisheries Policy.

Fermanagh: Risk of Further Flooding

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department will take to reduce the risk of further flooding in Fermanagh, given the current high levels in Lough Erne and the forecast for further rainfall.
(AQW 31323/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: You will be pleased to know the Lough levels have started to fall, although they remain high and will rise again if more rain falls within the catchment. The levels in Lough Erne are monitored daily and water is currently being discharged at a rate in excess of 300 cubic metres per second by ESB, from their hydroelectric power station at Cliff, to draw down the water as quickly as possible. Rivers Agency has been in contact with the Western Emergency Planning Co-ordinator, PSNI and other government agencies and a planning meeting was held on Monday 24 February. In addition Rivers Agency has 3 pumps on site at Derrychara Link to enable water to be removed from the road to minimise the impact on businesses and the road network. This pumping can take place, as following the severe flooding of November 2009, localised flood walls and a sump were constructed. I can assure you that all that can be done is being done, but the inflows into Lough Erne during periods of wet weather are greater than the outflows, meaning that rising water levels are unavoidable.

Assistance for Fishermen

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance her Department is providing to fishermen who have experienced severe financial difficulties due to the recent weather conditions.
(AQW 31327/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I announced on 25th February that I would bring forward proposals to the Executive for some immediate help for the fishing industry. I also plan to appoint a Fishing Industry Taskforce to undertake a fundamental examination of the challenges and opportunities facing the industry and to identify options for reform to help to ensure the future sustainability of the local fishing sector. This Taskforce will help my Department to identify the key priorities under the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and advise how this fund can best help to assist the industry meet its obligations under the reformed Common Fisheries Policy.

International Trade

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she is working with the Irish Government to promote international trade.
(AQO 5637/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am committed to growing exports of our high quality produce and am using every avenue available to me to promote international trade.

I have discussed international trade issues at the North South Ministerial Council where I outlined ongoing trade negotiations and sought advice on how best to progress negotiations with China given that the south have accessed this market.

My officials have arrangements in place to share information to support international trade in dairy products. They also drew on their southern counterparts' experiences when agreeing premises approval for meat exports to Russia.

Most recently I have secured agreement for a north south international trade working group, the scope of which is being finalised. There is much we can learn from the south on their experiences of negotiating terms for international trade and much they can learn from us. This offers a great opportunity to draw on the successes we have both achieved.

As an excepted matter Defra take the lead on international trade negotiations and I have been liaising with the Defra Secretary of State, Owen Patterson and Defra Ministers to ensure every effort is made to open markets of interest to exporters in the north.

This has included raising issues in relation to exports of meat and other animal products to Russia, Australia and China. I have also offered the support of my officials who have travelled with their Defra counterparts on three separate trade missions to China. Following the most recent mission in January this year the Chinese authorities have confirmed their intention to undertake an inspection visit of the pork plants and associated cold stores with a view to approving them for export. We are working closely with industry to ensure we put our best foot forward as this is a lucrative market opportunity.

Departmental Office: Strabane

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made in establishing a departmental office in Strabane.

(AQO 5630/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Work on a new purpose built Government building on the site of the current Social Security Office at Urney Road, Strabane is due to begin in Autumn 2014, subject to planning permission and the Central Procurement Division's tender process. This will be the venue for the Strabane DARD Direct Office and also a modern Jobs and Benefits office. I expect the full range of DARD services to farmers in the surrounding area to be available from this office by Spring 2016. When delivered, the Strabane DARD Direct office will complete the full roll-out of 12 DARD Direct Offices across the north.

Feedback from farmers about DARD Direct has always been very positive and I believe co-locating with DSD and DEL is a very cost effective way for DARD to ensure our customers in the North West enjoy the same benefits as others.

Departmental Headquarters: Ballykelly

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what preparatory work will be carried out by her Department, in the forthcoming financial year, in advance of her departmental headquarters moving to Ballykelly.

(AQO 5633/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Internal assurance on the business case for the relocation of my departmental headquarters to Ballykelly is now complete. Preparatory work planned for the next financial year includes the appointment of a design consultant to design the new building and the steps necessary to secure planning permission. It is also intended to carry out some activities at the Shackleton site such as a Land Quality Survey, an Ecology Study and Archaeology Study and a traffic impact survey. Work is also continuing on the development of a HR Strategy and Plan.

Agrifood Load Scheme

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what impact the delay in the Agri-Food Loan scheme will have on the Going for Growth strategy.

(AQO 5635/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Agri-Food Loan Scheme was launched by the DETI and DFP Ministers on 6 October 2013. The scheme is designed to provide access to banking finance for producers engaged in integrated supply chains to increase supply of primary produce for processors. It is disappointing that the scheme was unable to open in 2013 and I hope that it will open shortly.

The scheme is one of the early initiatives taken forward by departments to deliver on the aims and objectives of Going for Growth. It addresses one of the key issues raised by the Agri-Food Strategy Board, namely access to finance. The Board made a number of wide ranging recommendations to develop sustainable growth in the agri-food sector. The DETI Minister and I have brought forward proposals to the Executive for a response to the report as a whole and I hope we will have the opportunity to discuss these in the near future.

Flooding: Availability of Extra Monies

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what extra monies will be made available to deal with recent flooding.

(AQO 5636/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Whilst there has, thankfully, been no widespread flooding here, recent weather events have reinforced the ongoing need by DARD to invest in flood alleviation and drainage infrastructure works to protect people from flooding from rivers and the sea. Given these extreme weather patterns, this will continue to be an ongoing priority for future years. I was very pleased with the additional £2m secured from the Executive for flood alleviation works in 2014/15, as announced by the Finance Minister in October 2013, as part of the outcome of the 2014/15 Capital Budget exercise.

In addition to an extensive programme to maintain and upgrade existing drainage infrastructure, protecting some 15,500 properties, Rivers Agency is progressing a number of flood alleviation projects around the north of Ireland, including a major project in East Belfast.

The Agency is making significant progress with the £11 million East Belfast flood alleviation scheme, which, once complete, will provide enhanced protection to 1,700 properties, including many in the Sydenham area.

Construction of a flood alleviation scheme at Ballygawley has recently been completed and construction of a scheme at Beragh is currently out to tender. This should be complete during Spring 2015.

Fuel Poverty

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she plans to ensure that her Department's contribution to reducing fuel poverty in rural areas is maintained in light of the proposed reform to the Warmer Homes Scheme.

(AQO 5639/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has collaborated effectively with the Department of Social Development over the last six years in providing supplementary funding, from successive Tackling Rural Poverty and Isolation programmes, towards the Warm Homes Scheme in particular. This collaborative working has ensured that many vulnerable rural households received much needed home energy efficiency measures such as insulation and central heating systems.

I remain committed to ensuring there is action to address the challenges facing people living in rural areas and to improving their quality of life and will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that action is taken to target fuel poverty in rural areas. My officials continue to meet regularly with DSD in monitoring the ongoing intervention and look at what role DARD can play going forward.

Glenariff Forest

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the progress made on re-opening the trails in Glenariff Forest.

(AQO 5640/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As a result of the heavy snow storms in Spring 2013, severe damage was caused to recreation paths at Glenariff Forest Park. Subsequent tree falls and land slippage led to the closure of some paths on health and safety grounds. A major programme of work was required to clear storm damaged trees, particularly within the area where the Waterfall Walk is situated. This was a highly complex operation due to the severity of the damage and the access difficulties caused by the challenging river gorge terrain.

On the basis of engineering advice, a full structural and geotechnical survey was commissioned to determine the repairs and strengthening works required to facilitate the safe re-opening of the Waterfall Walk. Due to access restrictions and health and safety considerations the survey had to be carried out using specialist rope access engineers.

The recommended improvement works identified by the survey were quality assured by Central Procurement Directorate engineers and the necessary repair works commissioned.

I am pleased to be able to inform you that repair works to the Waterfall Walk commenced on Monday 13 January 2014 with an expected timescale for works of 6-8 weeks. Central Procurement Directorate engineers have confirmed that works to re-open the walk are currently on programme despite the excessive rainfall hindering works within the river.

I am acutely aware of the importance of Glenariff Forest Park as a tourist attraction and I am keen to see that access to the Waterfall Walk is re-opened as quickly as possible while ensuring public safety.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Major Capital Projects: Foyle Constituency

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 28878/11-15, to detail the applications for capital projects to her Department, including its Arm's-Length Bodies, in the Foyle constituency in (i) 2012; and (ii) 2013.

(AQW 30744/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Details of applications for capital projects for the financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14(to date) are provided in Table 1 attached. The answer only incorporates those instances where a third party has applied for a capital grant. Instances where the Department or its ALBs have initiated capital spend (e.g. in the case of refurbishment of libraries) are not included.

Table 1 – Capital Applications in the Foyle Constituency in 2012/13 and 2013/14

Capital Project Name	Description of Capital Project	Anticipated Cost £
Lumiere Stitch in Time	To purchase the Stitch in Time lighting installation from Artichoke	50,000
Portable Marquee	Purchase of a portable marquee by the Brandywell Bogside Initiative, for use by other communities across the city and region.	50,000
Armoured Pram	Acquisition of Eamonn O Doherty's unique artwork, Armoured Pram for Derry, as a key legacy of 2013.	30,000

Capital Project Name	Description of Capital Project	Anticipated Cost £
Oak Leaf Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme -capital works	56,610
Rochester's Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme -capital works	45,288
Eglinton Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme -capital works	7,752
St Joseph's Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme -capital works	200,000
Springtown Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme -capital works	200,000
County Derry Amateur Boxing Board	Boxing Investment Programme - equipment	10,067
Ring Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme - equipment	13,110
St Mary's Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme - equipment	9,408
Eglinton Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme - equipment	11,064
Oak Leaf Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme - equipment	20,269
Rochester's Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme - equipment	9,397
Springtown Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme - equipment	17,304
St Joseph's Amateur Boxing Club	Boxing Investment Programme - equipment	21,241
Abridged	To commission and publish contemporary/ experimental poetry	10,029
Bounce Education	Purchase equipment for special needs access.	16,380
Creative Village Arts Ltd	Installation of Security Cameras, Door and Window Shutters and equipping Community Artists Resource and Education Hub.	11,113
An Gaelaras Ltd	Culturlann Ui Chanain - high-quality audio/visual archive	22,421
Greater Shantallow Community Arts	Purchase Equipment	16,818
North West Play Resource Centre (The Playhouse)	Theatre Equipment	22,309
Verbal Arts Centre	Equipment to establish "the 2D Learning and Training classroom".	15,150

Capital Project Name	Description of Capital Project	Anticipated Cost £
Centre for Contemporary Art Derry - Londonderry	Series of six temporary public artworks	12,000
The Void Art Centre	Creation of a series of three gardens or a 'garden-trail'	99,379
Waterside Theatre Company Ltd	Update sound and lighting equipment	76,000
Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company	Building Fit Out	78,000
William King Memorial Flute Band	Musical Instruments for Bands 2012/13	4,988
Craigbane Accordion Band	Musical Instruments	3,374
Holywell Trust	Bishop Street Public Art	73,500
In Your Space (NI) Ltd	Equipment to enhance and develop circus skills provision in the North West	11,940
Killaloo Accordion Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,920
The Pride of the Orange and Blue Auld Boys Flute Band	Purchase of musical instruments	5,000

Erne Salmon Management Programme

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what elements of the 2001 Erne Salmon Management Programme (i) have been; and (ii) are yet to be implemented.

(AQW 30840/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) The Erne Salmon Management Programme is an important initiative in conserving salmon stocks in the Erne system and I am pleased to report that there has been significant progress in implementing the Programme's main recommendations as follows:
- There is an on-going upstream stocking programme for juvenile salmon produced at the ESB hatchery at Ballyshannon and co-ordinated by ESB, IFI and my Department. There is also a brood stock rearing programme at the Ballyshannon hatchery.
 - Work has been undertaken to examine fish passage at the dams at Cathleen's Falls and Cliff and the removal of halogen lighting and downstream gates have resulted in increased movement of salmon through the fish pass. Protocols have been developed to ensure fish passage at the dams and minimise mortalities.
 - Micro tagging of smolts continues to be carried out to assess marine survival and to identify groups of brood stock fish. GIS habitat data has been used to assess the suitability of habitat to support salmon stocks and to map areas of wild salmon spawning. The areas where habitat is suitable for salmon is used to stock hatchery salmon out to utilise as much available habitat as possible.
 - Water quality is an issue for the NIEA and EPD in the North and South respectively, however with the Water Framework Directive the focus is on improving water quality where it is poor.

My Department works closely with these agencies to identify and address any factors that would affect salmon stocks in the Erne system.

- There is no commercial salmon fishing allowed in the Ballyshannon region and I am introducing legislation imposing mandatory catch and release for salmon angling across the DCAL jurisdiction. This will further protect salmon stocks in the Erne system.
- (ii) Many of the recommendations of the Erne Salmon Management Programme are on-going and are underway and these often lead to additional pieces of work. A review of salmon on the Erne is due to be undertaken involving the ESB, IFI and my Department which is likely to commission additional research using acoustic tags to look at fish movements at the dams and in the upstream catchment. This will be part of the work to inform the development of a fisheries management plan for the Erne.

Foras na Gaeilge: Lead Organisations

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she can confirm that those appointed as lead organisations by Foras na Gaeilge, as announced on 17 January 2014, are the same organisations approached by Foras na Gaeilge over one year prior to commencement of the application process.

(AQW 30936/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In September 2012 Foras na Gaeilge were exploring options for a new funding model that would direct a higher proportion of the allocated funding to service delivery.

In order to assess the feasibility of funding organisations to deliver services on an all-island basis under specific themes, Foras na Gaeilge held a series of meetings with existing core funded organisations. Some organisations declined the opportunity to meet with Foras na Gaeilge at that time. Seven organisations did meet, separately, with Foras na Gaeilge on the understanding that the meetings were being held on a without prejudice basis.

Six of the seven organisations who did meet with Foras na Gaeilge at that time have been selected as the new lead organisations.

IÚR-FM: Foras na Gaeilge

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail how much money IÚR-fm received from Foras na Gaeilge, including a breakdown of how it was spent.

(AQW 30963/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In September 2012 Foras na Gaeilge were exploring options for a new funding model that would direct a higher proportion of the allocated funding to service delivery.

In order to assess the feasibility of funding organisations to deliver services on an all-island basis under specific themes, Foras na Gaeilge held a series of meetings with existing core funded organisations. Some organisations declined the opportunity to meet with Foras na Gaeilge at that time. Seven organisations did meet, separately, with Foras na Gaeilge on the understanding that the meetings were being held on a without prejudice basis.

Six of the seven organisations who did meet with Foras na Gaeilge at that time have been selected as the new lead organisations.

International Competitions: Ravenhill Stadium, Casement Park and Windsor Park

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, once the capital works at Ravenhill Stadium, Casement Park and Windsor Park have been completed, what international competitions will she seek to stage at these venues.

(AQW 31075/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Good progress is being made on the redevelopment of all three stadiums. Once completed it will be a matter for the Governing Bodies of each of the three sports to consider what international competitions they host.

I have indicated my support for the IRFU's proposal to bid to host the Rugby World Cup in Ireland in 2023. I would be hopeful that one or more of these stadiums might be considered for that competition in due course.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure on how many occasions (i) she; and (ii) departmental officials cancelled briefings, which were part of the forward work programme, to her Department's Statutory Assembly Committee, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31132/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: On no occasion have I, or departmental officials, cancelled a briefing to the CAL Committee.

European City of Culture: Assistance for Cities

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the procedures in place to assist cities, such as Londonderry, to be better placed in any future bid to become European City of Culture.

(AQW 31225/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department supports the development of culture, arts and leisure with the aim of promoting equality, and tackling poverty and social exclusion. In doing this, DCAL and its arms length bodies contribute to culturally and economically vibrant cities in the North of Ireland, helping to place them in a strong position to apply for the EU City of Culture title.

Cities themselves must apply for the designation. I understand that Derry City Council and stakeholders in the City have indicated a desire to apply for the title. However, their current priority is to embed a legacy from the City of Culture 2013 and seek the Irish City of Culture designation in 2016. I have publicly voiced my support for Derry to seek the Irish City of Culture designation.

My Department does not have in place specific procedures to assist cities in seeking the EU City of Culture title, however, my officials are closely engaged with stakeholders in Derry and my Department provide on-going advice and support for organisations seeking European funding in line with Barosso Taskforce commitments.

Funding Provided to Curling

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding provided to curling, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31276/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, is responsible for the development of sport in the north of Ireland, including the distribution of funding.

In the last five financial years up to March 2013, Sport NI has received no applications for funding from the sport of curling.

Sick Absence in Department

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, following the Northern Ireland Audit Office Report: Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector April 2013, what steps she has taken to improve sickness absence levels within her Department.

(AQO 5648/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department applies the NICS Managing Sickness Absence policy making full use of phased returns to work; reasonable adjustments to duties; the services of the NICS Employee Assistance Provider - CareCall; and the NICS Welfare Support Services and Occupational Health Service to encourage and support earlier returns to work. Line managers and Departmental HR also actively encourage and support staff to return to work.

A new on-line, NICS mandatory training package on managing sickness absence is being rolled out to all staff within the Department this month. It will ensure our staff and line managers are fully aware of the procedures to be followed in managing sickness absence.

In addition, DCAL has a proactive Workplace Health Improvement Programme (WHIP) now run under the NICS WELL banner. The programme serves to raise awareness and understanding of the key health issues occurring amongst staff to encourage preventive action.

Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between staff engagement and reduced sickness absence. My Department has an established Staff Engagement Forum made up of representatives from across the Department. This Forum provides the opportunity to engage with staff and discuss issues arising.

Athletics Track: St Colman's College

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the recent Northern Ireland Audit Office investigation into the contracts for the installation of a new athletics track and associated sports facilities at St Colman's College, Newry.

(AQO 5649/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I welcome the recommendations contained in the Audit Report, which clearly lays out failings in the project management of the St Colman's sports facility. The Department is liaising closely with Sport NI to ensure that it implements the recommendations in future management of projects and has received assurance from the Sport NI Accounting Officer that the lessons learned are being applied

It is of paramount importance that we apply best practice project management in all of the projects we are responsible for, to ensure that value for money is achieved. Therefore, we will also apply the lessons learnt around the management of projects across the Department and its Arms Length Bodies.

The important issues around the management of the project aside, the facilities provided at St Colman's are of high quality and will provide opportunities to service the needs of the local community for many years to come.

Windsor Park

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on discussions between her Department, Belfast City Council and the Irish Football Association regarding the inclusion of community and leisure facilities within the new Windsor Park development.

(AQO 5650/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department wishes to maximise the community & socio-economic returns associated with the Windsor Park development.

To this end my Department has entered into discussions with Belfast City Council and the IFA around the potential for inclusion of community and leisure facilities adjacent to the West Stand of the new Windsor Park development.

These discussions are ongoing and the Department has no binding commitment at this stage with either Belfast City Council or IFA.

DCAL will only consider a joined up development with Belfast City Council and the IFA where such a development has no adverse impact on the programme timeline for the Windsor Park stadium development.

In any event, the Department will expect to see the IFA deliver community and leisure facilities at the stadium site regardless of whether this is carried out in partnership with Belfast City Council or not.

As part of the planning application process for a Belfast City Council community and leisure facility, Belfast City Council would be required to carry out extensive community consultation similar to that carried out around the planning process for the Windsor park project.

With regards to timeframes, my department wishes the IFA and Belfast City Council to reach agreement by the end of May 2014, and I would expect the results of the community consultation to be reflected in any future agreement reached between all parties.

Rugby World Cup 2023

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the agreement between her Department, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Irish Government in relation to support for the 2023 Rugby World Cup bid.

(AQO 5651/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have indicated my full support for the proposed bid by the IRFU to host the Rugby World Cup competition in Ireland in 2023.

I have met with the IRFU, the DETI Minister and my Ministerial colleagues in the South, Ministers Varadkar and Ring to discuss the way forward.

We have agreed to set up a working group and on Wednesday 19th February, I along with Minister Foster met Hugo MacNeill in relation to the proposed bid.

That group will examine key issues necessary to develop a bid and report to Ministers for consideration of a proposal to the Executive and Government of Ireland.

Irish Language

Mr B McCreagh asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action she is taking to depoliticise the Irish language.

(AQO 5652/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since becoming Minister I have taken steps to ensure that there is no discrimination, political or otherwise, against either Ulster-Scots or Irish in regard to policy or funding. Irish and Ulster-Scots cultural and language development are treated even handedly and with equal importance and recognition for their traditions and value to all sections of the community.

The Irish Language is part of our shared heritage and history. For too many years it has been the subject of political disagreement. I believe that the rich cultural and linguistic heritage is something that all of us can share, embrace and enjoy. That is why I launched the Líofo campaign, in September 2011, as I wanted to broaden the appeal of the Irish language to all communities especially those who have not normally seen the Irish language as part of their culture.

Yesterday, my Department launched a TV advertising campaign to promote the Irish Language. A key message of this advertising campaign is that the Irish language belongs to everyone “Líofo Le Cheile” and is around us every day, in words and place names. In addition, a new Líofo website has also launched, and this will increase access to the Irish Language and learning materials.

Belfast Central Library

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the redevelopment of Belfast Central Library into the regional library.

(AQO 5653/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: During an Assembly debate in September 2013 I recognised the deficiencies of the existing Belfast Central Library facility and said that I was broadly supportive of its redevelopment.

I also outlined my Vision for a redeveloped library as being one that helps build good community relationships in the area and contributes to my priorities of tackling poverty and inequality.

I am mindful as well of the Department of Social Development's plans to regenerate the 'Library Square' area of Belfast, where the Central Library is currently located, and the potential for this to be a signature building alongside a new University of Ulster campus.

Clearly, any proposed redevelopment of the Library must demonstrate value for money and show merit against the competing requests for funding put to the Executive. Libraries NI is currently preparing an Outline Business Case in order to provide an objective assessment of the costs and benefits of any potential investment. This Case must evaluate the full range of options for redevelopment including upgrading the existing building or transferring to an alternative location in the city.

Work on the Case is still in progress and I understand that Libraries NI hopes to be in a position to submit it to DCAL for consideration in early spring 2014.

World Police and Fire Games

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the legacy plan for the World Police and Fire Games.

(AQO 5654/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The World Police and Fire Games were very successful as a showcase for the North of Ireland and to demonstrate that we are capable of hosting large-scale sporting events successfully. This is a significant legacy for the Games, in itself.

The Games were always going to be more than a sporting event and they will have a lasting legacy as a result of the extensive Services engagement in the community, particularly with schools and young people. There are a number of legacy projects which have already been delivered such as the donation of defibrillators to 45 local schools and the three official charity partners who benefitted from the exposure they received during the Games.

I have been and am committed to taking forward initiatives to create a lasting legacy and positively impact on local communities.

DCAL has already engaged with a number of Sports Governing Bodies to look at opportunities to increase capacity, skills and experience and this work will continue to ensure there is a lasting legacy from the Games.

One of the major legacies has been in volunteering. We engaged 3,600 volunteers, many of whom are keen to volunteer again and will be helping out at future sporting events such as the Giro.

My Department is funding a project to support young people interested in developing a career in sport.

I am also funding a number of projects directly aimed at developing new sports such as Dodgeball and Softball and encouraging greater participation in existing sports.

These are a direct result of the World Police and Fire Games and a legacy from them.

Through these initiatives we are using sport as a way to inspire young people, particularly those who are disengaged, to provide new skills, and improve their health both mentally and physically.

Foras na Gaeilge: Rationalisation

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the implications of the rationalisation plan by Foras na Gaeilge, which results in all groups that receive funding being concentrated in Dublin.

(AQO 5655/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The approval of the new funding arrangements at the North South Ministerial Council on 10 July 2013 represented a significant shift in the strategic co-ordination and delivery of services

to language communities and is consistent with Government language policy and strategy north and south.

While the previous core funding arrangements served the needs of communities well, they were unsustainable in terms of the increasing amount of money spent on administration as opposed to service delivery.

In accordance with the NSMC approval Foras na Gaeilge have now selected six lead organisations to deliver the six thematic schemes. Four of the new lead organisations are based in Dublin and two are based in Co. Meath. All six organisations have demonstrated, as part of the selection process, their ability to provide a service on an all-island basis.

The new funding arrangements will mean a higher proportion of the money allocated will be spent on service delivery. This will have a positive impact for the Irish language and the Irish language community.

Sport: Gender Imbalances

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what progress has been made in addressing the gender imbalances detailed in Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009 - 2019.

(AQO 5656/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The strategy for sport, Sport Matters, states that in 2005/06 the Continuous Household Survey (conducted by NI Statistics and Research Agency) found that 25% of females participated in sport at that time. To help improve female participation rates in sport, a specific target is included in Sports Matters to deliver a 6% increase in women's participation rates by 2019.

A series of actions to address this target have been outlined in the Sport Matters action plan and associated progress reports, which are publicly available on the DCAL website. The most recent progress report shows that the 2012/13 Continuous Household Survey records that female participation in sport has increased to 41%, an increase of 16%. As a result the relevant target in Sport Matters is deemed to be on track for achievement. However, fewer women than men participate in sport, therefore, while this progress is welcome, it is important that this good work continues. As such, the Sport Matters action plan and progress reports will continue to be used as a vehicle to promote and encourage female participation in sport.

Department of Education

Teacher Training to Deliver Computer Programming

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education whether extra money has been directed towards training teachers to deliver computer programming in (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary schools.

(AQW 30798/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): In 2012/13 and 2013/14, the Department provided funding of £20,000 per annum, through the STEM initiative to deliver a computer science continuing professional development programme for up to 20 post-primary teachers. The programme which is run by the SELB on behalf of the other five ELBs, aims to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and knowledge in programming and to develop an understanding of the career opportunities within the IT sector here.

In addition I can advise that in support of the new A-level in Software and Systems Development qualification introduced in September 2013, CCEA has held information, training and support events during the period March to December 2013. The aim of these events was to ensure that teachers are, and continue to be, trained and prepared to deliver the qualification.

In relation to initial teacher education, although my Department has not provided funding, I can advise that students completing a teaching qualification in our local higher education institutions are provided with training in coding through various mediums including HTML, Scratch and Raspberry Pi.

Planning Application S/2009/0839/F

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the time spent by the South Eastern Education and Library Board in working on Planning Application (S/2009/0839/F) for a Caravan Park on Ballylesson Road, Belfast.

(AQW 30813/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As advised in my response to AQW 29793/11-15, public bodies are bound by guidance from Land and Property Services 'Central Advisory Unit: Disposal of Surplus Public Sector Property in Northern Ireland – March 2013'. This requires them to keep their assets under continual review and release surplus assets with the least possible delay.

In disposing of surplus assets, a planning application may be submitted if professional advice indicates that the market value of the site will be enhanced by securing planning approval prior to marketing.

In this particular case, the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) submitted a planning application in August 2009. Whilst the application was advertised and both neighbour and standard consultations were issued at the time, Lisburn City Council did not meet about the application until January 2014.

SEELB has advised that the actual time they have spent on the planning application has been fairly negligible when compared to the overall output of their Property and Planning Services department. The Board is still endeavouring to dispose of the land at best market value and awaits the outcome of the planning application.

Planning Application S/2009/0839/F

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education how much it has cost the public purse, in terms of employee time and consultancy fees, for the South Eastern Education and Library Board to pursue its planning application S/2009/0839/F for a caravan park at 44 Ballylesson Road, Belfast.

(AQW 30820/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: On the basis of professional advice received from Land and Property Services (LPS), South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) made an application for planning permission in an attempt to enhance the market value of the site at 44 Ballylesson Road.

The SEELB does not have records indicating how much officer time was spent working specifically on the preparation of planning application S/2009/0839/F. The Board's financial records indicate that £2,947.90 has been spent on consultancy fees relating to this application.

Proceeds from the sale of surplus education assets are reinvested in capital works needed within the existing schools' estate. In order to maximise the potential for the public purse to achieve best market value, extra expenditure may sometimes be incurred. In such cases it is expected that the overall benefits will outweigh the extra resources.

Special Education Schools: Budget Allocations

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education when special education schools will receive their budget allocations.

(AQW 30841/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Special schools do not receive budget allocations directly from the Department. Their budgets are determined and allocated by the five Education and Library Boards.

Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Enhancement Scheme

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) how much funding was allocated to each Education and Library board for the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Enhancement scheme in 2013/14; and (ii) how much has been expended to date.

(AQW 30865/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I can confirm that in 2013/14 the Education and Library Boards allocation and spend on the CRED Enhancement Scheme is as follows:

	Allocation	Spend (up to 31 Jan 2014)
BELB	£114,618	£114,618
NEELB	£55,421.30	£55,421.30
SEELB	£94,252	£66,415
SELB	£71,000	£66,163.58
WELB	£20,500	£16,815.90
Total	£355,791.30	£319,433.78

Programmes Funded by the British Council

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail how many schools have taken part in programmes funded by the British Council, in each of the last 3 years, broken down by (i) sector and (ii) Education and Library Board.

(AQW 30867/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The British Council has provided the following information:

i)

School Type	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2011	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2012	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2013
Nursery	1	3	2
Primary	130	148	114
Grammar	61	59	58
Secondary	85	83	64
Special	11	14	17
Preps	2	0	1
Total	290	307	256

Management Type	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2011	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2012	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2013
Controlled	101	127	98
Controlled Integrated	8	6	4
Grant Maintained Integrated	18	18	15

Management Type	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2011	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2012	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2013
Other Maintained	4	4	12
Roman Catholic Maintained	113	110	84
Voluntary	46	42	43
Total	290	307	256

ii)

Board	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2011	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2012	Total no. of schools British Council engaged with 2013
Belfast Education & Library Board	58	63	64
Western Education & Library Board	58	53	40
North Eastern Education & Library Board	62	75	54
South Eastern Education & Library Board	51	52	39
Southern Education & Library Board	61	64	59
Total	290	307	256

Teacher Exchange Programmes

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many teachers have participated in Teacher Exchange programmes in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 30868/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The British Council has provided the following information on the number of teachers that have participated in teacher exchange programmes in each of the last 3 years through the programmes they administer.

Financial Year	Comenius	Fulbright Teacher Exchange Programme
2010/11	c222 teachers (37 school partnerships and 119 In-Service Training (IST) placements)	2
2011/12	c150 teachers (25 school partnerships 74 IST placements)	1
2012/13	c264 teachers (44 school partnerships 100 IST placements)	1

Schools in Newry and Armagh: Minor Works

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Education to detail the instances where minor works were carried out in schools in Newry and Armagh over the last three years, including the total financial investment this represented.

(AQW 30917/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following table details minor work schemes that have been approved in the Newry and Armagh constituency during the period April 2011 to January 2014:

School Name	Scheme Description	Month Approved	Approved Cost
Ashgrove Nursery School	Extension and Alterations	Jul-12	169,664.00
Tandragee Nursery School	Inescapable Statutory Requirements	Nov-13	5,352.00
Mullavilly Primary School	DDA Works to Hygiene Room	Feb-12	5,970.00
Mullavilly Primary School	Transfer of Mobile Unit from Banbridge Academy	Apr-11	62,339.00
Mullavilly Primary School	Provision of DDA Entrance and Accommodation Upgrade for needs of Disabled Pupil	Oct-12	97,072.00
Armstrong Primary School	Mobile Classroom	Aug-12	36,041.00
Armstrong Primary School	Two Classroom Extension	Jun-13	281,543.00
Killylea Primary School	1 Single Modular Classroom	Nov-12	119,498.00
Clare Primary School	1 Classroom Extension and Staff Car Parking	Jan-13	239,801.00
Kingsmills Primary School	Modular Unit to provide PE, Dining, Staffroom and SEN Teaching Facilities	Dec-13	93,980.00
Kingsmills Primary School	Works to Servery	Nov-13	20,830.00
Cortamlet Primary School	Construction of Toilets and Storage Area with Traffic Management	Dec-12	112,501.00
Cortamlet Primary School	Bin Compound	Nov-13	3,100.00
Drumhillery Primary School	Extension to Office, Refurb of Staffroom & Pupil Toilets plus Resource Area & Car Parking	Nov-13	285,579.00
Poyntzpass Primary School	Transfer of Mobile Unit from Banbridge Academy	Apr-11	39,478.00
Windsor Hill Primary School	MUGA Pitch	Feb-12	185,581.00

School Name	Scheme Description	Month Approved	Approved Cost
Orchard County Primary School	Modular Nursery Unit	Feb-12	133,950.00
Orchard County Primary School	Traffic Management	Dec-13	20,800.00
St Malachy's Primary School, Whitecross	Provision of CCTV	Dec-13	11,536.80
St Michael's Primary School, Newry	Resurface Playground	Sep-13	4,020.00
Clonalig Primary School	Provision of SMA Storage	Nov-13	31,376.00
Clea Primary School	Replacement of Entrance Gate	Aug-11	1,200.00
Christian Brothers' Primary School	External Toilet Refurbishment	Jul-11	38,408.00
Christian Brothers' Primary School	School Meals Access Ramp	Jan-13	11,500.00
Mount St Catherine's Primary School	Relocation of Secretary's Office	Jan-14	42,064.25
Cloughoge Primary School	Staff/Visitor Car Park	Jun-13	80,400.00
Cloughoge Primary School	Fire Risk Assessment Works	Dec-13	2,371.71
St Malachy's Primary School, Armagh	Replace Floor Covering in Corridors & Stairs	Jan-14	17,730.38
St Malachy's Primary School, Armagh	Refurb of Toilets	Dec-13	111,503.64
St Patrick's Primary School, Crossmaglen	Installation of New Vision Panels	Jan-14	13,568.06
St Patrick's Primary School, Crossmaglen	Additional Accommodation	Jan-14	171,360.00
Killean Primary School	Toilet Refurb	Oct-11	102,605.41
Killean Primary School	Replacement of Double Mobile	Jun-13	270,794.40
St Patrick's Primary School, Newry	Covered Play Area	Nov-13	27,630.33
St Patrick's Primary School, Newry	Additional Car Park Spaces	Dec-11	19,200.00
St Patrick's Primary School, Newry	Door Access Control	Feb-13	24,000.00
St Patrick's Primary School, Newry	Fencing around Play Area	Sep-12	1,800.00
St Patrick's Primary School, Newry	Provision of CCTV	Dec-13	10,682.27

School Name	Scheme Description	Month Approved	Approved Cost
St Patrick's Primary School, Newry	Vision Panels	Dec-13	12,960.02
St Michael's Primary School, Armagh	Fence off Subsidence Area of Playground	Dec-11	6,834.36
St Brigid's (Drumilly) Primary School	Fencing	Jul-12	17,100.00
St Brigid's (Drumilly) Primary School	Traffic Management	May-13	29,700.00
St Mary's Primary School, Armagh	Replacement SMK	Jan-13	210,338.00
St Peter's Primary School, Bessbrook	Traffic Barrier	Jul-12	600.00
St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh	Replace Steps/Kerbs/Wall	Jul-11	51,000.00
St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh	Handrails at Entrance	Jul-11	3,345.00
St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh	Vision Panels in Four Classroom Doors	May-12	13,102.00
St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh	Disability Access	Jul-11	2,100.00
St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh	Provision of Playground	Apr-12	12,681.25
St Joseph's Primary School, Newry	Double Door Playground Access	Sep-11	13,230.00
St Joseph's Primary School, Newry	Fire Alarm and Intruder Alarm	Dec-13	133,073.82
St Clare's Convent Primary School	Replacement Boiler	Aug-11	50,213.65
St Clare's Convent Primary School	Fencing	Sep-11	6,000.00
St Clare's Convent Primary School	Installation of Two Ramps	May-12	6,682.40
St Joseph's Convent	Provision of Fencing	Nov-11	13,800.00
St Joseph's Convent Primary School	Security Improvements	Dec-13	31,695.48
St Colman's Abbey Primary School	Replacement Windows	Mar-13	11,931.59
St Mary's Primary School, Barr	Toilet Refurb	Sep-12	66,645.00
St Mary's Primary School, Newry	Traffic Calming/Parking/Fencing	Nov-13	156,000.00

School Name	Scheme Description	Month Approved	Approved Cost
St Mary's Primary School, Newry	Controlled Door Access	Mar-12	2,249.70
St Joseph's Primary School, Bessbrook	Disabled Toilet	May-11	99,399.09
St Joseph's Primary School, Bessbrook	Toilet Refurb	Apr-13	200,371.90
St Jarlath's Primary School	Fire Alarm	Apr-13	20,229.00
St Laurence O'Toole's Primary School	Toilet Refurb and Vision Panels	Jan-12	8,856.00
St Laurence O'Toole's Primary School	Toilet Refurb & Reconfiguration of Toilet Doors	Dec-13	51,630.14
St Laurence O'Toole's Primary School	Car Park and Traffic Management	Oct-13	9,600.00
St Peter's Primary School, Dungannon	Perimeter Fencing	Jun-12	37,800.00
St Peter's Primary School, Dungannon	Provision of Double Mobile	Nov-11	122,713.65
St Peter's Primary School, Dungannon	Toilet Refurb and Heating Upgrade	Jun-12	138,000.00
St Peter's Primary School, Dungannon	Replacement Mobile	May-13	154,548.00
St Peter's Primary School, Dungannon	Installation of Fire Alarm	Jan-14	47,252.81
St Peter's Primary School, Dungannon	Special Needs Adaptations	Jan-14	4,465.07
St Peter's Primary School, Dungannon	Door Access Control	Jan-14	5,580.83
St Francis of Assisi Primary School	Traffic Management	Dec-11	77,128.62
St Francis of Assisi Primary School	Health & Safety Site Improvements	Jan-14	5,400.00
St John's Primary School, Armagh	CCTV	Jun-11	8,167.50
Our Lady's and St Mochua's Primary School	Security around Oil Tank	Sep-11	4,080.00
St Josephs and St James Primary School	Replace Wooden Shed and Metal Shed	Sep-11	4,434.75
St Joseph's and St James' Primary School	Perimeter Fencing	Dec-11	20,400.00

School Name	Scheme Description	Month Approved	Approved Cost
St Josephs and St James Primary School	Extension of Fire Alarm System	Aug-12	2,100.00
St Josephs and St James Primary School	Repair Concrete Steps & Concrete Area	Jul-12	6,600.00
Drelincourt Infants School	Fire Alarm/Fire Doors	May-12	3,600.00
Drelincourt Infants School	Fire Alarm/Fire Doors	Mar-13	18,630.26
Saints & Scholars Int Primary School	Nursery Mobile	Nov-11	197,789.85
Saints & Scholars Int Primary School	Mobile Classroom Repairs	Jan-14	26,837.74
Saints & Scholars Int Primary School	Drainage	Jun-13	50,400.00
Newtownhamilton High School	Transfer of Mobile from Banbridge Academy	Apr-11	53,709.00
Newtownhamilton High School	SMA	Mar-13	574,469.00
Markethill High School	Refurb of Art & Design Suite	Dec-12	255,469
Tandragee Junior High School	Extension to Provide Art & Design	Dec-13	256,500.00
Newry High School	Provision of Grass Pitch	Nov-13	89,000.00
St Joseph's Boys' High School, Newry	Car Parking and Vehicle Access	Dec-12	42,000.00
St Joseph's Boys' High School, Newry	Refurb of Art Room	Oct-13	192,644.60
St Mary's High School	Toilet for Post 16 Male Pupils	Aug-11	73,471.70
St Mary's High School	Upgrade of Telephone System	Dec-11	6,856.00
St Mary's High School	Reduction of Gas Levels in Science Room	Oct-12	4,045.42
St Paul's High School	Fencing	Aug-12	35,443.62
St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen	Provision of Sixth Form Study	Mar-12	112,482.00
St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen	Addition Classroom	Nov-12	3,216.00
St Catherine's College	Raising Height of Banisters	Feb-12	3,420.00
St Catherine's College	Extension to Footpath	Aug-11	6,000.00
St Catherine's College	New Walkway between Existing Blocks	Jun-13	41,247.46
St Catherine's College	Provision of 3G/4G Pitch	Dec-13	900.00

School Name	Scheme Description	Month Approved	Approved Cost
Our Lady's Grammar School	DDA Works - Visual Impairment Adaptations	Oct-12	6,517.80
Our Lady's Grammar School	Ramps to Main Building	Jul-13	3,000.00
Lisanally Special School	Provision of 1 Double and 1 Single Modular Unit	Jun-12	298,273.00
Rathore School	Transfer of Mobile from Banbridge Academy	Apr-11	53,877.00
Rathore School	Internal Alterations	May-11	112,087.00
Rathore School	New 3 Classroom Modular Unit	Jun-12	384,999.00
Rathore School	Classroom Extension and Refurb of 1 Classroom, Stores, Toilets and Car Parking	Jun-13	346,426.00
Total			8,040,181.33

Schools Enhancement Programme

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Education to detail the schools in Newry and Armagh which benefitted from the Schools Enhancement Programme, including the total financial investment this represented. **(AQW 30919/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: On 18 October 2013, I announced that 51 projects would proceed to the next stage in selection process of the Schools Enhancement Programme (SEP). Economic Appraisals are currently being carried out on all 51 project proposals and an announcement of the projects that will receive funding, and the level of that funding, will be made in due course.

I can confirm that the Department is examining project proposals from four schools in the Newry and South Armagh area.

Attendance Rates of Looked After Children

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 30290/11-15, to explain the reasons for the differences between the attendance rates of looked after children and other pupils between the primary and post-primary sectors; and what action his Department is undertaking to address this issue. **(AQW 31002/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: There is no single or definitive reason as to why there are differences between the attendance rates of looked after children and other pupils between the primary and post-primary sectors. In 2011 my Department commissioned a Study into how the education system can improve the attendance of looked after children at post-primary school. The study, conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, identified a number of underlying causes and influences that impact on the non-attendance of looked after children, including:

- Peer pressure;
- Behavioural issues;
- Underlying social and personal issues;
- Personal factors;
- Contact with birth parents;
- Socio-economic circumstances;
- Age when a child enters the care system;
- Placement type and stability; and
- Attitudes to education in the home/care environment.

Schools should refer pupils to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) for support, if appropriate, if their attendance falls below 85% or if there is a cause for concern.

Intervention by the EWS is tailored to the individual child following the assessment of their circumstances including their needs, the parents/carer's capacity to meet those needs and the family and environmental factors. Provision of advice and support, consideration of warnings or any onward referral is completely determined by the outcome of this assessment.

A number of initiatives are also aimed at improving the attendance of looked after children. For example:

- The North Eastern Education and Library Board, through the Residential Study Support Project have been facilitating homework and study support in residential units in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area during the evenings. A particular focus to this work over recent years is to undertake capacity building for residential social workers in relation to their corporate parenting responsibilities in respect of looked after children education.
- The Attachment Project (TAP) is a pilot project within the Belfast and South Eastern Education and Library Boards which focuses on building capacity and awareness in schools on understanding and managing attachment issues for looked after children. This project will be evaluated through Queen's University of Belfast in the coming months and it is hoped to extend its reach in the coming academic year. This project also has the benefit of enabling teachers to utilise the skills learned through TAP to apply them to children in the general school community.

Future Provision of Post-Primary Education

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how he will adjust his policy approach to take into account the decision of the Southern Education and Library Board to abandon the consideration of Option A on the future provision of post-primary education.

(AQW 31055/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB), at its meeting on 12 February 2014, decided to stop the consultation on the Board's preferred option in respect of 'Updating the Dickson Plan: the SELB proposals', and to move forward with a more wide ranging consultation process.

I am concerned that despite recognition for several years that all pupils in the controlled sector in the Craigavon area do not have access to equitable educational provision and despite the SELB pronouncement in June 2013 that retaining the status quo is not an option, the Board has failed to come forward with a strategic plan to address the fundamental inequality at the heart of this matter. I will be seeking robust assurances aligned to a timeframe as to how they intend to eradicate education inequality for the controlled sector in the Dickson plan area.

The issues present in Craigavon, and in fact in many areas, highlight the need for area planning. The decision of the SELB does not give me cause to adjust the strategic approach being undertaken.

Inhalers for Pupils Diagnosed with Asthma

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to ensure that inhalers for pupils diagnosed with asthma are available in schools.

(AQW 31062/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The joint DHSSPS/DE guidance "Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs" recommends that pupils with asthma carry an inhaler with them at all times and also that the parents provide the child's school with an additional inhaler to be available as necessary. The guidance recommends that in primary school settings, a spare inhaler should be kept in the child's classroom and in a post-primary setting, it should be kept in an unlocked central room.

My officials worked in close partnership with officials from DHSSPS and other interested stakeholders, including trade unions, in developing the joint guidance document and I believe it remains effective in ensuring pupils with asthma have access to an inhale

Inhalers for Pupils Diagnosed with Asthma

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has had with (i) the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety; and (ii) teaching unions, to ensure that inhalers for pupils diagnosed with asthma are available in schools.

(AQW 31064/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The joint DHSSPS/DE guidance "Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs" recommends that pupils with asthma carry an inhaler with them at all times and also that the parents provide the child's school with an additional inhaler to be available as necessary. The guidance recommends that in primary school settings, a spare inhaler should be kept in the child's classroom and in a post-primary setting, it should be kept in an unlocked central room.

My officials worked in close partnership with officials from DHSSPS and other interested stakeholders, including trade unions, in developing the joint guidance document and I believe it remains effective in ensuring pupils with asthma have access to an inhale

Home to School Transport

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education how much has been spent on home to school transport in each of the last three years.

(AQW 31116/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The cost of the Home to School Transport scheme in each of the last three years is given in the table below.

The recurrent costs represent the day-to-day operational costs of providing the Home to School Transport scheme to transport approximately 90,000 pupils to and from school. The capital costs relate to the replacement of ageing vehicles in the Education & Library Board fleet of yellow and white buses. Also, in the 2012-13 year funding was spent on fitting additional flashing warning lights and signs to Board buses. This is part of a one-off exercise to ensure that all the Board vehicles conform to new DoE safety legislation by 1 September 2014.

Financial Year	Recurrent costs *	Capital costs	Lighting & signage
2010-11	74,462,213	1,712,000	Nil
2011-12	72,375,711	919,000	Nil
2012-13	72,681,012	1,982,000	842,998

*Source: The Education and Library Boards Actual Outturn Expenditure Home to School Transport.

Together: Building a United Community Objective

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education to detail the definition of a shared education campus and the target date for the delivery of the Together: Building a United Community Objective of ten shared education campuses.

(AQW 31237/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The definition of a Shared Education Campus and indicative timetable, for the first call under the Shared Education Campuses Programme, are available on my Department's website. A link to the Shared Education Campuses Programme page and associated protocol document is provided below.

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/shared-education-campuses-programme.htm>

Holy Trinity Primary School: Additional Nursery Places

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education, regarding the application by Holy Trinity Primary School for an additional 26 nursery places for September 2014, to detail (i) what decision has been made on

the application; and (ii) if no decision has been made yet, when the school can expect a response from his Department.

(AQW 31245/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A Development Proposal (DP) proposing an increase in nursery places at Holy Trinity PS from 1 September 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter, was published on 16 December 2013. Following the publication of a DP, a statutory two month objection period begins which affords all interested and affected parties an opportunity to submit their comments on the proposal to DE. The statutory objection period ended on 17 February 2014.

I am aware that other preschool providers in the Cookstown area are also in the process of bringing forward proposals for new or additional nursery places from September 2014.

DE officials have begun the process of collating all the relevant and pertinent information and comments received. However, given the timing of the proposals and the complexities involved it is likely to be some weeks before I am in a position to consider the proposals.

School Principal: Precautionary Suspension

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education why a school Principal is in their 21st month of precautionary suspension; and what is the cost of this suspension to the public purse.

(AQW 31261/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information you have requested cannot be disclosed as it is third party, personal data on a living person. To disclose this information would be in breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 and, in particular, the first principle to process data "fairly and lawfully."

Department for Employment and Learning

South Eastern Regional College Theatre in Bangor

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline what steps he is taking to ensure the construction of the South Eastern Regional College theatre in Bangor will continue without delay, despite planning issues.

(AQW 30161/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): All necessary steps are being taken to progress South Eastern Regional College's Performing Arts Centre. The tendering process was completed in January 2014. The Award of Contract letter has been released to enable the construction phase to commence. Planning permission remains valid.

South Eastern Regional College Theatre in Bangor

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) when it first came to his attention that the planning permission for the South Eastern Regional College theatre in Bangor had expired; and (ii) what action has he taken to ensure construction can continue without delay.

(AQW 30162/11-15)

Dr Farry: Planning permission for the planned new Performing Arts Centre at the South Eastern Regional College's Bangor campus has not expired. The Award of Contract letter has been released allowing the college to move forward with the delivery of the project. The project is expected to be completed for the 2015 student intake.

South Eastern Regional College Theatre in Bangor

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how construction was allowed to commence at the South Eastern Regional College theatre in Bangor despite the planning permission having expired.

(AQW 30163/11-15)

Dr Farry: Planning permission for the planned new Performing Arts Centre at the South Eastern Regional College's campus in Bangor has not expired.

University of Ulster, Magee: Expansion

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how his Department will support the developing business case for the expansion of the University of Ulster, Magee.

(AQW 30727/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is my understanding that Derry City Council on behalf of the Derry/Londonderry Strategy Board has put the development of the business case out to tender. It is the Derry/Londonderry Strategy Board which will approve the business case before the University of Ulster submits it to my Department. My Department will review the submitted business case to ensure that it meets the standards set down in the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation and will assess the merits of the arguments put forward. In order to undertake this assessment and exercise it approval role, my Department must maintain independence. Consequently, it would not be appropriate for my Department to become involved in the development of the business case.

Students Studying Outside of Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number or proportion of local students who are forced to study outside of Northern Ireland due to a lack of available third level places.

(AQW 30742/11-15)

Dr Farry: The latest figures available show that, in 2012/13, 33% of local students were studying at universities in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Research has indicated that, in the main, those who opt for a university place in Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland as their first choice, do so because they believe that their chosen institution is the best place to study their preferred subject. Other reasons given included a preference to study at a particular university and the development opportunity to live and study away from home.

Capital Expenditure and Specific Projects on Stranmillis Campus

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the completed capital expenditure and the specific projects on the Stranmillis campus in (a) 2011/12; and (b) 2012/13; and (ii) any planned expenditure and specific projects in the current financial year and 2014/15.

(AQW 30743/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have provided the details requested in the table overleaf.

	2011/12 Actual £'000s	2012/13 Actual £'000s	2013/14 Current £'000s	2014/15 Forecast £'000s
Central Building: 1st Floor Refurbishment	150	414		
Stranmillis House: Disability Project			450	295
Central Building: Foyer Upgrade				522

	2011/12 Actual £'000s	2012/13 Actual £'000s	2013/14 Current £'000s	2014/15 Forecast £'000s
Dunseverick Hall Upgrade		340		
Relocation of student social facilities & DDA works to Refectory			1,125	
Stranmillis House: Additional Works			371	
Main Building: Asbestos Removal				3,121

Transfer of Functions

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQO 5499/11-15, answered by the Minister on 10 February 2014, to confirm the accuracy of this response.

(AQW 30772/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can confirm the accuracy of my response to AQO 5499/11-15. My Department does not determine the number of teachers to be trained. That responsibility falls to the Minister of Education. My Department's responsibility for teacher training relates to resourcing the Initial Teacher Education providers.

Proposed Merger of Stranmillis Teacher Training College and Queens University

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) to detail the cost to date of carrying out reviews into the proposed merger of Stranmillis Teacher Training College and Queens University; (ii) whether he will confirm, given his response in the Assembly during Topical questions on 10 February 2014, there is no consensus for this project; and (iii) whether he will formally abandon this project in the interests of equality and costs.

(AQW 30780/11-15)

Dr Farry: To date, costs of £4,066 have been incurred and met by my Department in relation to the proposed merger. From November 2008 to March 2012, Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College have advised that they have incurred, and met, costs of £154,568 and £178,840 respectively. The costs incurred total £337,474.

As I stated during the recent Topical Questions (AQT 691/11-15 on 10 February) the merger proposal was not driven by my Department on either a cost or equality basis but was initiated by the SUC Governing Body which proposed the merger in 2008. There was not the necessary support within the Assembly to take the merger forward.

The Chair of the Governing Body of SUC has now indicated to me that this position in relation to the merger has been superseded by the Stranmillis submission to the Second Stage of the Review of Teacher Training Infrastructure in Northern Ireland. I await the outcome of the Review.

Salisbury Review: Update

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the Salisbury Review.

(AQW 30783/11-15)

Dr Farry: The independent Salisbury Review was commissioned and led by Colleges NI on behalf of the further education sector. I understand from Colleges NI that it expects to be in a position to release the report within the coming weeks.

Lecturer's Negotiating Committee

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any progress made in replacing the management side, joint secretary to the Lecturer's Negotiating Committee.

(AQW 30784/11-15)

Dr Farry: All employment matters, including those relating to negotiating committees, are the responsibility of the College Employers. My Department neither appoints nor is party to the proceedings of these committees.

However, I have been advised by Colleges NI, that the College Employers have not replaced the management side joint secretary whilst the Salisbury Review has been progressing. It is hoped that this issue will be addressed once this Review has been published.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many times he has appeared before his Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30796/11-15)

Dr Farry: From January 2009 until April 2011 Ministers appeared in front of the Committee for Employment and Learning six times. Since my appointment to the position in May 2011 until December 2013 I have attended 10 Committee meetings on 15 separate agenda items.

Chairman of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis Teacher Training College

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the statement from the Chairman of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis Teacher Training College on 7 February 2014.

(AQW 30880/11-15)

Dr Farry: As I explained in my response to AQW 3005/11-15, the Chair of the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College had indicated to me that their position in relation to the proposed merger with Queen's University Belfast had been superseded by the University College's submission to the Second Stage of the Review of Teacher Training Infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

I have now been advised that the Chair of the Stranmillis Governing Body has issued a statement to this effect to staff at the College. The Department is liaising with Stranmillis on finalising the governance arrangements arising from this change of policy position and also awaits the outcome of the Stage Two Review.

STEM Strategy 'Success Through STEM': Update

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the progress of the STEM Strategy 'Success Through STEM'.

(AQW 30883/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has led on the implementation of the STEM Strategy, 'Success through STEM', which was endorsed by the Executive in March 2011. The Strategy aims to promote STEM and was produced by the STEM Government sub group, which consists of officials from the Departments of Employment and Learning; Education; Culture, Arts and Leisure; Enterprise, Trade and Investment Agriculture and Rural Development and Health, Social Security and Public Safety. The Strategy outlines 20 recommendations which highlight how Government and business intend to encourage more of our young people to study and pursue a career in STEM. The Departments on the Government sub group were assigned responsibility for taking forward specific recommendations from the Strategy.

Each Department represented on the STEM government sub group continues to take forward their own initiatives to implement the relevant actions from the Strategy. These were initially captured in the

'STEM One Year On' report, which was published in March 2012. The overall progress on the Strategy is monitored by an overarching STEM Implementation Steering Group.

My Department's initiatives include continued funding of the 'Step up' science programme at the University of Ulster, pilot Higher Level Apprenticeships in ICT and Food Engineering and a 'College Industry Initiative' to up-skill Further Education lecturers. By 2015/16 I will also have provided an additional 1350 STEM places at undergraduate level in Northern Ireland and 351 PhD places in STEM and economically relevant subjects. Additionally, in conjunction with employers and the further education sector my Assured Skills branch has delivered a number of academies to meet identified skills needs. Academies have now been established in Software Testing, Data Analytics and Cloud Computing. In engineering, a computer numerical control course is also being piloted in conjunction with South Eastern regional College and the Northern Regional College.

I have also established, and chair, focussed working groups to specifically address skills shortages in the ICT and Advanced Manufacturing sectors. The ICT Working Group has been particularly effective and key achievements so far include an MSc conversion course for non-IT graduates and the Public/Private ICT Apprenticeship Scheme. The latter scheme recruited 32 Apprentices in 2012 and 44 in 2013. Work is ongoing with employers to launch a similar scheme in the North West in 2014.

Since November 2012 my Department has funded a 'STEM business co-ordinator' to work directly with employers and business leaders from the STEM Business sub group to help them take forward their specific actions from the Strategy. One of the key activities taken forward by the STEM Business co-ordinator has been to work with the Equality Commission to engage with businesses to look at the issue of gender bias. Others areas have been to share best practice and to identify additional steps that businesses can take to make careers in STEM industries more attractive.

In January 2014 my Department organised for several key delivery partners to give presentations on their current STEM activities to a delegation from the United States, led by Andrew O'Brien of the US Department of State. The presentations highlighted the current STEM initiatives being taken forward across Northern Ireland. Feedback on the event was very positive and my Department will be developing these links for mutual benefit in the coming months.

Employment Programme for the Belfast South Zone of the Social Investment Fund

Mr Attwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consultation was conducted between his Department and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister regarding the Employment Programme for the Belfast South Zone of the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 30942/11-15)

Dr Farry: As requested by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, officials from my Department offered comments on the proposed employment projects being considered under the Social Investment Fund for the Belfast West, Belfast East, Belfast North and Belfast South investment zones. In addition, an official from my Department sits on the Social Investment Fund Programme Board and one also sits on the recently established Social Investment Fund Sub-Group.

Employment Programme for the Belfast North Zone of the Social Investment Fund

Mr Attwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consultation was conducted between his Department and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister regarding the Employment Programme for the Belfast North Zone of the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 30945/11-15)

Dr Farry: As requested by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, officials from my Department offered comments on the proposed employment projects being considered under the Social Investment Fund for the Belfast West, Belfast East, Belfast North and Belfast South investment zones. In addition, an official from my Department sits on the Social Investment Fund Programme Board and one also sits on the recently established Social Investment Fund Sub-Group.

Employment Programme for the Belfast East Zone of the Social Investment Fund

Mr Attwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consultation was conducted between his Department and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Employment Programme for the Belfast East Zone of the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 30994/11-15)

Dr Farry: As requested by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, officials from my Department offered comments on the proposed employment projects being considered under the Social Investment Fund for the Belfast West, Belfast East, Belfast North and Belfast South investment zones. In addition, an official from my Department sits on the Social Investment Fund Programme Board and one also sits on the recently established Social Investment Fund Sub-Group.

Employment Programme for the Belfast West Zone of the Social Investment Fund

Mr Attwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consultation was conducted between his Department and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Employment Programme for the Belfast West Zone of the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 30995/11-15)

Dr Farry: As requested by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, officials from my Department offered comments on the proposed employment projects being considered under the Social Investment Fund for the Belfast West, Belfast East, Belfast North and Belfast South investment zones. In addition, an official from my Department sits on the Social Investment Fund Programme Board and one also sits on the recently established Social Investment Fund Sub-Group.

Collaboration and Innovation Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline whether the funding available via the Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF), dealing with the 16-24 year old age group not in education, employment or training, can be used for matched funding alongside the European Social Fund.

(AQW 30998/11-15)

Dr Farry: Collaboration and Innovation Funding can contribute to an organisation's ability to act as a public match funder for its own European Social Fund project. The relevant details are published in the European Social Fund Promoter's Operating Manual 2007-2013, Section 3.1.4b Self Match Funding, available at

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/esf-promoters-operating-manual-2007-2013-revised-september-2013.pdf>

Collaboration and Innovation Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether there is any EU funding contained within the Collaboration and Innovation Fund.

(AQW 31001/11-15)

Dr Farry: There is no EU funding contained within the Collaboration and Innovation Fund.

Collaboration and Innovation Fund Programmes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the rationale for Departmental guidance regarding match funding on Collaboration and Innovation Fund programmes.

(AQW 31004/11-15)

Dr Farry: Match funding is not required for Collaboration and Innovation Fund projects.

Collaboration and Innovation Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what guidance is in place regarding match funding against Collaboration and Innovation Fund programmes.

(AQW 31005/11-15)

Dr Farry: There is no guidance in place regarding match funding for Collaboration and Innovation Fund projects as match funding is not required.

South West Regional College: Supply Tutors for Specialist Classes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the amount paid to South West Regional College to supply tutors for specialist classes in special needs schools, in each of the last three years; and (ii) the current hourly rate for these staff.

(AQW 31013/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold the information requested by the Member as this activity is funded through DE and schools as part of the Entitlement Framework. Also, the supply of tutors from further education colleges to work with special needs schools is a matter for individual colleges under this policy area.

Further education colleges are employing authorities in their own right and are responsible for all matters relating to staff. My Department does not hold details of individual tutor salaries.

I have forwarded your request to the Director of South West College, Malachy McAleer, and have asked him to respond to you directly on this matter.

People Over 45 who are Economically Inactive

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the details of the current consultation that his Department is jointly undertaking with the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment in regard to tackling the high number of people over 45 who are economically inactive.

(AQW 31069/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment have jointly launched a 12 week public consultation on 'Enabling Success' – a new strategic framework to tackle economic inactivity in Northern Ireland.

The public consultation will run from 23 January 2014 to 17 April 2014 and full details, including a series of public consultation engagement events held throughout Northern Ireland, are available on both departmental websites –

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/consultation-zone/economic-inactivity-consultation.htm>

<http://www.detini.gov.uk/index/homepage-newpage-consultations.htm>

Following the conclusion of the consultation period, my Department will publish a summary of responses and will use the findings from the consultation exercise to inform the development of the final strategy.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Growth Loan Fund in the Derry City Council Area

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the amount of finance provided to small and medium enterprises under the Growth Loan Fund in the Derry City Council area; and (ii) how many of these small and medium enterprises have been granted loans to date.

(AQW 30643/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Growth Loan Fund – Derry City Council area:

- (i) As at 30 September 2013, the amount was £2.5million.
- (ii) As at 30 September 2013, 5 small and medium sized enterprises have been granted loans.

Tourism Ireland: St Patrick's Day

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline how Tourism Ireland is marketing locations in Northern Ireland with a strong Christian heritage in overseas markets around St. Patrick's Day.

(AQW 30682/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Information on Christian heritage and St Patrick is included across Tourism Ireland's suite of 22 international market websites, market guides and social media. This includes an article/editorial piece about the St Patrick's Trail in Co. Down and Co. Armagh which has been translated into all European languages and will feature on this suite of websites and social media from the 10th of March.

Tourism Ireland's key market offices will be running online advertising to drive additional traffic to the article before, during and after St Patrick's Day in order to promote Northern Ireland as a top holiday destination and to encourage potential overseas visitors to book now. Tourism Ireland's US website is currently featuring video content on the story of St Patrick, which also includes the promotion of the St Patrick Centre in Co. Down.

Tourism Ireland has offered Northern Ireland industry partners including the St Patrick Centre in Downpatrick, the opportunity to promote alongside them at the upcoming Best of Britain and Ireland Show in Birmingham this St Patrick's week.

As part of Tourism Ireland's publicity campaign for St Patrick's Day the organisation is currently inviting key overseas travel journalists to visit Northern Ireland before and after the St Patrick's Day festival. They will then write about their experience encouraging more overseas visitors who have an interest in Christian heritage to choose Northern Ireland as their holiday destination in 2014.

Coach and group familiarisation trips to Downpatrick are also being organised to promote Northern Ireland's Christian Heritage tourism product and, in the United States, Tourism Ireland is rolling out targeted co-operative activity with tour operators aimed at religious travel group leaders.

Tourism Ireland has developed a specific car touring itinerary along St Patrick's trail for promotions in GB, including a specific St Patrick's story itinerary for international media familiarisation trips which will be rolled out throughout 2014.

Tourism Ireland has developed a joint marketing plan for St Patrick's Trail which has been presented to Down District Council and will be implemented at a number of upcoming trade events throughout 2014.

Agri-Food Loan Scheme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 28395/11-15, for an update on the plans to roll out the Agri-Food Loan Scheme to other agri-food sectors.

(AQW 30683/11-15)

Mrs Foster: At the outset, Invest NI and the participating banks committed to exploring the potential of an Agri-Food Loan Scheme (AFLS) for poultry, pork, beef and dairy by March 2014. My officials have been exploring the feasibility of extending the AFLS to other agri-food sectors, with the specific terms of the scheme to be adapted to the needs of each industry for each phase.

The first phase of the scheme relates to broiler production, and there is a proposal on the table encompassing Invest NI, banks, producers and poultry processors. The required legal agreements are anticipated to be signed imminently and the banks will then open the scheme to applications. With the 'rules of engagement' clearly documented during the first phase of the scheme, it should hopefully enable the scheme to be adapted to meet the needs of other sectors in a more timely and efficient manner than would otherwise have been the case. We have already started to see evidence of a more collaborative approach from the banks in examining the potential of the scheme for other sectors.

We have been approached by a section of the pork industry with a proposal and have met with the banks to gauge this proposal, with positive initial discussions. Officials have also had exploratory discussions with industry representatives from the other agri-food sectors specified at the outset of the scheme. There has also been some interest in the AFLS from other agri-food sectors beyond those specified at the outset and my officials have met with industry representatives to illustrate the broad offer under the scheme and examine the feasibility of extending it to further agri-food sectors.

My officials are keen to engage with any agri-food sector which can demonstrate an integrated supply chain and I would encourage other agri-food sectors to bring forward proposals developed by the industry to my officials for further consideration.

Pig Farming and the Pork Sector

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the grants, finance and support available for farmers wishing to invest in pig farming and the pork sector.

(AQW 30684/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Support for pig producers is primarily the responsibility of DARD. It is not within the remit of Invest NI to provide grant or other financial support for farmers wishing to invest in pig farming and the pork sector.

However, as an outcome of the Agri-food Strategy Board report – Going for Growth - a new Agri-Food Loan Scheme was announced by myself and the Finance Minister in October 2013. This new Scheme is aimed at local food producers who form part of an integrated supply chain. The Scheme will be delivered jointly by Government and the banks and will help producers to access the finance needed to allow them to invest in farm buildings necessary to increase supply of the primary produce for processing.

The first phase of the Scheme will be open to broiler producers. However, there are plans to extend further phases of the loan scheme to other agri-food sectors such as pork, red meat and dairy over the coming months. Officials have had positive initial discussions with pork processors and the banks.

Petroleum Prospecting Licence: CHx Capital LLC

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has received an application for a Petroleum Prospecting Licence (PL1/13) from an American based company called CHx Capital LLC.

(AQW 30774/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department is processing an application for a Petroleum Licence from CHx Capital LLC whose registered office is in the United States of America.

Petroleum Prospecting Licence Application

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in the initial stages of a Petroleum Prospecting Licence application, whether the applicant is bound by law to disclose the detail of everything they are potentially prospecting to her Department.

(AQW 30775/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI grants petroleum licences "to search and bore for and get petroleum" in accordance with The Petroleum (Production) Act (Northern Ireland) 1964.

In this Act, "petroleum" includes any mineral oil or relative hydrocarbon and natural gas existing in its natural condition in strata, but does not include coal or bituminous shales or other stratified deposits from which oil can be extracted by destructive distillation.

Any significant exploration activity such as drilling, whether for conventional or unconventional hydrocarbons, requires further Departmental approval and other consents and would require to be assessed on its own merits.

Petroleum Prospecting Licence Applicants

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether Petroleum Prospecting Licence applicants must outline all of the techniques they would use to find and extract their targeted mineral or substance throughout the term of the licence.

(AQW 30776/11-15)

Mrs Foster: At the time of application a company will usually only be in a position to provide an outline of their proposed work programme for the initial term (exploration phase) of the licence. The type of exploration activity (e.g. pre-drilling) will be described but not the specific technology or location.

This is because plans for the later stages of exploration are strongly influenced by the results from the earlier stages with Licensees interpreting the results to decide if they should continue to explore and, if so, where and how they should focus their ongoing exploration.

When a Licensee wishes to carry out field-based exploration, they are required to submit detailed proposals to my Department and, where appropriate, to other regulatory authorities. Following this, the suitability of their proposed methodologies and operations are rigorously assessed in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Giro d'Italia 2014: Tourism Promotion

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what tourism promotion will be carried out when the Giro d'Italia cycle race is held during May 2014.

(AQW 30825/11-15)

Mrs Foster: 2014 represents an unprecedented opportunity to promote Northern Ireland to millions of potential cycling enthusiasts around the world, as Northern Ireland gears up for the 'big start' or 'Grande Partenza' of the Giro d'Italia 2014 race - the second biggest cycling race in the world. The race also offers an opportunity to showcase Belfast City, Titanic Belfast, Parliament Buildings, the Giant's Causeway, the Causeway Coastal route and Armagh to the world-wide media and entice millions of potential visitors to put Northern Ireland at the top of their holiday destination list in 2014.

The event will be promoted by both the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and Tourism Ireland through marketing campaigns in our key consumer markets both at home, in the Republic of Ireland, in Great Britain and overseas.

The domestic and ROI marketing campaign, which went live on 10 February, will focus on TV advertising, cinema, radio sponsorship, taxi branding, press and digital advertising. This will be underpinned by extensive PR, Social Media and activation activity in both markets and through discovernorthernireland.com.

Tourism Ireland's international suite of websites features information on the race as well as dedicated articles on the Giro and special offers including a Giro d'Italia 2014 guided cycling tour offer. Extensive promotion is being undertaken in Italy as well as in Great Britain and other important markets such as Germany, the Netherlands, France, Spain, the Middle East and South Africa.

A high level campaign is ongoing in Italy targeting specialist and non specialist media contacts. In Milan last month a press conference was organized to showcase the Giro d'Italia race locations which attracted 45 specialist travel and lifestyle media.

A new guide to the "Grande Partenza" and Northern Ireland is being distributed to Italian media and specialist sports media are being targeted in collaboration with the Giro d'Italia race organizers, and

will include a familiarisation trip to Northern Ireland in February for journalists from one of Italy's leading sports magazines – La Gazzetta dello Sport.

In the GB market a press familiarisation visit for leading publications to visit Northern Ireland is planned for the end of February. The focus of their articles will be the 'Giro d'Italia and the sights and cycle routes of Northern Ireland.

Science and Engineering Graduates

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department is working with the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning to address the significant shortfall in science and engineering graduates.

(AQW 30849/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The importance of STEM is widely recognised and my Department works with DE and DEL on a range of STEM initiatives. For example the Economy and Jobs Initiative contains a commitment for an additional 500 undergraduate STEM places each year, bringing the total increase to 1,200 by 2015.

During 2014 the DE and DEL Ministers plan to review Preparing for Success, the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy. DETI will contribute to that review as a member of its Steering Group and there are plans for the review to be discussed at the Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy.

There is also joint policy and programme development between my Department, DEL and DE through the implementation of the STEM Strategy, 'Success through STEM'. The MATRIX panel also works with DEL to identify emerging STEM skills needs and the STEM Champion, Dr Joanne Stuart, is a member of MATRIX.

Invest NI and DEL, with third level education, provide a bespoke Software Testers Academy, Big Data Academy and Cloud Academy to address the skill needs of the ICT sector. Invest NI also supports DEL's work with the North West Engineering Skills Working Group to develop engineering skills at technical and graduate level. My officials also work with DEL on its Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Services Working Group and the ICT Skills Working Group.

Renewables Grid Liaison Group

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what progress the Renewables Grid Liaison Group has made since it was established by the Utility Regulator.

(AQW 30909/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since it was established in 2012, the Regulator-led Renewables Grid Liaison Group has facilitated discussion on issues such as wind farm cluster development, small scale generation connections and offshore connections. It has also published a bi-annual Renewable Integration Status Report which sets out progress for all participants on NIE grid development plans. These reports, together with the Group's Terms of Reference and minutes of meetings can be accessed on the Regulator's website – www.uregni.gov.uk.

Newry and Armagh: Foreign Investment

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department is working to attract foreign investment to Newry and Armagh.

(AQW 30922/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is responsible for attracting high quality Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that will benefit all of Northern Ireland. The global market for FDI is intensely competitive and in order to compete effectively, Invest NI must leverage the capabilities of all of Northern Ireland as a region where an investor can thrive and grow. Our talented and loyal workforce, advanced telecoms infrastructure, high skilled business clusters, a pro-business environment, competitive operating costs and proximity to major markets form the basis of our FDI sales message.

It is important to note that an investor will make the decision about where the company will locate based on the area's ability to meet the requirements of their business. Typically an investor will look for existing investors in the same business sector (Invest NI's key target sectors being ICT, business services, financial services and renewables); universities and colleges that offer courses relating to that sector; and suitable, available property. In addition, potential investors are often drawn to population centres that they consider will provide the appropriate number of suitably skilled potential employees.

Areas in which these desired features do not exist, or are not clearly presented, are unlikely to attract the attention of potential investors to visit or locate in the area.

Invest NI is working with stakeholders in the Newry and Armagh areas to help foster an understanding of the typical requirements of an FDI project in order to help those areas become "investor ready". For example, in February 2014, the agency's International Investment Division met with representatives of Newry Chamber of Commerce and Newry & Mourne District Council to hear about the area's investment proposition and initiatives to build its capabilities. The day concluded with a visit to Southern Regional College (SRC) to hear about the work that the college is doing to increase the area's skills capability, in particular i3, SRC's business support centre.

Invest NI has also developed an 'FDI app' and a 'District Council App' which will help present a snapshot of the benefits of setting up in Northern Ireland to potential investors. Newry & Mourne District Council has indicated that it wishes to be involved and Invest NI is working with the Council to develop these downloadable mobile applications which will form part of a promotional toolkit highlighting each Council area's attractiveness as a potential investment location.

Ultimately however, the investor will make the decision as to where they locate based on their specific business needs and having considered the options available to them.

Giro d'Italia 2014: Money Invested in North Antrim

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the money her Department is investing in North Antrim in relation to the hosting of the Giro d'Italia 2014.

(AQW 30991/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), has set up a number of working groups specifically designed to address all aspects of the Giro d'Italia 2014.

These working groups are exclusively created to discuss how the Local Councils can capitalise on the Giro and the opportunities it brings to the area.

My Department, through NITB, has already committed £3 million to secure the Giro d'Italia for Northern Ireland which will facilitate this global event coming to Northern Ireland and indeed travelling through the North Antrim area.

Renewable Sources of Energy

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the current percentage of energy that is generated from renewable sources.

(AQW 30993/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In the twelve month period to end January 2014, approximately 18% of electricity consumption was from renewable sources. The Programme for Government target is 20% by 2015.

It is estimated that we are on track to achieve the Programme for Government target of 4% renewable heat by 2015. However, to verify progress, DETI will carry out analysis as part of a future review of the Renewable Heat Incentive.

Farm Safety Measures

Mrs Dobson asked inister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 30202/11-15, to provide a full breakdown of all funding provided by her Department for farm safety measures.

(AQW 31035/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, through the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) has contributed the following expenditure towards raising awareness of health and safety across the farming industry:

Year	Media, shows and marketing	Child Safety
2011/12	£75,000	£25,000
2012/13	£410,000	£45,000
2013/14	£300,000 (to end of 3rd quarter of the financial year)	£100,000 (includes production of 2 new child safety DVDs)

The above expenditure includes the following promotional and educational activities:

- A high profile media campaign
- Health and safety awareness days
- Primary school farm safety presentations
- Presentations to numerous farmers' groups
- Promotion of farm safety at selected agricultural shows

In addition HSENI has and will continue to carry out other statutory activities including:

- 1,000 farm safety inspections each year
- Investigation of work related fatal accidents
- Investigation of complaints
- Secretarial support to the Farm Safety Partnership

HSENI does not separate costs for these activities as they are resourced from within its running costs.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on how many occasions (i) she; and (ii) departmental officials cancelled briefings, which were part of the forward work programme, to her Department's Statutory Assembly Committee, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31135/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not hold this information.

Irish Open 2015

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what funding package will be provided to ensure the successful delivery of the Irish Open 2015.

(AQW 31250/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment and The Northern Ireland Tourist Board are in regular discussions with event organisers about possible future events.

It is not possible to disclose the nature of these discussions until agreements have been finalised.

Department of the Environment

Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Freshwater Directives

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether the new targets relating to Freshwater directives from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency have been discussed and agreed with EU officials.

(AQW 29711/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is the key EU water Directive, requiring Member States to aim to achieve good ecological status or good ecological potential for waterbodies by Dec 2015. The Directive allows Member States to set alternative objectives for 2021 or 2027 in certain circumstances, such as where there are technical feasibility and/or disproportionate cost issues preventing the achievement of good ecological status by 2015.

To meet the requirements of the WFD, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency published River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in December 2009, which cover the period 2009-2015. The RBMPs stated that around 28% of water bodies were at good status in 2009 and through the measures in the Plans the aim is to reach around 59% at good status by 2015.

To date, the Department has implemented measures and produced progress reports in accordance with the targets and timetable set out in the Water Framework Directive. My Department also provided details of the objectives of the first cycle RBMPs to EU officials in March 2010 and NIEA will submit a further progress report in 2016. The second cycle RBMPs, which will cover the period 2016-2021, will set out the objectives for the second cycle based on progress achieved by the end of 2015, the assessment of pressures on the water environment and an assessment of what is achievable by 2021.

The targets for other EU water Directives (such as the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and the Nitrates Directive) are set within the Directives and have been in place for a number of years. As is the case with the WFD, the Department has engaged with EU officials and provided information in terms of implementation and reporting as required by the Directives.

At this stage, there are therefore no new targets in relation to any of these key Directives concerned with improving the condition of our freshwaters.

Nitrate Levels in Lough Neagh

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the programmes to reduce nitrate levels in Lough Neagh.

(AQW 29719/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As a key part of Northern Ireland's implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Neagh Bann River Basin Management Plan (2009-2015) was published in December 2009. The Northern Ireland Environment (NIEA) continues to work in partnership with stakeholders, including the Lough Neagh Partnership, to help meet targets to improve and protect the Neagh Bann water environment.

A Neagh Bann Significant Water Management Issues overview report has recently been published for public consultation:

www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/swmi.htm.

The report sets out the latest assessment of the pressures and impacts on the water environment and the progress made towards achieving the objectives for 2015.

At this point of the first river basin planning cycle, little improvement has been seen in overall ecological status from 2009. Progress has, however, been made in implementing measures in the River Basin Management Plans and there are signs of improvement in some of the individual biological and chemical parameters that contribute to the overall assessment of status. For example, as a result of

measures taken largely since the introduction of the Nitrates Action Programme in 2006, and also the Phosphorus (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (NI) 2006, to address nutrient enrichment of the water environment, the levels of phosphorus and nitrates in rivers are either stable or decreasing though concentrations of phosphorus in the majority of rivers are still above environmentally acceptable levels to bring about ecological improvement.

Assessment of water quality is mainly based on monitoring by NIEA and is reported in the four-yearly "Report on the State of Implementation of the Nitrates Directive in the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)". This is submitted to the European Commission in accordance with Article 10 of the Nitrates Directive (the Article 10 report). The latest Article 10 report (for 2008-2011) was produced in 2012 and is available on the DOE website at:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/2012_ni_nitrates_article_10_report_-_final.pdf

The EC Drinking Water Directive nitrate standard is 50 mg NO₃/l and NIEA monitors nitrate concentrations against this standard at 4 stations in Lough Neagh. Annual average nitrate concentrations at the four monitoring stations over 2004-2007 were all below 10 mgNO₃/l with one site below 2 mg NO₃/l. When maxima were considered, all 4 sites were below 10 mgNO₃/l. Over 2008-2011, all 4 sites had an annual average nitrate concentration below 2 mg NO₃/l and when maxima were considered, all 4 sites were again below 10 mg NO₃/l.

Trend assessments have compared 2008-2011 data with the previous four-year data set 2004-2007. Between the two reporting periods, the 4 sampling locations in Lough Neagh showed stable¹ average nitrate concentrations, with all sites showing a decreasing trend in maximum nitrate concentrations.

However, Water Framework Directive (WFD) trophic classification (based on total phosphorus and biological parameters) for Northern Ireland's 27 surveillance lakes for 2009-2011 shows that phosphorus levels remain high in Lough Neagh leading (in conjunction with biological parameters) to the lake being considered hypereutrophic and classified as at "bad" status under WFD. This situation has changed little since the previous two assessment periods (2000-2005, 2006-2008). The lack of change in lake systems may not be unexpected for a variety of reasons including differences highly related to individual lake typologies e.g. flushing times of these systems and the release of phosphorus reserves already built up in sediments.

The Nitrates Action Programme is currently being reviewed by DOE and DARD (to be completed by 31 December 2014) and that review provides an opportunity to examine this issue and consider whether any further measures to address the situation are necessary.

Friends of the Earth: Funding

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how much funding his Department has given to Friends of The Earth in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30733/11-15)

Mr Durkan: No funding has been provided by my Department to the Friends of the Earth for the period in question.

Licences of Private Hire Coaches

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment what procedures are in place to review the licences of private hire coaches which permit excessive drinking and drug abuse by patrons.

(AQW 30753/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The offence of consuming alcohol on a bus is committed only by the person consuming the alcohol. The bus operator commits no offence, nor is it an offence for failure to prevent the commission of an offence.

1 'Stable' refers to the change in annual average NO₃ (mg/l) between 2004-07 and 2008-11 of >1 to ≤1 mg/l as defined by Nitrates Directive reporting requirements

However, bus operators are required to act in a responsible manner in line with the requirement to be of good repute to hold an operator's licence. The Department considers any evidence presented in relation to bus operators, and where complaints are substantiated by the evidence available, it takes appropriate regulatory action such as the issue of warning letters, interviews to issue advice or warnings or, where appropriate, the revocation of the licence.

Quarry Safety Campaign

Mrs Cameron asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the quarry safety campaign 'Stay out! Stay safe!'.

(AQO 5541/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The objective of the "Stay Out! Stay Safe!" campaign was to target young people and their parents across the country to make them aware of the dangers of disused quarries, particularly the danger associated with swimming in quarry pools. My predecessor, Alex Attwood, requested delivery of a high impact awareness campaign before the July holiday period.

As part of the campaign 1,000 'DANGER - NO SWIMMING' warning signs were made available to councils on 10th July 2013, for immediate erection at sites considered to be at highest risk.

Advertisements were placed in the daily and Sunday newspapers, as well as all the regional weekly newspapers.

The campaign, which included the production of 1,500 campaign posters for display in public buildings, was also supported by extensive media relations including social media activities, information on NIDirect and other relevant websites (councils, NILGA, NI4Kids etc) and internal communications across DOE and the wider NICS.

Given the need to act quickly to prevent further loss of life, no formal measurement of awareness before campaign delivery was undertaken. However since the launch of the campaign in July 2013, there have been no further deaths as a result of swimming in disused quarries in Northern Ireland.

Driver and Vehicle Agency Enforcement Officers: Ravenhill Rugby Ground

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29848/11-15, on the three occasions Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement officers attended Ravenhill Rugby Ground, Mount Merrion Avenue between March 2013 and Sept 2013, whether they were accompanied by any taxi-operator officials, or were met at the venue by taxi-operator officials or representatives; and if so, who were the representatives.

(AQW 30785/11-15)

Mr Durkan: On the first occasion that Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) enforcement officers attended Ravenhill Rugby Ground, to assess the provision of taxis, a representative from fonaCAB Ltd and a representative from the Public Hire Coalition introduced themselves to uniformed officials. This was not a prearranged meeting.

On subsequent visits, DVA officials were not accompanied nor did they meet with any taxi operator officials or representatives.

Review of Taxi Fares

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the review of taxi fares.

(AQW 30786/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department commissioned a review of taxi tariffs and levels in 2010, which included the development of a suitable maximum fare tariff structure for Northern Ireland. Responses to a subsequent public consultation in November 2011 indicated that 69% of consultees agreed with the proposed tariff.

The SL1 for the Taximeter and Maximum Fare Regulations was considered by the Environment Committee on 16 January 2014. Members referred to recent queries around Single Tier Licensing which had not yet been concluded, and agreed to defer until further consideration.

Prior to the making of the Regulations, and periodically thereafter, the arithmetic in the calculation will be updated by officials – this will allow for factors such as changes in the price of fuel, repair costs, insurance and the like.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement: Retailing in Town Centres

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment how his draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement will protect retailing in town centres as being distinct from out of town developments.

(AQW 30822/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) brings forward a new town centre first approach for local development plans and decision taking regarding planning applications for retail and main town centre uses.

For development plans Councils will be required to define a hierarchy of centres and define their role and function and the policy for what retail development will be appropriate in them. Plans will also incorporate a new 'call for sites' approach to identify available land to meet retail need. A sequential approach will be adopted for this with preference being given to town centre sites, then edge of centre before considering out of centre sites.

A sequential test will also be applied to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Development Plan.

I await the outcome of the public consultation on the SPPS which closes 29 April 2014 and encourage everyone to become involved and submit their views.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement: Retailing in Town Centres

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment whether the potential consequences that further significant out of town retailing development could have on town centres will be outlined in the consultation period for his draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement.

(AQW 30823/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A consultant team led by GL Hearn carried out a review of town centres last year and helped inform the new retailing and town centres planning policy in the draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). The report highlights current pressures town centres are facing, including those from out of centre developments. I am satisfied that this report has provided strong evidence for the decline in our town centres and the need for a new planning policy approach. The consultant's report was published for information alongside the draft SPPS. There are no plans to outline additional potential consequences that further significant out of town retailing development could have on town centres in the consultation period draft SPPS. I expect the new policy to ensure that town and city centres are the first choice for new retail development in the future. I await the outcome of the public consultation on the SPPS which closes 29 April 2014 and encourage everyone to become involved and submit their views.

Councillors Elected to the New Councils

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what training will be made available to councillors elected to the new councils.

(AQW 30842/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have put in place a process that will allow for a range of training to be made available to councillors elected to the new councils. I have provided funds directly to each new council cluster which will allow them to address training needs identified and tailored at a local level to address local need. This will include localised induction that will help address the priorities for that Cluster.

In addition, my Department has commissioned a range of training interventions designed for elected members to be delivered by the Local Government Training Group. This training will cover issues such as New Member Induction, the Councillors' Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards. My Department is also funding a range of training support to develop councillor knowledge and skills on a range of important new functions transferring to local government such as planning and community planning.

My officials are in regular contact with NILGA and other representative bodies to help identify further training opportunities that may benefit councillors as the Reform programme is taken forward. This will help meet emerging needs of members elected to the new councils.

The total budget I am allocating to capacity building and induction for local government reform amounts to £3.6m.

Waste Crime/Illegal Dumping

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of the Environment, following the publication of the Mills report in December 2013, what steps his Department has taken to reduce waste crime and illegal dumping. **(AQO 5531/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: A number of actions have been taken, even before we received the Mills Report.

My predecessor secured £1.5m in the 2013 June Monitoring Round and this has been used to:

- Employ ten extra waste enforcement experts in NIEA's Environmental Crime Unit
- Clean-up some of the waste at the Campsie illegal waste dump that posed the most immediate environmental risk
- Buy specialist investigation equipment

This funding has helped NIEA to set up a major waste crack-down through what is known as 'Operation Toothfish'.

This operation is being led by NIEA's Environmental Crime Unit with the assistance of the PSNI.

Operation Toothfish currently involves 25 investigations covering 31 sites and 42 suspected companies and individuals across Northern Ireland.

This is a comprehensive crack down which is targeting a variety of potential types of waste crime – illegal landfill, refuse derived fuel, fuel laundering, end of life vehicles and waste tyres.

This operation is the start of a programme of action over the next few years to reduce the creation of waste and establish a fully compliant waste industry in Northern Ireland.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of the Environment how many times he has appeared before his Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years. **(AQW 30874/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: Since becoming Minister in July 2013 I have twice appeared before the Environment Committee.

Ravenhill Rugby Ground: CCTV Footage

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28201/11-15, AQW 28378/11-15, AQW 27856/11-15, whether the Departmental Solicitors Office viewed all the video footage recorded at Ravenhill Rugby Ground, Mount Merrion Avenue on 23 August 2013. **(AQW 30881/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: The concept of legal professional privilege safeguards the rights of a person or organisation, including the Department, to obtain legal advice on a confidential basis and not to

disclose such information, or other such information pertaining to that advice, in the interests of the wider administration of justice. The Department is, therefore, unwilling to waive the legal professional privilege vested in it, and is therefore unable to provide the information sought.

Driver and Vehicle Agency: Bus Regulation Breaches

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many private hire bus or coach operators have been reported to the Driver and Vehicle Agency for regulation breaches, such as permitting passengers to consume alcohol, in the last three years; (ii) how many were prosecuted, or had their operators licences revoked; (iii) on how many occasions no further action was taken; and (iv) how many are currently subject to investigation.

(AQW 30882/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In the last three years, the Department has received 10 reports about consumption of alcohol on buses.

- (i) The offence of consuming alcohol on a bus is committed only by the person consuming the alcohol. The bus operator commits no offence. Enforcement of the ban on consumption of alcohol on board a bus is the responsibility of the PSNI.
- (ii) Bus operators are required to act in a responsible manner in line with the requirement to of good repute to hold an operator's licence. The Department considers any evidence presented in relation to bus operators, where complaints are substantiated by the evidence available, and it takes appropriate regulatory action such as the issue of warning letters, interviews to issue advice or warnings or, where appropriate, the revocation of the licence.
- (iii) The reports received in the last three years were largely unsubstantiated reports and, in the absence of any substantial evidence, the Driver and Vehicle Agency was unable to take any action.
- (iv) There are currently no ongoing investigations in relation to identified operators.

Private Hire Taxis Operators: Wheelchair Access

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment what terms of wheelchair accessibility or disabled access are unlikely to be met by a number of existing Private Hire taxis, as claimed by a Driver and Vehicle Agency official at the Committee for the Environment meeting on 12 December 2013.

(AQW 30884/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department published a consultation on a new specification for wheelchair accessible taxis on 7 February 2014. The proposed new specification was recommended as a result of recent research carried out by Integrated Transport Planning on behalf of the Department. It aims to balance the needs of wheelchair users, those of the industry and to take account of vehicle availability and affordability.

At the meeting on 12 December 2013, rather than referring to Private Hire taxis, officials advised that there may some Belfast Public Hire vehicles which may not meet the new WAV specification. This assertion is based on the consultants' report, available from the link below, that states there are likely to be a number of vehicles that will not meet the new specification.

<http://applications.doeni.gov.uk/publications/document.asp?docid=19799>

It is difficult to determine definitively how many vehicles might fail to meet the accessibility specification as a result of an inadequate ramp, step or wheelchair tie-down equipment, as this will depend on individual vehicle adaptations. However, there are certain vehicle models that will not meet the requirements for door aperture size and internal headroom, which are factors that are not changed during any conversion process of a vehicle to become a taxi.

Of those vehicles licensed as Belfast Public Hire at the time of the study (spring 2013), the consultants estimated that 101 may not meet the internal dimension requirements stated in the new specification. However, vehicle makes and models change over time, and it may be the case that one version of a

particular model may be acceptable but a newer or older version may not share the same dimensions. Therefore, it will be necessary to ensure each vehicle purchased after September 2014, which is to be licensed as wheelchair accessible taxi, is checked for suitability against the published specification.

Taking into account the cost of purchasing a new wheelchair accessible vehicle, the Department has proposed in the consultation that any taxi currently licensed as Belfast Public Hire and thus currently licensed and tested as a wheelchair accessible taxi will be permitted to continue to be licensed as wheelchair accessible for 5 years following the introduction of the regulations, provided each individual taxi continues to comply with the existing specification. After that period, any taxi currently licensed as Belfast Public Hire which does not comply with the new specification will not be categorised as wheelchair accessible and will not be able to advertise itself as such, although they will of course be eligible to be used as another class of taxi.

The consultation closes in early April 2014, after which I will make final decisions on the vehicle specification.

Public Hire Taxis Operating in Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 30050/11-15, and given that the official in question used the figure 437 four times prior to then reading it as 350, and not 347 as claimed, for his assessment of this explanation.

(AQW 30886/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My officials have advised that an error in reading the relevant figure was made during the meeting on 12 December 2013. I am content with the explanation provided and that appropriate steps were taken to advise the Committee of the accurate figure in relation to Belfast Public Hire taxis.

Integration of the Driver and Vehicle Agency and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the integration of the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, (i) how many permanent posts in the integrated body will be filled by DVA staff; (ii) what impact the merger will have on DVA staff; and (iii) whether any DVA staff will be redeployed.

(AQW 31017/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department for Transport's Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has proposed centralising all vehicle licensing work in Swansea. If this proposal, which I have strongly opposed, were to be agreed by Ministers in London, all of the vehicle licensing (motor tax) offices across Northern Ireland would close. In defending the retention of these jobs, I have pointed out to the London Government, that removing this excellent local service would have a significant impact on staff, customers and the local economy.

Since there would be no vehicle licensing work carried out here, other than by Post Offices, no Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) staff would be employed in this work. All 302 full time equivalent posts in DVA, currently funded by DVLA, would be impacted. 265 of these posts are engaged wholly on vehicle licensing work and, if centralisation were to go ahead, all of these jobs would be lost. The remaining 37 posts are engaged partly on vehicle licensing related work and partly on work related to DVA's other functions. Some of these 37 posts are likely to be retained if the centralisation of vehicle licensing were to proceed.

Any staff that become surplus in DVA as a result of centralisation would be considered for redeployment within the Northern Ireland Civil Service in line with the NICS Redeployment Policy.

Arc21 Project: Planning Permission

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether any councils within the Arc21 area have been recently asked to provide a £1million bond to cover professional fees for the Arc21 preferred

bidder in the event that the project may not receive planning approval; and how this would represent value for money for rate-payers.

(AQW 31126/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department is not a party to any of the procurements being taken forward by the Waste Management Groups. Management of their project is a matter for arc21 and its constituent councils to determine in line with their governance arrangements, and it would not be appropriate for the Department or any other third party to offer any public comment which would be in breach of legally binding procurement rules relating to commercial sensitivity and confidentiality.

Coach Operators and Private Tour Organisers: Safeguarding of Young People

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment to detail how coach operators and private tour organisers are governed with regard to the safeguarding of young people of post-primary school age in their care.

(AQW 31165/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are a number of measures in place to govern the safeguarding of young people in respect of licensing conditions.

Holders of bus operator licences are required to be of good repute and, as part of the process of determining if an applicant meets this requirement, a basic disclosure certificate for every person named on the application (such as owners, partners, directors and transport managers) must be submitted in support of applications for licences. Basic disclosure certificates, issued by AccessNI, show all unspent convictions. This information is taken into consideration when assessing an application for a licence.

In addition, bus drivers, who, unlike bus operators, will be in contact with passengers, must also be judged to be fit persons to hold a licence to drive a bus and they too must submit a basic disclosure certificate that will reveal any unspent convictions recorded against them. Again, this information is considered as part of the application process.

Where an applicant for an operator's or a driver's licence has been convicted of an offence, and the conviction remains unspent, the Department will assess the nature and severity of the offence before deciding whether the licence should be granted. Offences that might suggest any danger to children or any vulnerable person will be given a great deal of weight in this judgment.

Councils: Procurement of Services

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment whether councils will be able to procure services under the banner of community planning, such as enhanced health services from the Health and Social Care Board.

(AQW 31256/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The new duty of community planning will require councils to lead the process of creating a long term vision for the social, environmental and economic well-being of their area and its citizens, in partnership with the community and service providers in their area.

The community planning approach will allow the council to join with other service providers to co-operate and co-ordinate effort to best meet the needs of citizens.

The general power of competence contained in the Local Government Bill complements the community planning duty. This power will mean that councils can act with similar freedom as an individual, unless the law prevents it. Therefore, a council will have the ability to develop innovative approaches to addressing issues in its area.

Using this power a council may wish to consider options to provide additional services such as enhancing health service provision where a need is identified. If a council wished to pursue such an option, it would of course need to ensure that it works closely with partner agencies and takes full

account of both the needs of the whole district and the regulatory framework that may exist in relation to the particular service.

Department of Finance and Personnel

January Monitoring Round: Medical Negligence Claims

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, following his statement on the January monitoring round on the 21 January, to detail how the £30 million he has allocated to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety will be spent and whether any of it will be used to deal with medical negligence cases.

(AQW 30027/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The allocation was provided to relieve pressures on the integrity of frontline health care. In response to AQW 30037/11-15, the Health Minister has detailed how the allocation will be spent and has confirmed that funding has not been provided at this stage for clinical negligence cases.

Review of Public Administration: Procurement Process

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what assurances can he give that small to medium sized rural businesses will not be disadvantaged in the procurement process, when applying for public sector contracts, following the establishment of the Review of Public Administration,

(AQW 30263/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Although the local government sector is not subject to Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy it is currently taking a number of steps, at a regional level, to help ensure that all SMEs can avail of procurement opportunities. Proposed initiatives include:

- The development of a supplier charter which will result in greater engagement with the local business community through meet-the-buyer events, trade exhibitions/conferences and through policies such as pro-active feedback to support the development and competitiveness of local suppliers in the Northern Ireland economy.
- Advertising tender opportunities where the value is over £30k and obtaining quotations from local suppliers, where possible, if the value of the contract is less than £30k.
- Advertising tenders on eSourcingNI (the NI Ireland Public Sector Procurement portal), or its replacement system. This will enable local SMEs to find both local and central government procurement opportunities in a single location rather than having to search national and local newspapers and council websites.

These initiatives, which are contained in a proposed local government procurement toolkit currently being considered by councils, should help ensure that local SMEs are not disadvantaged following the establishment of the Review of Public Administration.

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel on how many occasions since May 2007 has his Department not accepted the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding.

(AQW 30530/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The title of Northern Ireland Ombudsman is the popular name for two offices – the Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints. I am assuming that you are interested in our dealings with the Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and am answering on that basis.

There have not been any occasions since May 2007 when my Department has not accepted the recommendations in the Assembly Ombudsman's findings.

Rowreagh Road, Kircubbin: Flood Victims

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any assistance provided by his Department for flood victims, in Rowreagh Road Kircubbin, seeking funding from the EU Solidarity Fund. **(AQW 30773/11-15)**

Mr Hamilton: My Department does not have responsibility for providing assistance to flood victims, nor have I been approached by any department with responsibility for this type of assistance for approval for such resources.

National Asset Management Agency: Funding of Projects

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline what his Department has done to improve National Asset Management Agency funding of projects. **(AQW 30911/11-15)**

Mr Hamilton: I have no direct responsibility for the National Asset Management Agency or how it funds its projects.

Procurement Processes: Sub-Economic Tendering

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many contractors have been excluded from procurement processes as a result of sub-economic tendering. **(AQW 30916/11-15)**

Mr Hamilton: Eight contractors and one consultancy practice have been excluded from procurement processes as a result of sub-economic tendering.

Access to Finance Implementation Panel

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 30521/11-15, to detail when the action plans being developed by the Access to Finance Implementation Panel, addressing the recommendations in the Economic Advisory Group report, will become operational. **(AQW 30958/11-15)**

Mr Hamilton: The Implementation Panel is still in the process of engaging with the local banks and business organisations. Once this work is complete, I understand the Panel then plans to assess the information gathered before re-engaging with the banks and those organisations to agree the precise actions to be taken forward to deliver on the Economic Advisory Group recommendations. The Panel has not yet specified a timescale for this, but I know they are taking forward this work as a matter of urgency and I expect to see significant progress in the coming months.

Welfare Reform: Implementation

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any communication between HM Government and the Executive on the question of sanctions, should Welfare Reform not be implemented. **(AQO 5604/11-15)**

Mr Hamilton: The Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander MP, wrote in June 2013 on the penalties to be applied to the Executive's DEL budget allocation, should welfare reform not be progressed by January 2014. Mr Alexander estimated the penalties at an initial £5 million per month but indicated that these would quickly rise as welfare reforms are rolled out in Great Britain. Of course, the latest estimate suggests that by 2017-18 the costs will exceed £270 million.

I also discussed the issue of welfare reform with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury at the Finance Minister's quadrilateral meeting held in November 2013. At this meeting the Chief Secretary reinforced the UK Government's intention to apply penalties from January 2014.

My officials also met with their HM Treasury counterparts on 14 February 2014 to discuss welfare reform. At this meeting HM Treasury officials outlined the mechanics of adjusting the Northern Ireland Block Grant.

Obesity Related Deaths

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of obesity related deaths in each council area, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31052/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Information on obesity is only recorded on a death certificate, where the doctor certifying the death considers this to be the underlying cause of death or where it has contributed to the death.

The attached table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland, where obesity was mentioned on the death certificate, broken down by Local Government District (2008 to 2012).

Table 1: Number of Obesity Related¹ Deaths Registered in Northern Ireland by Local Government District, 2008-2012

Local Government District	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ards	2	0	1	3	2
Belfast	5	8	9	14	12
Castlereagh	1	4	2	1	2
Down	3	4	2	1	2
Lisburn	2	1	2	4	4
North Down	1	3	2	1	2
Antrim	0	1	3	5	3
Ballymena	2	1	3	2	4
Ballymoney	1	2	0	2	1
Carrickfergus	1	4	0	2	1
Coleraine	1	2	2	2	0
Cookstown	0	0	1	0	0
Larne	2	0	1	3	2
Magherafelt	0	0	2	0	1
Moyle	0	1	0	1	0
Newtownabbey	0	3	4	6	8
Armagh	3	3	1	2	0
Banbridge	0	2	3	0	1
Craigavon	1	2	4	4	4
Dungannon	0	1	1	2	0

Local Government District	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Newry & Mourne	2	2	4	4	0
Fermanagh	1	1	2	3	2
Limavady	1	1	0	1	1
Derry	1	1	0	3	1
Omagh	1	0	0	2	0
Strabane	2	0	1	1	2
Northern Ireland	33	47	50	69	55

Obesity related deaths were defined where 'Obesity' was mentioned on the death certificate. These deaths are recorded under International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code 'E66 - Overweight and obesity'.

Drug Related Deaths: South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many drug related deaths have been recorded in South Antrim, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31142/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The table overleaf shows the number of drug related¹ deaths registered in the South Antrim Constituency in each year between 2008 and 2012.

Table 1: Number of Drug Related¹ Deaths Registered in the South Antrim Constituency, 2008 - 2012²

Assembly Constituency	Registration Year				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
South Antrim	4	6	4	2	3
Northern Ireland	89	84	92	102	110

- 1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes:
F11-F16, F18-F19 - Mental and behavioural disorders due to drug use (excluding alcohol and tobacco)
X40-X44 - Accidental poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
X60-X64 - Intentional self-poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
X85 - Assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
Y10-Y14 - Poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances, undetermined intent.
- 2 Mortality data for the 2012 registration year are the latest available. Data for 2013 will be available in summer 2014.

Domestic and Commercial Rates in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) domestic; and (ii) commercial rates collected in South Antrim, in each of the last four years, broken down by ward.

(AQW 31143/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The domestic and commercial rates collected in South Antrim in each of the last four years, broken down by ward is not available for the South Antrim constituency as data is collated at District Council and Ward level only. The attached tables provide information on the domestic and non-domestic rates collected in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council areas, in each of the last four years, broken down by ward.

(i) Domestic Receipts for Antrim Borough Council, 2009/10 to 2012/13

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Aldergrove	£1,363,749	£1,311,457	£1,246,632	£1,171,119
Balloo	£447,148	£452,854	£426,779	£389,327
Ballycraigy	£392,174	£368,105	£361,137	£361,356
Clady	£1,278,852	£1,296,296	£1,203,283	£1,137,435
Cranfield	£811,754	£787,890	£755,211	£720,850
Crumlin	£1,248,128	£1,160,693	£1,140,750	£1,098,274
Drumanaway	£621,832	£616,689	£592,389	£568,480
Farranshane	£289,605	£283,400	£265,161	£261,653
Fountain Hill	£547,168	£529,736	£520,819	£497,570
Greystone	£467,746	£469,732	£464,086	£444,879
Masserene	£1,816,269	£1,756,199	£1,690,751	£1,570,132
Parkgate	£1,208,864	£1,179,431	£1,094,775	£1,054,849
Randalstown	£958,514	£910,558	£892,615	£868,861
Shilvodan	£898,242	£858,053	£807,051	£767,468
Springfarm	£735,696	£651,025	£675,108	£570,706
Steeple	£458,765	£488,762	£455,163	£441,227
Stiles	£439,463	£428,718	£420,663	£409,536
Templepatrick	£1,375,341	£1,324,453	£1,274,639	£1,219,883
Toome	£696,096	£671,927	£612,091	£572,621
Antrim BC	£16,055,405	£15,545,979	£14,899,105	£14,126,228

Totals may not add due to rounding

(i) Domestic Receipts for Newtownabbey Borough Council, 2009/10 to 2012/13

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Abbey	£852,917	£798,055	£795,503	£757,229
Ballyclare North	£1,209,378	£1,134,496	£1,107,667	£1,074,221
Ballyclare South	£1,009,908	£969,241	£951,484	£885,174
Ballyduff	£645,824	£636,522	£627,306	£602,607
Ballyhenry	£771,914	£744,928	£730,782	£700,845
Ballynure	£1,335,514	£1,289,260	£1,244,747	£1,176,915
Ballyrobert	£1,518,337	£1,441,691	£1,371,516	£1,300,056
Burnthill	£689,901	£646,254	£647,565	£633,617
Carnmoney	£743,033	£710,520	£691,705	£682,231

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Cloughfern	£720,754	£699,383	£665,827	£643,745
Collinbridge	£986,125	£946,965	£918,089	£898,899
Coole	£428,583	£430,209	£401,482	£396,582
Doagh	£1,314,996	£1,235,155	£1,189,466	£1,157,396
Dunanney	£389,144	£376,261	£370,690	£351,691
Glebe	£928,027	£901,668	£862,972	£813,921
Glengormley	£705,509	£692,706	£657,865	£632,565
Hawthorne	£552,207	£530,832	£519,063	£511,841
Hightown	£627,505	£556,689	£583,986	£539,455
Jordanstown	£2,651,329	£2,553,300	£2,499,422	£2,401,316
Mallusk	£3,033,579	£2,893,207	£2,739,878	£2,541,533
Monkstown	£677,064	£656,476	£644,487	£616,963
Mossley	£727,735	£716,828	£694,561	£707,961
Rosstulla	£1,577,567	£1,490,090	£1,431,237	£1,392,930
Valley	£753,026	£703,276	£704,967	£669,826
Whitehouse	£454,358	£448,698	£421,790	£390,723
Newtownabbey BC	£25,304,233	£24,202,708	£23,474,054	£22,480,242

Totals may not add due to rounding

(ii) Non-Domestic Receipts for Antrim Borough Council, 2009/10 to 2012/13

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Aldergrove	£5,951,051	£5,779,391	£6,365,249	£5,352,598
Balloo	£149,591	£154,557	£140,456	£125,123
Ballycraigy	£42,313	£41,628	£40,655	£41,221
Clady	£775,083	£858,801	£787,982	£811,465
Cranfield	£97,595	£101,776	£102,069	£90,697
Crumlin	£672,479	£645,585	£486,422	£427,814
Drumanaway	£90,185	£70,326	£66,484	£43,813
Farranshane	£1,102,933	£1,137,559	£1,157,819	£830,752
Fountain Hill	£470,919	£469,279	£465,914	£448,058
Greystone	£50,325	£49,132	£48,162	£46,898
Masserene	£7,239,975	£7,506,997	£7,570,196	£6,918,518
Miscellaneous*	£921,657	£903,036	£837,858	£889,765

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Parkgate	£156,456	£166,540	£181,593	£159,263
Randalstown	£719,916	£738,072	£702,202	£668,207
Shilvodan	£161,775	£165,672	£157,490	£171,597
Springfarm	£1,547,611	£1,656,326	£1,590,513	£1,364,407
Steeple	£34,736	£34,182	£33,507	£32,252
Stiles	£52,239	£52,622	£75,141	£44,126
Templepatrick	£935,667	£752,195	£806,385	£683,681
Toome	£259,980	£290,022	£239,650	£225,706
Antrim BC	£21,432,489	£21,573,699	£21,855,747	£19,375,962

Totals may not add due to rounding

* The 'Miscellaneous' ward relates to properties that cover more than one ward.

(ii) Non-Domestic Receipts for Newtownabbey Borough Council, 2009/10 to 2012/13

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Abbey	£850,463	£882,197	£876,855	£722,925
Ballyclare North	£314,952	£321,736	£304,122	£282,425
Ballyclare South	£1,227,094	£1,222,525	£1,313,160	£1,263,746
Ballyduff	£16,495	£11,980	£13,552	£14,545
Ballyhenry	£918,761	£796,258	£713,671	£727,023
Ballynure	£329,019	£334,589	£341,666	£299,252
Ballyrobert	£907,814	£796,297	£838,618	£731,408
Burnthill	£9,905	£8,821	£8,895	£11,765
Carnmoney	£220,459	£236,114	£226,845	£215,325
Cloughfern	£345,272	£373,088	£352,305	£333,615
Collinbridge	£571,801	£535,806	£498,815	£512,624
Coole	£168,789	£146,711	£143,873	£203,619
Doagh	£197,076	£203,532	£185,470	£181,667
Dunanney	£547,264	£545,046	£537,328	£748,206
Glebe	£43,890	£43,341	£44,745	£46,232
Glengormley	£590,801	£622,880	£607,142	£572,398
Hawthorne	£26,905	£51,999	£51,467	£48,753
Hightown	£598,800	£586,017	£577,597	£497,325
Jordanstown	£225,233	£223,180	£230,829	£200,770

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Mallusk	£7,057,518	£6,916,967	£6,410,896	£6,769,602
Miscellaneous*	£1,346,532	£1,308,199	£1,259,496	£1,052,129
Monkstown	£558,168	£534,816	£493,825	£597,132
Mossley	£389,608	£381,494	£400,157	£478,441
Rosstulla	£2,078,404	£1,838,142	£1,817,033	£1,836,219
Valley	£8,418,176	£7,896,811	£7,979,655	£7,462,142
Whitehouse	£304,931	£292,470	£311,647	£323,630
Newtownabbey BC	£28,264,131	£27,111,014	£26,539,662	£26,132,918

Totals may not add due to rounding

* The 'Miscellaneous' ward relates to properties that cover more than one ward.

EU Funds Obtained for Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 30613/11-15, whether the figures quoted in respect of Peace III and Interreg funding relate only to expenditure made locally.

(AQW 31160/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Yes.

Narrow Water Bridge: Tenders

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount contained in each tender received in relation to the construction of the proposed bridge at Narrow Water.

(AQW 31172/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: It is not possible to detail the amount contained in each tender due to commercial sensitivity around information disclosure.

Narrow Water Bridge: Funding

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has commenced any work on identifying funding that may be directed towards the Narrow Water Bridge project in the future.

(AQW 31173/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department has no plans to identify funding that may be directed towards any future Narrow Water Bridge project.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Claims for Clinical Negligence

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of outstanding claims for clinical negligence; and the (i) number; and (ii) cost of claims settled in each of the last five years including legal fees, court costs and other incidentals.

(AQW 30830/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): It is assumed that outstanding claims for clinical negligence refer to the number of open clinical/social care negligence cases.

At 31st December 2013, 2,851 clinical/social care negligence cases were open in Northern Ireland.

& (iii) Information on the number and amount paid on clinical/social care negligence cases that were settled by each HSC Trust and Legacy HSS Board in each of the last five years is detailed in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively. However, it should be noted that costs associated with a case may not be paid in the same financial year in which the case was settled

Table 1: Number of Clinical/Social Care Negligence Cases Settled (2009/10 – 2013/14)

Year	Number of Cases Settled
2009/10	322
2010/11	258
2011/12	223
2012/13	275
2013/14*	148

* Period covering 1 April 2013 - 31 December 2013 (Excludes Western HSC Trust as data is not yet available)

Table 2: Amount Paid on Clinical/Social Care Negligence Cases That Were Settled, by Type of Payment (2009/10 – 2013/14)

Year	Amount Paid			
	Damages	Legal Costs ¹	Other Costs	Total
2009/10	£9,004,310	£3,289,382	£61,757	£12,355,450
2010/11	£23,855,374	£5,507,876	£84,554	£29,447,804
2011/12	£16,907,546	£8,724,415	£139,000	£25,770,960
2012/13	£18,632,823	£7,108,125	£221,311	£25,962,259
2013/14 ²	£26,182,843	£8,703,681	£1,079,487	£35,966,011

1 Legal costs for the Western HSC Trust were not available for 2009/10

2 Period covering 1 April 2013 - 31 December 2013 (Excludes Western HSC Trust as data is not yet available)

Altnagelvin Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any patients either came to harm, or died while waiting to be treated in Altnagelvin Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department in each of the last three years; and if so, how many patients came to harm or died in each of those years.

(AQW 30837/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am unable to provide the information requested at this time. It is assumed this question relates to Serious Adverse Incidents in the emergency department. In light of recent reports about Serious Adverse Incidents in emergency departments, I have asked my officials to ascertain comparable data for hospitals across Northern Ireland and any available comparable data for other jurisdictions. My Department will only be able to determine what information can be published without breaching patient confidentiality when that work has been completed.

Individual Funding Requests for Multiple Sclerosis Treatments

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many Individual Funding Requests for Multiple Sclerosis treatments were submitted to each Health and Social Care Trust in (a) 2011; (b) 2012; and (c) 2013; and (ii) how many of these were approved.

(AQW 30857/11-15)

Mr Poots: Individual funding requests (IFRs) are submitted for approval to the Health and Social Care Board; information has been held centrally since 01 January 2012.

	2012	2013	2014 (to 17 Feb)
No. IFRs for MS submitted	10	10	2
Approved	1	2	1
Additional information sought	9	7	1
Declined	0	1	0

Northern Ireland has the highest uptake rate for specialist MS drugs in the UK and at January 2014, there were over 1,400 people on active treatment. Currently the range of specialist treatments for MS includes:

Therapy	Total number of patients on therapy
Copaxone	308
Rebiff 22	210
Rebiff 44	276
Betaferon	83
Avonex	435
Extavia	12
Tysabri	88
Fingolimod	12

All of these regimes are routinely commissioned by the HSC Board and therefore available to patients in NI. 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.

Skeagh House, Dromore: Costs

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail all costs associated with Skeagh House, Dromore, including all legal fees, since it was evacuated on 27 March 2013 as a result of a landslip.

(AQW 30878/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that the following costs have been incurred since the evacuation of Skeagh House on 27 March 2013:

Estates costs - to December 2013.

Professional/Legal Fee (approx)	£16,000
Security Measures & hoarding for protection from debris	£6,000
Total	£16,000

Staff & Goods & Service costs

Payroll Costs	£379,741.31
Goods & Services	£ 33,567.91
Total	£413,309.22

Payroll costs quoted are for displaced Skeagh House staff only.

Odyssey Complex: SOS Bus

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department holds a record of the ages of people who were intoxicated and assisted by the SOS bus, or otherwise, at the Odyssey complex on 6 February 2014; and for a summation of the ages.

(AQW 30891/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) responded to a call at 19:25 hours on 6 February 2014 to the SOS bus outside the Odyssey. On arrival there were 20 patients in the SOS bus. NIAS carried out a scene survey which included the medical provision inside the Odyssey.

Inside the venue 68 patients were medically assessed by a private medical provider to the event (Pro-Paramedics), two of those patients were transported to hospital by NIAS resources.

Outside the Odyssey 40 patients were assessed and treated by NIAS staff assisted by BASICS doctors and the SOS bus staff. 15 patients were transported from the scene to Belfast Trust Hospitals. Patients were in the age range of 15 – 18 years.

Claims for Clinical Negligence

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of outstanding claims for clinical negligence in the Western Health and Social Care Trust; and the (i) number; and (ii) cost of claims settled in each of the last five years including legal fees, court costs and other incidentals.

(AQW 30893/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that outstanding claims for clinical negligence refer to the number of open clinical/social care negligence cases.

- (i) At 31st December 2013, 413 clinical/social care negligence cases were open in the Western Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust.
- (ii) & (iii) Information on the number and amount paid on clinical/social care negligence cases that were settled by the Western HSC Trust in each of the last five years is detailed in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively. However, it should be noted that costs associated with a case may not be paid in the same financial year in which the case was settled.

Table 1: Number of Clinical/Social Care Negligence Cases Settled (2008/09 – 2012/13)

Year	No. Settled
2008/09	28
2009/10	25
2010/11	59
2011/12	34
2012/13	31

Table 2: Amount Paid on Clinical/Social Care Negligence Cases That Were Settled, by Type of Payment (2008/09 – 2012/13)

Year	Amount Paid		
	Damages	Legal Costs*	Total Costs
2008/09	£1,323,500	£0	£1,323,500
2009/10	£357,293	£0	£357,293
2010/11	£1,115,569	£195,431	£1,311,000
2011/12	£1,671,322	£1,257,678	£2,929,000
2012/13	£870,750	£1,422,250	£2,293,000

* Information on legal costs paid in 2008/09 – 2009/10 was not available

People Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis: Review Appointments

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how often a person diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) should be issued with a review appointment to attend a Consultant or MS Nurse led clinic.

(AQW 30895/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Trusts that there is no recommended frequency for review appointments with Consultants or Nurse-led clinics for patients diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. Each case is determined on clinical need on a case-by-case basis.

Procedures, Treatments and Surgery Out-Sourced to the Private Health Sector

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the procedures, treatments and surgery that have been out-sourced to the private health sector, over the last three years; (ii) the average waiting time for each of these functions in the (a) Health Service; and (b) private health sector; and (iii) the cost of these procedures in the (a) Health Service; and (b) private health sector.

(AQW 30914/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC transfers patients to the independent sector to address waiting time delays following a detailed examination of demand and capacity in a specialty. The Health and Social Care Board will fund HSC Trusts non-recurrently to undertake such additional activity until such times as investments to increase local Trust capacity are in place in specialties where there is an ongoing gap between capacity and demand.

The tables attached at ANNEX A set out the requested statistical information detailing records for activity which has been commissioned from the independent sector (IS) in each of the last 3 years and the overall cost of this procurement.

It is not possible to identify the pricing at specialty level as IS tariffs are at procedure level. There is a HSC NI tariff list of costs by individual procedure which details some hundreds of procedures and varies very significantly in price, from £50 to £22k, dependent on each procedure.

Information on average waiting times is not available as information is not collated on this basis.

Annex A

Independent Sector activity for 2010/11 (Other" column is mainly diagnostic procedures)

Specialty	Currency				
	Inpatients	Daycases	New Outpatients/ Outpatients with procedures	Review Outpatients	Other
Breast Reconstruction	6		0		
Breast Surgery	53	3	0		
Cardiac Surgery	210	0	0	139	
Cardiology	0	0	0	0	
Colposcopy		0	0	44	
Dental Surgery	0	58	0	3	
Dermatology	1	1216	2183	675	
ECG	0	0	0	0	
ENT	15	20	251	362	896
Gastroenterology	1	113	0	27	
Gen Surgery Scopes	0	1	0		
General Medicine	5	496	195	172	
General Surgery	63	314	0	151	
Gynaecology	66	333	35	430	
MRI			0		2800
Neurology	0	4	43	522	
Neurophysiology			0		135
Neurosurgery			0		
Ophthalmology	3	507	1900	563	
Oral Surgery	1	158	61	65	18
Orthopaedics	1386	1749	13207	5726	
Paediatric Dentistry			0		

Specialty	Currency				
	Inpatients	Daycases	New Outpatients/ Outpatients with procedures	Review Outpatients	Other
Paediatric Plastics		1	0		
Paediatric Surgery	0	0	0	0	
Pain Management	0	28	114	209	
Plastic Surgery	19	326	10	65	
Rheumatology	2	73	344	190	
Thoracic Surgery	0	0	146	25	
Urology	17	248	81	233	
Vascular Surgery		0	0		
Grand Total	1848	5648	18570	9601	3849

Value of Activity	£24.7m
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Independent Sector activity for 2011/12 (Other" column is mainly diagnostic procedures)

Specialty	Currency				
	Inpatients	Daycases	New Outpatients/ Outpatients with procedures	Review Outpatients	Other
Breast Reconstruction	42		0		
Breast Surgery	77		0		
Cardiac Surgery	239		0	145	
Chronic Pain			107	10	13
Dermatology			2551	727	405
Echo			0		37
ENT	62	29	442	93	236
Gastroenterology	1	2495	335	5	253
General Medicine	1	1301	780	45	318
General Surgery	164	1055	596	160	129
Gynaecology	199	110	1021	95	632
Heptology		1	0		
Immunology			429	15	

Specialty	Currency				
	Inpatients	Daycases	New Outpatients/ Outpatients with procedures	Review Outpatients	Other
Max Fax	55	46	570	71	323
Medicine		57	0		
Neurology	0	0	1291	14	264
Neurophysiology			1347		
Neurosurgery			169	3	
Ophthalmology	4	1407	4760	1823	133
Oral Medicine			200	370	
Oral Models			0		13
Oral Surgery		15	413	8	
Orthopaedics	3900	2069	10083	15598	
Paed Dental			170		
Paed Ortho	3		0		
Paed Surgery		17	0	1	
Pain		73	121	64	4
Plastic Surgery	272	221	901	122	39
Radiology (MRI Scans)			0		3385
Rheumatology	0	0	2227	124	456
Scopes		1616	0		
Thoracic Surgery	19		76	25	15
Urology	7	90	2	80	
Vascular Surgery	25	12	0	89	
Total	5070	10614	28591	19687	6655

Value of Activity	£52.6m
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Independent Sector activity for 2012/13 (Other* column is mainly diagnostic procedures)

Speciality	Currency				
	Inpatients	Daycases	New Outpatients/ Outpatients with procedures	Review Outpatients	Other*
Breast Surgery	200	0	0	0	
Cardiac Surgery	154	0	0	0	
Cardiology	4	0	0	0	457
Cardiology (EP only)	0	0	0	0	
Clinical Genetics	0	0	0	0	
Dermatology	88	347	3773	1086	
Endocrinology	0	0	0	0	
Endoscopy	0	360	0	0	
ENT inc Paeds	567	172	4505	1167	
Gastroenterology	597	186	1496	352	
General Medicine	409	59	1440	144	
General Medicine - Respiratory	0	0	364	19	
General Surgery	1750	747	3092	324	
Geriatric Medicine	0	0	0	0	
Gynae Oncology	0	0	0	225	
Haematology (Clinical)	0	0	0	0	
Immunology	0	304	1613	0	
Nephrology	0	0	0	0	
Neurology	48	10	2022	443	3856
Neurosurgery	0	0	0	0	
Obs & Gyn (Gynaecology)	839	580	1516	919	
Old Age Psychiatry	0	0	0	0	
Oncology	0	0	0	0	
Ophthalmology	498	2288	5912	1948	
Oral Medicine / Restorative / GP	0	0	0	21	
Oral Surgery	138	190	2501	100	
Neuroradiology	0	0	0	0	

Speciality	Currency				
	Inpatients	Daycases	New Outpatients/ Outpatients with procedures	Review Outpatients	Other*
Oral Surgery (Special Needs/ other)	250	0	1048	0	
Orthopaedics	1055	0	5382	1452	
Orthopaedics Spinal	42	0	0	0	
Orthoptics	0	0	0	0	
Paediatric Cardiology	0	0	0	0	
Paediatric Dentistry	0	0	0	11	
Paediatric Neurology	0	50	50	5	
Paediatric Surgery	88	0	0	0	
Paediatrics	26	0	982	109	
Pain Management	314	615	756	291	
Plastic Surgery	837	0	2700	215	
Rehabilitation	0	0	0	0	
Restorative Dentistry	0	23	910	46	
Rheumatology	0	114	3127	678	
Specialist Medicine (GUM)	0	0	0	0	
T&O	2985	984	6413	8292	8358
Thoracic Medicine	0	0	100	15	
Thoracic Surgery	86	0	0	0	
Urology	716	1473	1183	100	
Vascular	220	102	0	109	
Hepatology	0	0	0	0	
Grand Total	11910	8603	50885	18071	12671
Value of Activity	£66.0m				

Value of Activity	£66.0m
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* Other: complete activity count of diagnostic procedures is not currently available for 2012/13

Admissions to Residential Care Homes: Uniform Criteria

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are uniform criteria across each Health and Social Care Trust for admissions to residential care homes.

(AQW 30930/11-15)

Mr Poots: An individual's admission to Residential Care should be based on an individual comprehensive assessment of need in line with Departmental Circular ECCU 1/2010 'Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance'.

The individual and, where requested, their family and/or carer, should be fully involved in this process and informed of the range of options available and any potential financial implications to the individual or family member. This will include providing information on the available suitable facilities in the locality which the individual or their representatives may wish to visit in order to inform their decision making process.

Hospital Emergency Departments

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how far the frequent crisis conditions in hospital emergency departments have contributed to an inadequacy of associated beds for admissions; and (ii) how the number of such beds in each hospital compares with 2009.

(AQW 30946/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of patients requiring emergency admission has increased by 3.5% over the past five years. It is essential that Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts ensure that bed capacity is used to the best effect so that patients do not wait excessive lengths of time in emergency departments. The HSC has adopted a whole system approach to improve the smooth movement of patients through and out of hospital, with improved internal hospital processes, multidisciplinary team working and interface between hospital and community services.

We know from a Rapid Review of Northern Ireland Health and Social Care funding needs and the productivity challenge: 2011/12 – 2014/15 (Appleby 2011) that acute beds in Northern Ireland in 2008/09 were approximately 25% higher than England, and were not used as intensively and lengths of stay were longer. Hospital bed numbers have therefore decreased since 2009. This change has been managed by more efficient use of beds through changing clinical practice, increasing use of day surgery, better anaesthetics, and improved community rehabilitation options. These developments in changing the patterns of hospital bed use have resulted in shorter stays in hospital. Consequently the average length of stay for all patients in Northern Ireland has fallen by 13.5% since 2008/09. For the acute programme of care, the reduction is 7.3%. As a result fewer beds are needed to meet demand.

The average number of available beds in each HSC Hospital in Northern Ireland during 2009 and 2013 is given in the table below.

Trust	Hospital	Average Available Beds	
		2009	2013 ^p
Belfast	Belfast City	544.9	464.8
	Cancer Centre	84.6	69.2
	Forster Green	37.6	0.0
	Knockbracken Healthcare Park	307.0	165.0
	Mater Infirmorum	296.8	252.1
	Muckamore Abbey	260.2	192.4
	Musgrave Park	258.3	245.3

Trust	Hospital	Average Available Beds	
		2009	2013 ^P
	RBHSC	97.5	84.6
	Royal Maternity	167.6	122.0
	Royal Victoria	661.7	643.6
	Windsor	35.2	4.0
	Young Peoples Centre	12.0	29.4
South Eastern	Ards	30.2	20.0
	Bangor	20.0	20.0
	Downe	64.0	49.4
	Downshire	142.9	91.2
	Lagan Valley	144.4	91.2
	Lagan Valley PNU	40.0	36.5
	Thompson House	35.0	35.0
	Ulster	563.4	589.2
	Ulster MHU	14.8	24.0
Northern	Antrim	452.8	480.9
	Braid Valley	36.3	0.0
	Causeway Hospital	254.4	233.0
	Dalriada	32.0	32.0
	Holywell	226.9	175.5
	Mid Ulster	99.7	27.1
	Moyle	22.8	18.0
	Robinson Memorial	23.8	25.0
	Whiteabbey	112.9	44.2
	Whiteabbey PNU	17.0	0.0
Southern	Craigavon Area	506.7	464.6
	Craigavon Area PNU	67.3	74.0
	Daisy Hill	250.4	206.8
	Longstone	85.8	34.4
	Lurgan	59.8	51.0
	Mullinure	29.6	0.0
	South Tyrone	34.6	45.0
	St Lukes	135.2	52.3

Trust	Hospital	Average Available Beds	
		2009	2013 ^P
Western	Altnagelvin Area	496.4	476.6
	Erne/South West Acute	213.0	215.6
	Gransha	109.0	62.0
	Lakeview	52.2	24.0
	Tyrone & Fermanagh	101.9	93.2
	Tyrone County	57.0	44.0
	Waterside (Ward 1-4)	78.0	66.0

Source: KH03a

P The data shown for 2013 is provisional and may change.

Note – Forster Green, Braid Valley, Whiteabbey PNU and Mullinure Hospital are now closed.

Serious Adverse Incidents in Hospitals

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how many serious adverse incidents have there been in each hospital in each of the last five years; and of these, how many have been reported to the families.

(AQW 30947/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of Serious Adverse Incidents cannot be provided by hospital because in some cases the numbers are so small (i.e. less than five). The Department will not publish numbers less than five in order to protect patient confidentiality.

Summary information on the total number of SAIs reported during the period 1 January 2009 to 30 April 2010 is outlined below. The information for this period is not immediately available analysed by Hospital or Trust.

Information on the total number of SAIs reported by Trusts for the period 1 May 2010 to 31 December 2013 is shown in a separate table below.

Figures for 2013 are not completely comparable with previous years as the definition of an SAI and the associated guidance has been revised over time, most recently in October 2013

A Serious Adverse Incident is defined as any event or circumstance that led or could have led to serious unintended or unexpected harm, loss or damage.

Total Number of SAIs reported during the period 1 January 2009 to 30 April 2010

Year	No of SAIs
1 January 2009 – 31 December 2009	287
1 January 2010 – 30 April 2010	75
Total	362

Total number of SAIs reported by Trusts for the period 1 May 2010 to 31 December 2013

Trust	01/05/10 – 31/12/10	01/01/11- 31/12/11	01/01/12 -31/12/12	01/01/13- 31/12/13	Total
Belfast	37	79	77	85	278
Northern	29	49	63	131	272
South Eastern	25	37	47	57	166
Southern	33	49	41	57	180
Western	22	28	37	53	140
Total	146	243	269	386	1044

The issue of overall Trust compliance with guidance on involving families is still being considered. In three of the five Serious Adverse Incident cases highlighted in the media, guidance on involving families in investigations does not appear to have been adhered to.

New Health Centre in Ballymena

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the new health centre in Ballymena is due for completion.

(AQW 30968/11-15)

Mr Poots: The building of the Health and Care Centre at the Braid Valley Hospital site, Ballymena, is due for completion in early May 2015. It is anticipated that the Trust will occupy the new building in phases, all of which should be completed to enable the facility to open by autumn 2015.

New Health Centre in Ballymena

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances he can give that work on the new health centre in Ballymena is achieving value for money.

(AQW 30971/11-15)

Mr Poots: I can confirm that the business case process applied to all capital projects by my Department, including the development of the Ballymena Health and Care Centre, encompasses value for money assessment in line with the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGAEA) as laid down by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Following approval of the business case in respect of the Ballymena Health and Care Centre in March 2012, tenders for the Health and Care Centre project were received from 7 shortlisted contractors. In accordance with Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy, tender evaluation and acceptance was based upon both Quality (20% weighting) and Cost (80% weighting) to achieve the most economically advantageous tender for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. The Quality element took into account contractor proposals for sustainable development and maintainability.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust: Independent Review into the Investigation of Procurement Issues

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that the Senior Director of Corporate Management in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust is in a position to act on the 72 recommendations contained in the report on the Trust's procurement, why the Trust is commissioning an independent review into the investigation of procurement issues; and how much this review will cost.

(AQW 30984/11-15)

Mr Poots: The report on the Special Investigation into Estates at the Northern Health and Social Care Trust was published in January 2014 and made recommendations for correcting the internal control weaknesses identified. The Trust is acting to implement these recommendations.

The Trust has commissioned an independent review to examine the management and/or governance weaknesses which allowed the internal control weaknesses to happen and where appropriate, identify matters of potential employee misconduct. It will cost up to £28,000.

Dementia Friendly Communities Information Session

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what support is available to people with dementia; and whether they will consider attending the Dementia Friendly Communities information session in Parliament Buildings on 26 February 2014.

(AQW 30986/11-15)

Mr Poots: As dementia services are a health matter this question has been transferred to my Department.

Following the publication of The Dementia Strategy for Northern Ireland in November 2011, an Action Plan was developed to report progress on the implementation of the strategy. The Action Plan focuses on a number of initiatives including Reducing the Risk or Delaying the Onset of Dementia, Raising Awareness, Prompting Early Assessment and Diagnosis, Supporting People with Dementia and Supporting Carers

The Health and Social Care Board has invested £2m in Memory Services with more staff in attendance at memory clinics to enhance support for people and their carers when they receive their diagnosis. H&SC Trusts are introducing a Dementia Navigator service located close to memory clinics to enable service users and their carers to navigate the range of various support services available.

Three work streams, under the auspices of the Joint Programme on Dementia which is co funded by Delivering Social Change and Atlantic Philanthropies, are due to start work from April 2014. These will cover training requirements for staff as well as people with dementia and their carers, awareness raising and innovative short breaks/ respite.

Unfortunately due to prior diary commitments I was unavailable to attend the Dementia Friendly Communities information session.

People Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what respite services are available in each Health and Social Care Trust for people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

(AQW 30997/11-15)

Mr Poots: Details of Health and Social Care Trusts' respite provision for people with Multiple Sclerosis in Northern Ireland are attached.

Belfast HSC Trust

People aged 18-65 with MS in the Belfast Trust area have access to a range of respite provision including nursing and residential homes with appropriate RQIA registration.

Belfast Trust has a recurrent contract with the MS Society to provide a range of respite services for people with MS. These include yoga, neuro physiotherapy, counselling, art classes, exercise classes, aromatherapy, hand massage, mindfulness course, computer class, bowls, outings, history talks, and reminiscing class.

The Trust also contracts with a wide range of voluntary and independent organisations to provide a range of services for people with disabilities, including MS. These organisations have expertise in working with a full range of disabilities. The ultimate goal is to ensure the equality and social inclusion of people with disabilities.

The Trust has three day centres for people with disabilities providing a range of rehabilitative, social and respite functions which can be accessed by people with MS – Beech Hall in West Belfast, Woodlands in North Belfast, and Island Resource Centre in East Belfast.

Some service users are in receipt of direct payments which are used to purchase respite services tailored to their individual needs.

Northern HSC Trust

People in the Northern Trust area with MS have access to a range of respite provision including nursing and residential homes with appropriate RQIA registration; the MS unit in Dalriada; Thompson House in Lisburn; Foster Green Brain Injury Unit in Belfast and the Share Centre in Lisnaskea. Respite is also provided by way of respite grants from the voluntary sector; used to help people to go away for respite breaks and also through Direct Payments.

Southern HSC Trust

People aged 18-65, diagnosed with MS in the SHSCT area, are provided with respite in nursing and residential homes, at the Neurology Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital, at Thompson House in Lisburn and at Newry Hospice. Respite is also accessed through the flexible use of Direct Payments.

The Trust also support patient's application to receive funding for a short break/ respite care through the MS Society's short break fund

South Eastern HSC trust

Within South Eastern Trust there are 7 neurological respite beds situated in Thompson House Hospital which can be accessed by people with MS. In addition, people with MS may avail of the usual range of respite options, including residential or nursing homes or domiciliary based services.

Western HSC Trust

Within the Western HSC Trust area, people with MS have access to respite provision including Spruce House, Londonderry (in-patient respite); the MS Unit in Dalriada; the Share Centre in Lisnaskea; Strangford Lough Lodge Disabled Holiday Centre in Portaferry and at a range of nursing and residential homes –

Hill Crest Nursing Home, Omagh; Silverdale Nursing Home, Castlederg; Woodmount Nursing Home, Strabane; Culmore Manor, Londonderry; Longfield PNH, Londonderry; Brooklands Nursing Home, Belfast; Cornfield Care Home, Londonderry; Deanfield PNH, Londonderry; Daleview House, Londonderry; Edgewater, Londonderry; Templemoyle, Londonderry; Rush Hall, Limavady.

Specialist Local Counselling Services

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what resources his Department provides to specialist local counselling services to provide early intervention services to primary school age children who need specialist care.

(AQW 31008/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available. Specialist care for children covers a wide spectrum of services including child protection, exposure to domestic abuse, child mental health, disability and life limiting conditions.

Children's needs are assessed using the Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) Framework. In accordance with assessed need, a range of early intervention support services are provided, some in conjunction with colleagues in Education.

Core children's services such as Child Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS), Community Paediatrics and Children with a Disability are provided across the continuum of childhood. These services include counselling, and also include areas such as behaviour management, bereavement counselling, and more specialist/ clinical interventions to assist children and their families to manage or understand specific conditions.

Royal Victoria Hospital Accident and Emergency Department

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of patients that attended the Royal Victoria Hospital Accident and Emergency Department, broken down by residents in each local council area, on each day from 4 to 9 of January (i) 2011; (ii) 2012; and (iii) 2013.

(AQW 31020/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of attendances at the Royal Victoria emergency care department, during the period 4th – 9th January is detailed in the tables below for each of the last 3 years, by local council area.

Attendances at the Royal Victoria Emergency Care Department between 4th and 9th January 2011, by Local Council Area

Local Council Area ¹	04/01/ 2011	05/01/ 2011	06/01/ 2011	07/01/ 2011	08/01/ 2011	09/01/ 2011	Total
Antrim	3	2	2	0	2	1	10
Ards	3	2	2	1	1	2	11
Armagh	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ballymena	0	2	0	1	0	1	4
Ballymoney	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	4	2	1	0	0	0	7
Belfast	106	118	108	90	87	94	603
Carrickfergus	5	7	7	4	4	8	35
Castlereagh	5	4	7	7	2	10	35
Coleraine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cookstown	1	0	0	0	0	3	4
Craigavon	0	1	0	1	1	2	5
Derry	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Down	3	8	7	3	2	2	25
Dungannon	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Fermanagh	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Larne	2	1	2	2	1	0	8
Lisburn	35	20	28	22	28	22	155
Magherafelt	0	1	2	0	1	2	6
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry & Mourne	2	0	0	1	2	3	8
Newtownabbey	13	9	9	11	5	4	51
North Down	2	2	0	5	0	2	11
Omagh	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Strabane	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Ireland	188	179	175	150	137	157	986

Source: Symphony

1 Local Council Area has been derived from the patients home postcode.

Attendances at the Royal Victoria Emergency Care Department between 4th and 9th January 2012, by Local Council Area

Local Council Area1	04/01/ 2012	05/01/ 2012	06/01/ 2012	07/01/ 2012	08/01/ 2012	09/01/ 2012	Total
Antrim	0	0	5	3	1	0	9
Ards	1	1	2	0	0	1	5
Armagh	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Ballymena	0	0	2	0	1	1	4
Ballymoney	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Banbridge	2	1	3	4	2	2	14
Belfast	122	138	129	103	102	167	761
Carrickfergus	11	3	6	4	7	5	36
Castlereagh	15	18	21	16	14	19	103
Coleraine	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cookstown	0	0	2	2	0	1	5
Craigavon	2	5	0	1	1	3	12
Derry	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Down	3	5	4	2	6	6	26
Dungannon	0	0	0	1	2	1	4
Fermanagh	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Larne	2	2	4	0	1	4	13
Lisburn	43	34	34	28	30	34	203
Magherafelt	0	1	1	0	3	1	6
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry & Mourne	0	1	3	0	1	2	7
Newtownabbey	11	12	13	8	9	15	68
North Down	6	4	2	1	2	3	18
Omagh	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
Strabane	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	221	226	233	176	183	268	1,307

Source: Symphony

1 Local Council Area has been derived from the patients home postcode.

Attendances at the Royal Victoria Emergency Care Department between 4th and 9th January 2013, by Local Council Area

Local Council Area ¹	04/01/ 2013	05/01/ 2013	06/01/ 2013	07/01/ 2013	08/01/ 2013	09/01/ 2013	Total
Antrim	4	2	3	4	4	3	20
Ards	4	0	0	1	3	2	10
Armagh	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Ballymena	1	1	1	2	1	2	8
Ballymoney	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	3	1	2	1	2	2	11
Belfast	141	110	112	142	138	120	763
Carrickfergus	8	4	5	10	9	4	40
Castlereagh	16	10	9	17	11	13	76
Coleraine	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Cookstown	0	0	1	1	2	1	5
Craigavon	2	0	1	1	3	0	7
Derry	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Down	4	3	1	5	3	6	22
Dungannon	0	1	1	1	3	1	7
Fermanagh	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Larne	1	3	3	5	4	2	18
Lisburn	36	33	35	47	41	35	227
Magherafelt	1	2	2	4	3	1	13
Moyle	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Newry & Mourne	2	1	0	2	2	1	8
Newtownabbey	17	10	8	11	14	8	68
North Down	5	1	0	4	1	0	11
Omagh	0	0	1	2	0	1	4
Strabane	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	248	182	185	262	248	203	1,328

Source: Symphony

1 Local Council Area has been derived from the patients home postcode.

Water Fluoridation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to the introduction of water fluoridation.

(AQW 31060/11-15)

Mr Poots: Children in Northern Ireland have the worst oral health in the United Kingdom. The last national survey of children's dental health, published in 2003, revealed that 61% of our five year old children have obvious dental decay experience compared to the UK average of 43%. For fifteen year

olds it was 78% compared to the UK average of 57%. In 2012, over 5,200 children attended hospital for a general anaesthetic to have almost 24,600 teeth extracted. It is clear that something needs to be done to address this problem and reduce the gaps with the rest of the United Kingdom and, indeed, Europe.

Water fluoridation can also improve adult oral health, and by delivering fluoride to 'hard to reach' groups, has the potential to lead to a reduction in health inequalities. Fluoridation of the water supplies is internationally recognised as the most effective, cost-effective and equitable way of improving dental health and its effectiveness and safety is endorsed by many reputable health bodies. A recent European Commission report found there is a negligible environmental impact.

I continue to consider the wide range of evidence and garner the opinions of my Executive colleagues on this sensitive matter before coming to a decision.

If a proposal to fluoridate water supplies is made, the appropriate evidence from reputable scientific and medical sources would be considered, and my Department would consult and ascertain public opinion.

Procedures, Protocols and Practices: Safety for Patients

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances his Department receives from Health and Social Care Trusts that staff comply with existing procedures, protocols and practices in place to ensure maximum safety and protection from infection for patients placed in their care; and that non-compliant staff are held to account through measured and appropriate disciplinary action.

(AQW 31061/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Controls Assurance Standard (CAS) for infection prevention and control is the main mechanism that provides the Department with assurances that staff working in Health and Social Care Trusts comply with existing procedures, protocols and practices to ensure maximum safety and protection from infection for patients in their care. This CAS is supported by a publication entitled Ten Elements, which is designed to strengthen board-to-ward assurance on healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs). Controls Assurance Standards (CAS) are a component of the Health and Social Care governance and accountability arrangements, and the CAS for infection prevention and control (IPC) helps to ensure that IPC is an integral part of Trusts' risk management regime. The IPC standard requires that "There is a managed environment, which minimises the risk of infection, to patients, staff and visitors". The standard is based on existing statutory, mandatory and best practice guidance and is reviewed and updated.

Changing the Culture 2010 (CtC 2010), is the strategic regional action plan for the prevention and control of HCAIs in Northern Ireland, and provides the context for each Trust's HCAI action plans. Objective 1 in CtC 2010 is to "ensure that all health and social care settings provide a safe environment", and the first commitment under this Objective is concerned with strengthening board-to-ward assurance for the prevention and control of HCAIs. In July 2012 the Department published Ten Elements as a practical guide to help Trust Board members, Non-Executive Directors in particular, to understand and focus on the key elements of board-to-ward assurance with regard to HCAIs. The ten elements are: Leadership; Culture; Communicating with patients and relatives; Clean hands; Isolation; Antibiotics; Learning; Audit; and Closing the loop.

For each of the elements there is a statement describing infection prevention and control in a high-performing Trust, and features that should be in evidence. The aide-mémoire includes examples of the kind of focused questions that Trust Board members should ask about IPC, and provides useful web links.

Ten Elements is intended to complement the information that Trust Board members, Chief Executives and Directors receive routinely, and to offer a concise and clear overview written in non-technical language.

Staff who do not comply with existing procedures, protocols and practices to ensure maximum safety and protection from infection for patients will be held to account for their conduct under existing disciplinary procedures.

Since the restoration of devolved government in 2007, Health and Social Care staff have achieved significant reductions in HCAs: between 2006/07 and 2012/13 MRSA episodes in hospital in-patients were reduced by 72% from 248 to 72, and over the same period *Clostridium difficile* episodes in in-patients aged 65 and over were reduced by 67% from 1026 to 338. While it is important to acknowledge the substantial progress that HSC staff have made, it is more important to maintain the focus on reducing HCAs and making our hospitals safer. Reducing HCAs will continue to be a priority and I will continue to set challenging targets for the Trusts.

Innovative Technologies in the Delivery of Health Care

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made in using innovative technologies in the delivery of health care.

(AQW 31067/11-15)

Mr Poots: Technological solutions are increasingly being deployed across the HSC to create a more networked approach, facilitating the delivery of services remotely and improving communication both across the health sector and between health professionals and patients.

The most significant development in recent months has been the implementation of the Electronic Care Record (ECR), a web-based portal system which gives healthcare professionals a single, secure overview of key information about their patients. The ECR aggregates the information which was previously held on a variety of systems across acute, community, primary and social care, ensuring that the correct information is available to clinicians where and when it is needed.

We are also seeing increased provision of services through remote and mobile platforms. This reflects a growing provision of services at community level and a requirement for healthcare professionals to work across multiple sites. For example, in January this year the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust installed a new data centre facility which is enabling the implementation of a 'Bring Your Own Device' and mobility strategy. This will give the Trust's healthcare professionals secure access to patient information from any location using any device. 'Virtual clinics' are being established to facilitate communication between patients and clinicians – an example is the remote diabetes service which came into operation last year between the Ulster Hospital and Bangor Community Hospital using a video-conferencing facility. It is proving popular with patients who are no longer required to travel to Belfast to attend appointments.

There is also a remote telemonitoring service which enables patients with long term conditions such as diabetes, congestive heart failure and respiratory disease to have their vital signs monitored remotely. Since its implementation more than 2,500 patients have benefited from the service.

All of these initiatives are making a positive impact on frontline service delivery, giving health and social care professionals more time to devote to patients, supporting the delivery of services built around the needs of service users and ultimately improving the quality of care and the patient experience.

People in the Ards Peninsula Diagnosed with Dementia

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people on the Ards Peninsula are diagnosed with dementia.

(AQW 31081/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF) of the General Medical Services contract, the total number of GP-registered patients diagnosed with dementia is recorded.

The Ards Peninsula is not a defined geographical area under the administrative boundaries currently in use in Northern Ireland. The closest approximation is Ards Local Government District, which encompasses the Ards Peninsula area as far north as Donaghadee, Newtownards town, Comber,

Ballygowan and the area south as far as Killinchy. The North Down area east from Groomsport and Bangor is not included.

There are 640 patients on the dementia registers of practices located in Ards LGD.

The number of patients on the QOF dementia register in each of the 16 practices located in Ards Local Government District (LGD) is shown in table 1 below. It should be noted that patients may not reside in the same LGD in which their practice is located.

Table 1: Number of patients diagnosed with dementia in Ards LGD 2013.

Practice Number	Address	Postcode	Number of patients on the dementia register
Z00276	Donaghadee Health Centre, 3 Killaughey Road, Donaghadee	BT21 0BU	131
Z00259	The Health Centre, 44 High Street, Portaferry, Newtownards	BT22 1QT	17
Z00279	The Health Centre, 44 High Street, Portaferry, Newtownards	BT22 1QT	31
Z00282	The Health Centre, Fowler Way, Ballywalter, Newtownards	BT22 2PY	25
Z00283	Lough View Surgery, 2 Main Street, Kircubbin, Newtownards	BT22 2SP	21
Z00271	Old Mill Surgery, Church Street, Newtownards	BT23 4AS	85
Z00265	The Surgery, 1 Church Street, Newtownards	BT23 4FH	30
Z00278	The Surgery, 1 Church Street, Newtownards	BT23 4FH	45
Z00284	The Surgery, 1 Church Street, Newtownards	BT23 4FH	20
Z00261	Killynether Practice, 2A Frederick Street, Newtownards	BT23 4LR	55
Z00275	Regency Medical Centre, 2A Frederick Street, Newtownards	BT23 4LR	46
Z00263	7A Newtownards Road, Comber, Newtownards	BT23 5AU	25
Z00267	The Health Centre, 5 Newtownards Road, Comber, Newtownards	BT23 5BA	16
Z00273	The Health Centre, 5 Newtownards Road, Comber, Newtownards	BT23 5BA	22
Z00272	16 A The Square, Comber, Newtownards	BT23 5DT	38
Z00254	24 Lisbarnett Road, Lisbane, Newtownards	BT23 6AW	33
Total			640

Register sizes are taken from the Payment Calculation and Analysis System (PCAS) as at National Prevalence Day, 31 March 2013.

Royal Victoria Hospital: Patient Deaths

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many of the five deaths in 2013, that may have been caused by the patients' waiting times at the Royal Victoria Hospital, were referred to the coroner.

(AQW 31085/11-15)

Mr Poots: The duty to report deaths to the Coroner is set out in Section 7 of The Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959. This puts a statutory requirement on every medical practitioner, registrar of deaths or funeral director and every occupier of a house or mobile dwelling and every person in charge of an institution or premises in which a deceased person died, to report a death to the Coroner if it resulted, directly or indirectly, as a result of violence or misadventure by unfair means, or as a result of negligence or malpractice on the part of others, or from any cause other than natural illness or disease for which the deceased had been seen and treated within 28 days of death, or in such circumstances as may require investigation.

In the five cases highlighted in the media, the statutory requirements to report the death to the Coroner have been complied with.

Deaths Involving Serious Adverse Incidents

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all of the deaths in 2013, where Serious Adverse Incident forms were completed, were referred to the coroner on the same day.

(AQW 31086/11-15)

Mr Poots: The duty to report deaths to the Coroner is set out in Section 7 of The Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959. This puts a statutory requirement on every medical practitioner, registrar of deaths or funeral director and every occupier of a house or mobile dwelling and every person in charge of an institution or premises in which a deceased person died, to report a death to the Coroner if it resulted, directly or indirectly, as a result of violence or misadventure by unfair means, or as a result of negligence or malpractice on the part of others, or from any cause other than natural illness or disease for which the deceased had been seen and treated within 28 days of death.

There is no requirement under the Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) procedure to inform the Coroner of a death resulting from a SAI. The principle aim of the SAI system is to identify and promote learning.

The arrangements for reporting deaths to the coroner cover reporting both during normal working hours and also out of hours reporting. The cases were reported promptly to the coroner.

Family Funds: Local Families

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline any disparity between Northern Ireland the rest of the UK in relation to applying successfully to the respective Family Funds; and whether local families are at a disadvantage due to lack of funding.

(AQW 31107/11-15)

Mr Poots: The criteria for applying to the Family Fund for support are the same across the UK. In that respect families in Northern Ireland are not disadvantaged. However, due to an increase in demand for support, I understand the Family Fund has allocated all funding provided by my Department for the current financial year and is unable to process any further applications from families in Northern Ireland.

Officials met with representatives from the Family Fund recently to discuss the current funding situation.

Despite the challenging financial circumstances, I am hopeful of being able to maintain my Departments contribution to the Family Fund again next year.

Guidance on Reporting Deaths to the Coroner

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 30943/11-15, in respect of each of the five deaths reported in the media, to detail the time which elapsed between each death and it being reported to the media.

(AQW 31154/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department is not in a position to answer questions as to when media organisations became aware of these cases.

Daisy Hill Fracture Unit

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the future of the Daisy Hill Fracture Unit, and any further plans to remove services from the Daisy Hill Hospital.

(AQW 31205/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has recently agreed investment of £4 million to support the provision of orthopaedic and fracture services in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area, including Daisy Hill Hospital. This investment will allow the expansion of local assessment and treatment services and the maintenance of the existing fracture clinics at Daisy Hill Hospital.

While the arrangements for the provision of acute and other services remain under on-going review in the context of Transforming Your Care and other drivers, the Health and Social Care Board has confirmed that there are currently no plans to seek the removal of any specific services from Daisy Hill Hospital; the Board continues to work with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust to ensure Daisy Hill and Craigavon Area Hospitals work in a networked system to provide acute care for the residents of the southern area.

Fracture Unit in Daisy Hill Hospital

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for his assessment of the proposal to move the Fracture Unit from Daisy Hill Hospital to Craigavon Area Hospital; (ii) what public consultation has taken place on this proposal; and (iii) whether this proposed move would be on a permanent or temporary basis.

(AQW 31209/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has confirmed that there are currently no plans to remove the fracture unit from Daisy Hill Hospital and, in fact, has recently agreed an additional investment of £4 million with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust to support the provision of orthopaedic and fracture services. This investment will allow the expansion of local assessment and treatment services and the maintenance of the existing fracture clinics at Daisy Hill Hospital.

Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will publish the revised guidance on the termination of pregnancy.

(AQW 31271/11-15)

Mr Poots: Work on termination of pregnancy guidance is ongoing, taking account of the responses to the public consultation on the guidance and the legal advice that I received on lethal fetal abnormality.

I intend to bring the revised guidance to the Northern Ireland Executive as soon as possible.

Sale of Tobacco Products to Under-Age Children

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for details of the test purchasing exercise for the sale of tobacco products to under-age children carried out between 2008 and 2011 in the Craigavon Borough and Banbridge District Council areas, including (i) the number of

premises visited over the period; (ii) the number of occasions when under-age sales took place; and (iii) what this figure represents as a percentage of total sales.

(AQW 31361/11-15)

Mr Poots: The following information in relation to underage sales of tobacco products, for the period covering April 2008 to March 2011, has been made available to my Department by the relevant councils:

	Banbridge District Council	Craigavon Borough Council
(i) Number of premises visited as part of a test purchasing exercise	67	56
(ii) Number of occasions when underage sales took place	17	13
(iii) What this figure represents as a percentage of total sales made during the test purchasing exercises	25%	23%

Accident and Emergency Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the further recent pressures on the Emergency Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 31384/11-15)

Mr Poots: Emergency departments experience fluctuations in the number of patients attending and who need to be admitted to hospital, especially during the winter period. All Trusts have escalation plans in place which enable them to deal with routine winter pressures through a range of measures.

The Belfast Trust has advised that the emergency department in the Royal Victoria Hospital experienced an increase in the number of people attending over the weekend of 22/23 February and into Monday. The Trust monitored the situation very closely put in place several escalation measures including opening extra beds throughout the Trust and calling in extra staff.

Accident and Emergency Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the situation at the Royal Victoria Hospital's Emergency Department on 24 February 2014 that led to escalation procedures being actioned.

(AQW 31385/11-15)

Mr Poots: Emergency departments experience fluctuations in the number of patients attending and who need to be admitted to hospital, especially during the winter period. All Trusts have escalation plans in place which enable them to deal with routine winter pressures through a range of measures.

The Belfast Trust has advised that the emergency department in the Royal Victoria Hospital experienced an increase in the number of people attending over the weekend of 22/23 February and into Monday. The Trust monitored the situation very closely and put in place several escalation measures including opening extra beds throughout the Trust and calling in extra staff.

Department of Justice

Prisoners: Drug Problems

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) when the problem of drugs in prisons was first noted as increasing to a problematic state; (ii) when concerns were first raised to the authorities of an upsurge in supply and usage amongst prisoners; (iii) whether any sustained increase and peak usage

corresponded with the introduction of allowing prisoners to be in charge of their own medication; and (iv) how current statistics compare to those prior to the introduction of allowing prisoners to be in charge of their own medication.

(AQW 30719/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice):

- (i) The level of misuse of drugs in prison has always mirrored that in the community. NIPS has steadily directed more efforts and resources to this problem over the last 15 years.
- (ii) Drug counselling partners, who have worked in prisons since 2000, have noticed an increase in the number of prisoners who use drugs. This situation is confirmed by landing staff.
- (iii) This question should be directed to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.
- (iv) Statistics for any drug testing before the introduction of in possession medication are not held.

Rural Crime Unit

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the measures being taken by the Rural Crime Unit, to combat tractor thefts occurring in E District.

(AQW 30918/11-15)

Mr Ford: In December 2013 the Rural Crime Unit announced an initiative to provide a subsidy to farmers in E and F police districts to encourage them to fit security equipment to farm machinery to combat thefts.

In response to queries, including from Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, the closing date for this initiative was extended to 28 February 2014, to facilitate further dissemination of information regarding this initiative at a local level.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships have been proactive in raising awareness of this initiative and encouraging the local farming community to avail of this subsidy. A recent example of this work was the promotional event held by Banbridge Policing and Community Safety Partnership at the Rathfriland Farmers Co-op Mart on 14 February 2014.

I understand that, to date, eighty eight orders for the security equipment available under the incentive scheme have been confirmed across both districts, and the fitting of this equipment is due to take place in the coming weeks.

A number of other crime prevention measures are proactively operated across E District to combat rural crime, including tractor thefts. These include a Farm Watch scheme, a text alert scheme and bespoke rural information and crime reduction events.

I also understand that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has made two arrests in relation to the recent tractor thefts in E District.

Absconion of Prisoner whilst on Bail

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the current position, in relation to Edward Connors, following his absconion whilst on bail.

(AQW 30932/11-15)

Mr Ford: Edward Connors is currently being held in custody in the Republic of Ireland pending extradition proceedings

Magilligan Prison: Staff Days Lost

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30271/11-15, given that the number of working days lost has doubled in the last three years, what steps are being taken to reduce this figure in the next twelve months.

(AQW 30975/11-15)

Mr Ford: Every effort is made to encourage any member of staff back to work as soon as possible following an assault at work.

NIPS continues to apply the Northern Ireland Civil Service Sickness Absence & Inefficiency Policy and will continue to deal with all absenteeism robustly through an established set of procedures.

NIPS would want to eradicate all assaults on staff, however, the sometimes unpredictable nature of a prison environment does not allow NIPS to provide any such guarantee.

All areas within Magilligan prison are regularly risk assessed and control measures have been put in place to monitor the staff prisoner interface as well as support staff in their dealings with prisoners.

These measures include work area risk assessments which evaluate the effectiveness of control measures such as CCTV, staff training and Control and Restraint training.

Prison Service CCTV Footage

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30520/11-15, why four staff members were suspended in this case if they had not been on duty at the time of, or prior to, the death.

(AQW 31014/11-15)

Mr Ford: The inquest into John Deery's death has still to be held. This is a judicial process and I am unable to comment on matters which will form part of the Coroner's/jury's finding.

Misbehaviour in Court: Legislation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30645/11-15, in light of the content of the answer and taking into consideration the behaviour of some persons, both defendant and non-defendant within the court setting, including applause, cheering, gesturing and verbal outbursts, which would amount to misbehaviour and being rude and/or disrespectful in court, whether he will bring forward legislation to deter such actions which apply across all courts at all levels.

(AQW 31101/11-15)

Mr Ford: The behaviour described in AQW/31101/11-15 could constitute contempt 'in the face of the court'. This type of contempt is normally dealt with at the time of the incident by the court. The judge may, for example, order that the perpetrator be immediately detained for a period of time or may impose a custodial sentence and/or fine.

There are currently no plans to bring forward further legislation to deal with such actions.

Investigations: Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6477/11-15, with particular reference to the last paragraph, to clarify whether, from investigations conducted by the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the actions of staff suspended from duty in connection with the John Deery case were found to have either led directly, or contributed to, his death.

(AQW 31147/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the response I gave the Member to AQW 31014/11-15.

Department for Regional Development

Waste Water Treatment Works

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Waste Water Treatment Works in the (i) Omagh District Council; and (ii) Strabane District Council areas are operating over capacity.
(AQW 26296/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it operates and maintains a wide range of Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs), from septic tanks serving two or more houses to the large Belfast WwTW at Duncrue Street. NIW collects and treats domestic wastewater, storm water and trade effluent discharges which are measured in terms of the equivalent population (PE). NIW continues to invest in improving and maintaining wastewater treatment and is currently achieving its highest ever wastewater discharge compliance. In 2013 over 98% of the population was served by compliant works and this compares with 84.5% in 2007.

- (i) Within Omagh District Council, 13 WwTWs serve population equivalents greater than 250 people of which 6 are currently operating at capacity. 11 WwTWs serve population equivalents between 250 and 50 of which 2 are currently operating at capacity. However it should be noted that of these sites currently operating at capacity all are currently complying with their NIEA Water Order Consent.
- (ii) Within Strabane District Council, 15 WwTWs serve population equivalents greater than 250 people of which 6 are currently operating at capacity. 11 WwTWs serve populations between 250 and 50 of which 1 is currently operating at capacity. However it should be noted the site currently operating at capacity is complying with the NIEA Water Order Consent.

With reference to WwTWs below 50 PE, there are 23 within Omagh District Council and 34 within Strabane District Council area and it would be anticipated that headroom would be limited at many of these sites. However, given the rural nature of these very small works any significant new development is likely to require an increase in treatment capacity.

It is important to note that although Works may be operating at capacity, they may continue to comply with their discharge consent. In these circumstances additional capacity is required before connecting new development.

The funding for the upgrades of the WwTWs is determined by the Utility Regulator during the Price Control (PC) process based on the public sector capital funding available. The funding available and the priority for investment is set out in the Social & Environmental Guidance prepared by my Department. For the PC13 period, 2013-2015, funding is available for the upgrade of 1 site above 250PE within Omagh District Council. Within Strabane District Council funding is available for the upgrade of 3 sites above 250PE. For the PC15 period (2015-2021) NIW plans to upgrade 2 sites in the band between 250PE and 50PE within both Omagh District Council and Strabane District Council. The final list of WwTWs to be upgraded during PC15 will be confirmed following further stakeholder engagement and a final determination by the Utility Regulator in December 2014.

Roads in Major Towns and Cities

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has considered closing off further roads used for cut-through driving or shortcuts in major towns and cities.
(AQW 29553/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department carries out an annual programme of traffic calming works which aims to ensure traffic speeds, primarily in residential streets, are commensurate with local road characteristics. Other measures, such as one-way traffic schemes, may also be considered on occasions in order to make specific routes, in congested or residential areas, less attractive to through traffic.

I am aware that through traffic in congested or residential areas poses a particular risk for pedestrians and cyclists and am keen that their access needs and safety are given a higher priority in my Department's traffic management plans.

When reviewing local traffic management arrangements or within the normal scheme design and development process, officials will consider the potential impact on adjoining streets and determine if further measures are needed.

However, if requests to close particular roads are received, officials will consider these on their specific merits.

Bilingual Traffic Signs

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's position on bilingual traffic signs; and to list any applications for bilingual traffic signs in each of the last eight years. **(AQW 30729/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I can confirm that my Department does not provide bi-lingual traffic signs.

My Department has received two (2) applications for bi-lingual signs in the last eight years:

- Direction signs to the Upper Andersonstown Community Forum; and
- Gateway signs from Belfast City Council.

Locomotive Breakdowns on the Coleraine-Derry Section of the Belfast-Derry Railway

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of locomotive breakdowns experienced on the Coleraine-Derry section of the Belfast-Derry railway since the line reopened following its upgrade; and whether a substitute service was provided on each occasion. **(AQW 30759/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Translink have advised that in the period March 2013 to February 2014, NI Railways have experienced four service failures between Coleraine and Londonderry as a result of train set failures.

Details are as follows:

Cancellations		
24/01/2014	Set failure, Londonderry	16:33 service Londonderry-Coleraine
Bus Substitutions		
29/08/2013	Set failure, Bellarena	07:13 service Londonderry to Coleraine
13/01/2014	Set failure, Londonderry	07:13 service Londonderry to Coleraine
27/01/2014	Set failure, Londonderry	07:13 service Londonderry to Coleraine

During the period a total of 5,118 services were scheduled to operate, resulting in a service failure rate of 0.098%.

The service cancelled on the 24 January did not have a specific bus substitution but existing Ulsterbus services were re-routed to accommodate passengers.

Parking in East Belfast, Dundonald and Comber

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he is aware of the difficulties that people have been experiencing with regards to parking in East Belfast, Dundonald and Comber; and whether he has any plans to develop park and ride facilities for Dundonald, Comber or Newtownards. **(AQW 30769/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I am aware of different parking issues at numerous locations throughout Northern Ireland. Typical issues include the availability and cost of parking, residents' parking as well as the obstruction of roads, footways and private driveways by inconsiderate parking. In Dundonald, for example, I am aware of local concerns relating to parking issues associated with the Ulster Hospital.

I can inform you that, my Department's Transport Projects Division is working through the Park and Ride Strategic Delivery Programme 2013–15 which sets out commitments to be delivered over that period. Future sites and potential locations for Park and Ride facilities throughout Northern Ireland, including Newtownards or Comber, may feature when my Programme Board reviews this programme for future years.

As part of the Belfast Rapid Transit project, my Department has recently received planning approval for a new 520 space Park and Ride site at Dunlady Road, Dundonald. Work is due to start on the construction of this facility in spring 2014. It is anticipated the facility will become operational by the end of 2014. In advance of the introduction of Belfast Rapid Transit in 2017, the facility will be served by existing Translink bus services.

Anti-Social Behaviour on Buses and Trains

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of reported cases of anti-social behaviour, abuse and vandalism on buses and trains in each of the last three years; and the number of successful prosecutions taken against offenders.

(AQW 30828/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised me that the relevant statistics need to be separately reported for bus and rail.

The reported number of recorded incidents of vandalism, and anti-social behaviour information required is as follows.

Calendar Year	NIR					
	Safety-related		Anti-social behaviour		Vandalism	
	No. of incidents	No. of successful	No. of incidents	No. of successful	No. of incidents	No. of successful
2011	78	46	236	42	45	2
2012	85	49	249	40	48	0
2013	51	41	210	42	36	2
Totals	214	136	695	124	129	4

Notes: Safety-related incidents include infringements at level crossings (both vehicles and pedestrians), trespass, etc.

Anti-social behaviour incorporates cases of abuse.

Calendar Year	Ulsterbus/Metro							
	Assaults		Vandalism			Inappropriate behaviour	Disruption by member of public	Intoxication of member of public
	on staff	on passengers	Stone throwing	on board bus	at bus station			
	No. of incidents							
2011	24	21	381	21	5	133	11	5
2012	24	14	310	15	4	139	9	2
2013	16	16	354	18	6	178	9	4
Totals	64	51	1045	54	15	450	29	11

Prosecutions in relation to bus operations are recorded as follows:

Calendar Year				
Ulsterbus	Anti-social behaviour		Vandalism/Criminal Damage	
	No. of incidents	No. of successful prosecutions	No. of incidents	No. of successful prosecutions
2011	0	0	1	1
2012	1	3	0	0
2013	0	0	0	0
Totals	1	3	1	1

There were no successful prosecutions in relation to Metro services.

Puffin Crossings in Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any plans he has to increase the number of puffin crossings in Ballymena.

(AQW 30831/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am pleased to advise the Member that my Department plans to upgrade five existing Pelican Crossings to Puffin Crossings in the Ballymena area within the next financial year.

Four of the crossings to be upgraded are associated with the extensive public realm scheme in Ballymena town centre, which will be delivered by the Council and funded by DSD. The locations of the crossing are:

- Wellington Street (2);
- Broughshane Street near Broadway; and
- Thomas Street.

The other crossing to be upgraded is on Cullybackey Main Street, where the existing zebra crossing is being converted to a Puffin Crossing. My Department's Roads Service, along with NIE, carried out extensive works last summer to move existing overhead services underground and it is planned to carry out resurfacing of both the carriageway and footways throughout the village over the summer months. The crossing upgrade will be provided as part of these works.

Passengers on the Londonderry to Belfast Line

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of passengers on the Londonderry to Belfast line during the 2013/14 financial year compared to the previous three years, in the ten month period to the end of January.

(AQW 30832/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details relevant passenger journey statistics on the Londonderry line for the years in question, up to end of Period 10.

Year	No. of passenger journeys
2013/14	1,760,944
2012/13	1,297,661
2011/12	1,283,080
2010/11	1,214,554

Storm Damage on the Windmill Road, Kilkeel

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Regional Development what work will be undertaken to repair the recent storm damage which occurred on the Windmill Road, Kilkeel.

(AQW 30833/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Windmill Road, Kilkeel remains in private ownership. My Department's Roads Service, therefore, has no responsibility for its upkeep or repair.

20 MPH Speed Limit in Residential Areas

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to list the residential areas subject to 20 mph restrictions; (ii) who identified these areas; (iii) what criteria was used to select these areas; and (iv) who is responsible for enforcing the speed restrictions.

(AQW 30838/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has been creating 20 mph zones with traffic calming measures for many years to improve pedestrian and other vulnerable road user road safety. Their installation has resulted in a considerable reduction in road casualties. With regard to your specific queries I would advise as follows:

Details of the roads with a 20 mph speed limit that my Department has legislated for, from 1996 to date, are available in the Assembly Library;

- (i) Those areas to be made subject to 20 mph speed limits are identified by Traffic Management officials from my Department's Roads Service. This often follows requests for traffic calming received from local residents and elected representatives;
- (ii) The Department's policy document, RSPPG E027: Road Safety Engineering Procedures, sets out the procedures and methodology for assessing streets and areas for the implementation of 20 mph restrictions. For roads to be selected for a 20 mph speed limit, the roads need to be residential in nature and within a traffic-calmed zone containing vertical traffic calming measures; and
- (iii) Responsibility for enforcing speed restrictions on the public road rests with the PSNI. However, as these 20 mph zones include engineering measures to make them self-enforcing, the PSNI will usually only become involved if excess speed remains a road safety issue.

Disposal of the Conlig Reservoirs

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the disposal of the Conlig reservoirs.

(AQW 30843/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Conlig Impounding Reservoirs are surplus to NI Water's requirements and will be disposed of at some time in the future. In disposing of surplus assets, NI Water must ensure that it obtains best price, achieves value for money and maintains high standards of public propriety. Any sale is dependent on a number of factors, not least the market conditions at the time of the sale and the level of expressions of interest.

NI Water has not yet identified a timeframe for offering the reservoirs to the market. However, I have asked NI Water to explore the possibility of transferring ownership of reservoirs within the public sector, before offering them for sale on the open market.

Electric Car Charging Point Parking Bay at the Royal Hotel, Bangor

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development when the electric car charging point parking bay at the Royal Hotel, Bangor will be designated solely for the use of those charging their cars, with appropriate penalties for those using it simply for parking.

(AQW 30848/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Amendments to legislation are progressing to designate one bay for electric vehicles which are charging at the charge point on Quay Street, Bangor. Work is to be completed by 31 March 2014.

Once the bay has been designated Traffic Attendants will issue Penalty Charge Notices (parking tickets) to vehicles which are detected as illegally parked.

Revenue Received from Parking Enforcement Fines

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) recipients of revenue received from parking enforcement fines; and (ii) where this revenue has been allocated within the past two financial years.

(AQW 30851/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is the sole recipient of all revenue from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs).

The revenue from PCNs is used, along with revenue from car parking and other charges, to supplement the overall financing of Roads Service by Central Government.

Parking Enforcement Fines: Craigavon and Banbridge

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how much revenue was obtained from parking enforcement fines within the Craigavon and Banbridge area over the past three financial years; and (ii) how much remains outstanding from unpaid enforcement fines.

(AQW 30852/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) The income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) is not maintained on a town or District Council basis.
- (ii) The amount of outstanding PCN debt, for the whole of Northern Ireland, for the last three financial years is as follows:
 - 2010/11 £531,165.94
 - 2011/12 £686,222.73
 - 2012/13 £1,019,745.94

These figures are, of course, subject to change as debt is recovered.

Disposal of the Craigantlet Reservoirs

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the disposal of the Craigantlet reservoirs.

(AQW 30900/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Craigantlet Impounding Reservoirs, known individually as Ballysallagh Upper, Ballysallagh Lower, Creighton's Green and Church Road, Hollywood are surplus to NI Water's requirements and will be disposed of at some time in the future. NI Water has not yet identified a timeframe for disposal. Disposal will be dependent on a number of factors, including the market conditions at the time of the sale and the level of expressions of interest.

Disposal of the Portavoe Reservoir

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the disposal of the Portavoe reservoir.

(AQW 30901/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Portavoe Impounding Reservoir is surplus to NI Water's requirements and will be disposed of at some time in the future. NI Water has not yet identified a timeframe for disposal. Disposal will be dependent on a number of factors, including the market conditions at the time of the sale and the level of expressions of interest.

Paths: Millisle shops and Beechfield and Ashfield Estate, Donaghadee

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the footpath resurfacing at the (i) Millisle shops; and (ii) the pathways between Beechfield and Ashfield Estate, Donaghadee.

(AQW 30903/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I recall the Member raising these issues with me during my visit with him to Millisle and Donaghadee last year. At that time, my Department undertook to give consideration to inclusion of these schemes, along with others of a more significant scale, on the works programme for 2013–14.

I am pleased to report that schemes, with a total value of approximately £140,000, have been successfully completed at Northfield Road and Cannyreagh Road in Donaghadee, and Masonic Avenue in Millisle.

I can also confirm that the work on the pathways between the Beechfield and Ashfield Estates in Donaghadee is still scheduled to take place before the end of the current financial year.

The Member has also been advised that the footway resurfacing scheme at the shops in Millisle has been re-scheduled for early in the new financial year. This is due to potential conflict with the diversionary route associated with the current road closure on the A2 Whitechurch Road, Ballywalter, which is in place due to the road collapse that occurred during the recent tidal surge.

Assessment of Coastal Roads in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what assessment has, or will, take place of coastal roads in North Down regarding their state of repair following the recent heavy storms.

(AQW 30931/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have placed in the Assembly Library a comprehensive list of the locations, where roads have either been subject to sea wall damage or undermining as a result of storm damage since the turn of the year, including those in North Down.

The estimated cost is currently almost £1.4 million. However, this figure could increase significantly once detailed inspections of sea defences are completed.

Officials are continuing to assess the extent of the damage caused and specific bids for further funding may be required, if repairs cannot be funded from within existing budgets.

Footway Scheme and Railway Cabinet and Barrier in Cullybackey

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on (i) the Footway Scheme; and (ii) the relocation of the railway cabinet and barrier in Cullybackey.

(AQW 30954/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has been working over a period of time on this project to provide a continuous footway link between the village of Cullybackey and Ballymena. To date, approximately 2 kilometres of the footway link have been provided with only a short length in the vicinity of the railway crossing still to be constructed.

Agreement has been reached with Translink regarding the acquisition of land on either side of the level crossing and progress is being made on the acquisition of additional land required, which was previously owned by Pattons (in Administration) and is now in private ownership.

Subject to a successful outcome to these negotiations, my Department is aiming to progress the works by the end of March 2014.

In relation to the relocation of the railway cabinet and barrier, Translink officials advise that an outline design has been developed and approved. A detailed design is currently being prepared following which formal funding approval, by means of an Economic Appraisal, will be required. Projected completion remains on course for autumn 2014.

Road Bridge across the River Bann in Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the estimated costings in each major expenditure category for another road bridge across the River Bann in Coleraine.

(AQW 30977/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: A third bridge across the River Bann at Coleraine, linking Union Street to Castlerock Road, was included in the Coleraine Town Centre Masterplan prepared by the Department for Social Development and Coleraine Borough Council. The Masterplan considered that a bridge would be required at some stage in the future should significant development proposals identified within the Masterplan proceed.

To date, estimated costings are not yet available.

Departmental Bank Accounts

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) any departmental bank accounts that have been inactive for twelve months or more; (ii) the reason they are inactive; and (iii) the balance of each account.

(AQW 30980/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department for Regional Development has no inactive bank accounts.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister for Regional Development how many times he has appeared before his Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30999/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: From my appointment in May 2011 to date I have appeared 11 times before the Committee for Regional Development. During the previous mandate (2007 to 2011) my predecessor appeared on 14 occasions with six of these being in the period in question. Total appearances for the last five years is therefore 17.

These are detailed in the table below:-

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	3	4	5	4

Cyclical Cleaning of Blocked Gullies

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the system in place for the cyclical cleaning of blocked gullies during the winter months.

(AQW 31016/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of more than 550,000 gullies across Northern Ireland. Roads Service aims to inspect and clean, where necessary, all gullies in urban areas twice each year, and gullies in rural areas once each year. This is in line with the Road Maintenance Standards for Safety.

This policy ensures that a reasonable level of maintenance is carried out to drainage systems, taking account of the Department's finite funding and staff resource levels.

In addition, Roads Service undertakes additional inspection and cleaning of gullies at locations where fallen leaves present ongoing problems at certain times of year, or where there has been a history of gullies becoming blocked for other reasons.

Odour Control Equipment

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 30542/11-15, to detail the estimated completion date for the installation of odour control equipment.

(AQW 31080/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Water has advised that the odour plant at Carrickfergus Wastewater Treatment Works will be operational from the end of June 2014.

Money Contributed to Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within the Department for Regional Development; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31140/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: For the purposes of this question, senior management has been interpreted as meaning those staff within the Senior Civil Service (i.e. Grade 5 and above). The numbers of SCS staff in post within my Department fluctuated within each of the 5 years specified.

The amounts of employer's contributions paid to pension schemes for senior management with my Department are detailed below:

Year	Number of Senior Civil Service staff in DRD	Total amount of Employer's Pension Contributions paid £
2009/10	17-19	279,515
2010/11	18-20	316,462
2011/12	17-21	290,403
2012/13	16-19	271,304
2013/14 (to date)	14-17	232,806

Utility Providers: Roads Following Works

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the (i) procedures for dealing with; and (ii) penalties imposed on utility providers who fail to reinstate roads to an acceptable standard following works.

(AQW 31204/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The required standards for reinstatement of roads are set out in the Northern Ireland Road Authority and Utilities Committee (NIRAUC) Specification for Reinstatement of Openings in Roads, a Code of Practice approved by my Department. Procedures for inspection of reinstatements and for dealing with reinstatement failures are set out in the NIRAUC Code of Practice for Inspections.

Where a utility provider fails to reinstate a road to an acceptable standard, the reinstatement defects are reported to the utility company responsible for repair or replacement. Additional inspections are carried out at the utility company's expense to ensure the defects have been corrected.

Where a utility provider's overall performance in terms of reinstatement is found to be unacceptable, the Department can increase inspection levels at the expense of that utility company as part of an improvement plan until the required improvement has been achieved.

Finally, street works legislation makes failure to comply with certain duties, including those related to safety and to reinstatement, an offence. The Courts can impose fines on street works undertakers found guilty of such offences. Details of fines imposed in the last three years were set out in my response to your recent question AQW 31175/11-15.

Department for Social Development

Frontline Services: Savings

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to detail where the £8.3m extra savings, above the 2013/14 target, have been made within the Department and the impact on frontline services.

(AQW 30411/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The £8.3m to which the increased "savings" refer is a cumulative figure over the 3 years to the end of March 2014 and reflects a higher than envisaged level of income available to the NIHE over that period. £1.5m of this relates to this financial year (2013-14), and the balance was generated in 2011-12 and 2012-13. This additional income remained in the operational budget of the NIHE over that period and there has therefore been no adverse impact on frontline services.

Disability Living Allowance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 30085/11-15, to provide the information requested in any available format.

(AQW 30417/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Disability Living Allowance decisions fall into a number of different categories. Claimants can dispute those decisions through the reconsideration and/ or appeal process across the different categories.

The Department of Work and Pensions IT system used to administer Disability Living Allowance does not record the specific Disability Living Allowance category where the reconsideration arose. The table below details the total number of reconsiderations requested a the claimant or instigated by the Department and the number where a more advantageous decision was given in each of the last five years in all Disability Living Allowance categories.

Period	Number of Disability Living Allowance Reconsiderations Received	Number of More Advantageous Disability Living Allowance Reconsideration Decisions
2009/10	8,577	1,841
2010/11	7,469	1,579
2011/12	6,648	1,429
2012/13	6,057	1,511
April 2013 to December 2014	4,181	998

The IT system used by the Tribunal Appeal Services to record appeal outcomes similarly does not record the specific Disability Living Allowance category where the appeal arose. The table below details for each of the last five years the number of Disability Living Allowance appeals that have received a final determination/outcome and how many of those received a more advantageous decision in all Disability Living Allowance categories.

Period	Number of Disability Living Allowance Appeals with a Final Outcome	Number of More Advantageous Disability Living Allowance Appeal Decisions
2009/10	5,147	1,836
2010/11	4,607	1,651
2011/12	3,826	1,511
2012/13	3,819	1,395
April 2013 to December 2014	2,841	944

It is important to note that there may be an overlap of cases in the Reconsideration/Appeal figures as claimants who receive a more advantageous reconsideration decision may still appeal as they remain dissatisfied with the decision. Decisions are normally revised as a result of the provision of new and additional evidence.

Social Housing Development Programme: Homelessness

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how the current Social Housing Development Programme, as well as existing social housing stock, has been changed to reflect (i) the current pressures of homelessness; and (ii) possible changes to housing support under welfare reform. **(AQW 30610/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Homelessness

Supported housing needs have been identified over the three year Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) and the matter is kept under review.

The SHDP currently includes 21 units in the 2014/15 year, programmed specifically for the Single Homeless Needs Group. In the 2015/16 year, there are 42 units programmed specifically for the Single Homeless Needs Group.

Also, General Needs housing delivered through the SHDP is allocated through the Housing Selection Scheme, and will therefore be available for letting to applicants who are owed the Full Homeless Duty (Full Duty Applicants) under the Scheme.

Additional homeless services are also provided and commissioned via the Supporting People Programme and help support services via the voluntary sector.

Welfare reform

With regard to the SHDP, the NIHE is actively encouraging and supporting the inclusion of 1 bed accommodation within all Housing Association new build proposals.

In order to help address any mismatch between existing stock and additional demand from small/single person households, my Department has requested that Housing Associations include a minimum of 200 x 1 bed units within each year of the SHDP.

Currently Housing Associations have indicated the following breakdown of units to be delivered within schemes included on the 3 year SHDP:

2014/15 to 2016/17 SHDP– Housing Mix Units @Jan 2014

Year	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Mix TBC
2014/15	272	1199	710	28	547
2015/16	310	987	557	4	405
2016/17	136	579	430	13	359
Total* With Mix Identified	718	2765	1697	45	

* There are schemes with design and planning still to be considered that do not as yet have final housing mixes identified.

Tenant mobility through re-lets of existing social housing stock – 7000 / 8000 per annum – can also help address the potential impact of welfare reform. To facilitate this, the NIHE have agreed amendments to the housing selection scheme that will be enacted with the introduction of welfare reform in Northern Ireland. This will give priority status to tenants who under-occupy their property and who wish to transfer to a suitable dwelling.

In addition tenants may want to exchange homes with someone who has another tenancy through the exchange scheme. The Housing Executive has re-subscribed for a further 2 years for an online mutual exchange scheme which will continue to be free for Housing Executive and housing association tenants. Any social sector tenant interested in exchanging their home with another social tenant can register details of their current home and the kind of home they want to swap with for free at www.homeswapper.co.uk. After this they will be matched with other social tenants and receive regular updates of suitable exchanges.

The Housing Executive has also carried out an analysis of its existing housing stock and secured preliminary technical advice and costings on the viability of converting larger units of accommodation into one bedroom self-contained units or bedsits. Work is ongoing with plans to conduct a pilot study which will inform any decision to undertake such conversions; more widespread progression of this work will proceed when details of the welfare reform changes in Northern Ireland are known.

Evicted Tenants: Tenancy Agreement

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive tenants have been evicted from their properties as a result of a conviction for an offence relating to their tenancy agreement, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30696/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the wording of the legislation upon which they may ask the Court to grant an Order for Possession, is where the tenant (or a person residing in or visiting the dwelling house) has been convicted of an indictable offence committed in, or in the locality of, the dwelling house.

However, even where the indictable conviction ground has been met, the Court must still be satisfied that it is reasonable and proportionate to make an Order for Possession. In order to meet the

reasonableness requirement, there normally needs to be the demonstration of some sort of impact on the local community. There are a number of factors that the Court will take into account when considering the reasonableness and proportionality of making a Possession Order in any given case; for instance, issues such as continuing nuisance; the length and previous history of the subject tenancy; whether the behaviour of the subject of the conviction was a one-off event; the number of complainants coming forward.

The Housing Executive usually only becomes aware of convictions when a complaint is received and investigations occur. Therefore the conviction of an indictable offence will not guarantee Housing Executive success in possession proceedings. The Housing Executive does not record cases based on conviction alone.

The list below details figures for all cases in which the Housing Executive has repossessed a property where an Anti-Social behaviour case has been opened. This could happen at various stages throughout the process, ranging from a tenant giving up possession prior to a notice being served, to a court granting a decree or the case going to the Enforcement of Judgements Office (EJO).

Total possessions for all repossessions by year where Anti-Social Behaviour is involved:

Year	Number
2007/08	33
2008/09	43
2009/10	54
2010/11	62
2011/12	51

The Housing Executive advises that figures for 2012/13 are not available as their Housing anagement System was being implemented during this time and reporting had been suspended during that period.

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.

Unrecovered Crisis Loans

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development when a recipient of an unrecovered Crisis Loan no longer recieves benefits, what arrangements are in place to pursue recovery.

(AQW 30702/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Where an individual who has a Crisis Loan is no longer in receipt of a Social Security benefit from which deductions can be made, the following arrangements are in place to pursue recovery.

- The claimant is contacted by letter and asked to pay the outstanding balance in full or contact the Social Security Agency to agree a suitable repayment arrangement within 14 days.
- If no response is received, the case will be referred to the Agency's Debt Centre who will attempt to make contact by telephone and letter in order to agree repayment arrangements.
- If the claimant does not respond to the request to agree repayment terms or cannot be contacted then the case will be considered for referral to a private sector debt collection company. The individual will be advised by letter that this action is being taken and of the potential consequences.
- If after a set period of time the debt remains outstanding the case will be returned to the Debt Centre for Civil Proceedings to be considered.
- In cases where a claimant is deceased, recovery from their estate will also be considered.

- If the claimant returns to benefit at any stage whilst the loan remains outstanding the Agency will again seek recovery by deduction from benefit.

Village Regeneration Area

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the funding available to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to secure derelict properties awaiting renovation in the Village Regeneration area; and whether all such properties are waterproofed to protect any occupied adjacent houses.

(AQW 30709/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has a responsibility to secure vacant dwellings and address health and safety issues, including nuisance to neighbouring properties. This is funded through the Housing Executive's Response Maintenance budget.

The Housing Executive do not routinely undertake waterproofing to all vacant properties in the Village area, but have addressed nuisance issues resulting from vacant properties. To date, ten vacant properties have been transferred and rehabilitated by Fold Housing Association. A further twelve, including 108/110 Donegall Avenue, will be transferred to Fold for rehabilitation in March 2014.

Social Housing New Builds: Donaghadee and Millisle

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many social housing new builds are planned for (i) Donaghadee; and (ii) Millisle.

(AQW 30714/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table provides details of the schemes in the Social Housing Development Programme 2014/15 – 2016/17 for Donaghadee and Millisle.

Donaghadee	Units (2014/15)	Units (2015/16)
18 Warren Road	10	0
PSNI site, 5 Millisle Road	10	0
Kilaughey Road	0	24
Beechfield	0	10
Millisle	0	
Moss Road	4	0

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.

Tenants Evicted from Housing Executive Properties on the Grounds of Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many tenants have been evicted from Housing Executive properties on the grounds of anti-social behaviour in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 30736/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the table below provides details, by Housing Executive Regions, for all cases in which the Housing Executive has repossessed a property where an anti social behaviour case has been opened. The Housing Executive has advised that this could happen at various stages throughout the process ranging from:-

- a tenant giving up possession prior to a notice being served;

- a court granting a decree; or
- the case going to the Enforcement of Judgements Office.

Repossession by NIHE Region

NIHE Region	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Belfast	3	4	7	18	0
South	16	21	31	30	25
North	14	18	16	14	16

The Housing Executive is unable to provide figures for 2012/13 as their new Housing Management system was being implemented during that time and reporting was suspended.

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.

Recorded Audio Proceedings in Benefits Appeals Tribunals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development for an update the provision of recorded audio proceedings of benefits appeals tribunals.

(AQW 30741/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Procedural and technical issues involved in the audio recording of tribunal hearings continue to be investigated. A commencement date for the pilot cannot be confirmed at this point.

Welfare Reform Bill: Timetable

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the timetable for bringing forward the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 30756/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I issued an Executive Paper on 28 January for the Executive meetings on 30 January and 13 February, seeking approval for a package of measures designed to shape how Welfare Reform could be implemented in Northern Ireland. This paper was not discussed as a substantive agenda item at either meeting. I remain fully committed to taking the Bill through its remaining legislative stages and am frustrated by the lack of progress.

Employment and Support Allowance Appeals

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of tribunals held to consider Employment and Support Allowance appeals in each of the last three years; (ii) the geographical breakdown of the successful appeals; and (iii) the cost of these tribunals.

(AQW 30757/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information cannot be provided in the format requested as The Appeal Service (TAS) arranges for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) appeals to be heard at venues throughout Northern Ireland determined by the postal district within which the appellant resides. The data is only available by tribunal district.

The Chairman of the Tribunal records whether the decision made on appeal was either more or less advantageous than a previous decision. A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award be made. A less advantageous decision may reduce the allowance or make no change to the original determination. Table 1 sets out the number of ESA appeals held by tribunal district and how many had a more advantageous outcome in the last two financial years and the period 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013.

The average cost of an ESA appeal cannot be provided as resources within TAS are allocated across a wide range of benefit appeals and a number of variables influence the cost. Table 2 sets out the actual expenditure within TAS in each of the last three years, the total number of decisions made and the proportion of which were specific to ESA appeals.

Table 1.

Tribunal District	1st April 2011 - 31st March 2012		1st April 2012 - 31st March 2013		1st April 2013 - 31st December 2013	
	Appeals Held ¹	More Advantageous	Appeals Held	More Advantageous	Appeals Held	More Advantageous
Armagh	150	43	240	77	265	63
Ballymena	398	116	619	188	715	218
Ballymoney	72	35	113	36	106	30
Banbridge	114	29	166	47	205	48
Belfast	2054	705	2939	934	2851	651
Coleraine	259	67	296	96	391	98
Cookstown	88	25	150	41	215	65
Craigavon	479	163	647	222	829	279
Downpatrick	224	66	293	100	348	87
Dungannon	292	105	332	101	510	141
Enniskillen	292	129	296	116	292	119
Limavady	120	60	182	64	215	71
Londonderry	505	235	680	273	882	369
Magherafelt	189	59	203	63	244	75
Newry	369	89	436	135	538	127
Newtownards	324	106	471	166	488	146
Omagh	270	112	288	110	392	150
Strabane	119	49	208	87	251	84
Grand Total	6318	2193	8559	2856	9737	2821

Table 2

Period	Projected/ Annual Spend	Total Number of Decisions Made	ESA Decisions Made
1st April 2011 - 31st March 2012	£5,954,000	12562	6318
1st April 2012 - 31st March 2013	£6,897,000	14561	8559
1st April 2013 - 31st December 2013 2	£5,238,000	14147	9737

Footnotes: Appeals held are final decisions at hearing and exclude adjourned appeals.

This figure is provisional and subject to the final accounts for 2013-14.

Disability Living Allowance Appeals

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of tribunals held to consider Disability Living Allowance appeals in each of the last three years; (ii) the geographical breakdown of the successful appeals; and (iii) the cost of these tribunals.

(AQW 30758/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information cannot be provided in the format requested as The Appeal Service (TAS) arranges for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) appeals to be heard at venues throughout Northern Ireland determined by the postal district within which the appellant resides. The data is only available by tribunal district.

The Chairman of the Tribunal records whether the decision made on appeal was either more or less advantageous than a previous decision. A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award be made. A less advantageous decision may reduce the allowance or make no change to the original determination. Table 1 sets out the number of DLA appeals held by tribunal district and how many had a more advantageous outcome in the last two financial years and the period 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013.

The average cost of a DLA appeal cannot be provided as resources within TAS are allocated across a wide range of benefit appeals and a number of variables influence the cost. Table 2 sets out the actual expenditure within TAS in each of the last three years, the total number of decisions made and the proportion of which were specific to DLA appeals.

Table 1.

Tribunal District	1st April 2011 - 31st March 2012		1st April 2012 - 31st March 2013		1st April 2013 - 31st December 2013	
	Appeals Held ¹	More Advantag- eous	Appeals Held	More Advantag- eous	Appeals Held	More Advantag- eous
Armagh	79	23	91	31	62	14
Ballymena	190	67	214	71	216	71
Ballymoney	46	12	45	16	47	13
Banbridge	60	18	64	16	42	10
Belfast	1,197	405	1,293	436	940	323
Coleraine	170	62	162	64	139	52
Cookstown	78	35	77	22	48	18
Craigavon	247	95	280	97	184	64
Downpatrick	151	47	121	40	107	45
Dungannon	116	48	155	56	105	38
Enniskillen	128	61	164	63	105	42
Limavady	83	38	96	42	62	26
Londonderry	527	308	367	179	256	114
Magherafelt	92	41	100	46	67	19
Newry	169	56	155	61	141	33
Newtownards	263	93	240	90	199	65

Tribunal District	1st April 2011 - 31st March 2012		1st April 2012 - 31st March 2013		1st April 2013 - 31st December 2013	
	Appeals Held ¹	More Advantageous	Appeals Held	More Advantageous	Appeals Held	More Advantageous
Omagh	121	50	92	35	49	18
Strabane	109	52	103	30	72	29
Grand Total	3,826	1,511	3,819	1,395	2,841	994

Table 2.

Period	Actual Spend	Total Number of Decisions Made	DLA Decisions Made
1st April 2011 - 31st March 2012	£5,954,000	12,562	3,826
1st April 2012 - 31st March 2013	£6,897,000	14,561	3,819
1st April 2013 - 31st December 2013 2	£5,238,000	14,147	2,841

Footnotes:

Appeals held are final decisions at hearing and exclude adjourned appeals.

This figure is provisional and subject to the final accounts for 2013-14.

Location of the Land Banks

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to list the location of the land banks owned by his Department.

(AQW 30765/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The location of all land banks owned by my Department as at December 2013 is detailed in the attached annex. This does not include surplus land which is not held for regeneration.

With the introduction of the Reform of Local Government from 1 April 2015 all land banks held by the Department will transfer to the relevant local council.

Annex**BRO****Description**

- 10 Castlereagh St Belfast
- 10 York Road
- 102 Mayo Street
- 118-120 Antrim Road Belfast
- 12 York Road, Belfast
- 12-14 Castlereagh St
- 130-138 Castlereagh St & Clan
- 136-152 Beersbridge Road
- 139/141 Albertbridge Road
- 14 York Road
- 141 Shankill Rd
- 143-145 Shankill Rd
- 15-15A Greenland St Belfast
- 155/157 N/Ards Road
- 16/18 Castlereagh St
- 183-191 Beersbridge Rd
- 184 North Queen St Belfast
- 1A Stormount Lane Belfast
- 2 Connswater St
- 2,4 & 6 Castlereagh Street

- 20 Oldpark Rd Belfast
- 20/24 Castlereagh St Belfast
- 211-217 Beersnridge Rd
- 22-28, 40 Old Park Road
- 232 Newtownards Road
- 25 Rydalmere St Belfast
- 2-6 Bellevue St & 1A Sugerfield
- 269 Albertbridge Road
- 273 Albertbridge Road
- 275 Albertbridge Rd Belfast
- 277 Albertbridge Rd Belfast
- 279 Albertbridge Rd
- 28 Duncairn Gardens
- 284 - 296 Shankill Road
- 286-294 Shankill Rd
- 2A Adam St Belfast
- 3 Stormount Lane
- 301-303 Donegall Road
- 30-34 Oldpark Rd Belfast
- 308 Shankill Road, Belfast
- 310 Shankill Road, Belfast
- 312 Shankill Road, Belfast
- 35-55 Carrs Glen Park
- 36-38 Oldpark Rd
- 42-44 Old Park Road
- 42-48 Shankill Rd
- 44-50 Carrs Glen Park
- 50-55 York Road, Plot B
- 50-58 York Rd Belfast
- 519 Falls Road
- 52/56 Clandeboye Street
- 57-63, Templemore Ave
- 61-63 Donegall Pass
- 8 Castlereagh Street
- 9-11 Welland Street
- 970-976 Shore Rd
- 98/98A Templemore Ave
- Ainsworth Community Centre
- Alessie Car Park
- Armagh House, Ormeau Road
- Ballysillan Pk/Carrs Glen Pk
- Beresford St., Belfast
- Bogtown Glen
- Colin Way
- Community Garden Poleglass
- Cooke St/River Terrace Belfast
- Craven St Youth Club
- Derelict Building Shankill Rd
- Derprob Bd 93-107 Shankill Rd
- Former Nicholl Engineering
- Land Adjacent To Old Colin Woo
- Land Adjoining Dairy Farm
- Land At 1-3 Bellevue St Bfast
- Land At 294-296 Crumlin Rd
- Land At 294-296 Crumlin Road
- Land At 52-126 Ormeau Rd
- Land At Alliance Crescent
- Land At Alliance Rd / Glenbryn
- Land At Ballysillan Park
- Land At Denmark St
- Land At Denmark St, Belfast
- Land At Meadowbank
- Land At North Howard Link
- Lural Glen Shops
- Merkland Place / Cupar Way
- Paisley Park
- Pani Site Springfield Parade
- Property 128-138 Peters Hill
- Ravenhill Reach
- Roe Street, Belfast
- Sites A&B Springfield Rd
- Sites C&D Springfield Rd
- Springfield Dam
- St Mary's Gardens
- Stewartstown Road
- Trading Kiosk Castle Place
- Woodvale Campus Site

BCCRD**Description**

- 109-113 Royal Avenue
- 23-25 Donegall Street
- 38 Bank St
- 42 Waring Street
- 46-50 Kent Street
- BANK SQUARE, BELFAST
- Blackstaff Square Belfast
- Corporation Square
- Custom House Square Open Space
- Donegall Quay - Open Space Ame
- Donegall Quay (Hanover Quay)
- GIRDWOOD ARMY BARRACKS
- GIRDWOOD ARMY BASE
- Gordon Street Open Space
- Lagan - Look Out Amenity
- LAND AT MILLFIELD
- LAND AT SAMUEL STREET
- Lanyon Place Plot 1
- Little Patrick Street
- NORTHSIDE VESTING
- Queens Quay I
- Queens Quay II
- Ravenhill Reach Amenity
- Station Street/Queens Quay
- Tomb Street
- Waring St Open Space
- Writers Square Belfast

RDO**Description**

- 11 Market Square, D'gannon
- 34 Union Place, D'gannon
- Car Park, Coleraine
- Car Park, Cornmill
- Development Site Ulster Bar Corner
- Footpath Main Street, Clogher
- Forkhill
- Grovenor Military Barracks
- Land At Lakeview Road
- Linenhall St Ballymoney
- Main St, Carrickmore
- Main Street, Belleek
- North St Newry
- Old Customs Post, Tullyhommon
- Plumbridge, Co Tyrone
- Queens Parade
- Roadway, Stewartstown
- Rodgers Quay, Carrickfergus
- The Diamond, Castlederg
- Tullyhommon
- Upper North St, Carrick
- Vennel Car Park, Bangor

NWDO**Description**

- Canal St / Dock St Strabane
- City Hotel Site
- Clondermot Site
- Clooney L/Derry
- Fort George
- Galliagh Linear Park
- Gateway Site Strabane
- Land At Foyle Embankment Drd-D
- Land At Jacqueline Way
- Newmarket St Londonderry
- Spencer Road Car Park
- Spencer Road/Lower Fountain Hi
- St Augustine's Site
- William Street

Vacant Housing Executive Properties

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of Housing Executive properties in each constituency that are vacant due to new tenant repairs not being carried out.

(AQW 30766/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the table below details the vacant properties by Housing Executive District Office area that are void because they are awaiting change of tenancy repairs.

Local Office	Change of Tenancy Repairs
North Belfast	16
South & East	20
West Belfast	10
Shankill	19
Bangor	0
Newtownards	7
Castlereagh	12
Lisburn Antrim Street	13
Lisburn Dairy Farm	3
Downpatrick	5
Newry	8
Banbridge	3
Armagh	12
Lurgan	7
Portadown	3
Dungannon	2
Fermanagh	1
Omagh	4
Cookstown	0
Antrim	5
Newtownabbey 1	8
Newtownabbey 2	8
Ballymena	1
Carrickfergus	9
Larne	1
Magherafelt	4
Ballycastle	5
Ballymoney	2

Local Office	Change of Tenancy Repairs
Coleraine	0
Limavady	0
Waterloo Place	0
Waterside	7
Collon Terrace	0
Strabane	9
NI Total	204

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 Dwellings in the East Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive dwellings in the East Londonderry constituency does he estimate will have had double glazing work commenced and completed by the end of the 2015 financial year.

(AQW 30824/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As I indicated in my response to AQW 30044/11-15 the following schemes are in the Housing Executive's double glazing programme for 2014/15:

- Greysteel 110 dwellings
- Kennaught/Roe Mill 159 dwellings
- Coleraine 304 dwellings

It is the Housing Executive's intention to have these completed by the end of March 2015 in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government.

Housing Executive Properties: Kilcooley, Bloomfield and Rathgill

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the timescale for the installation of double glazing in Housing Executive properties in (i) Kilcooley; (ii) Bloomfield; and (iii) Rathgill.

(AQW 30844/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that double glazing schemes are programmed in the above estates as follows:-

- Kilcooley 140 dwellings
- Bloomfield 1 dwelling *
- Rathgill 35 dwellings

All of these properties are included in Phase 1 of the Bangor double glazing mop-up schemes which are likely to commence in the autumn.

* **Note:** Bloomfield estate already has double glazing except for one dwelling which was a previous refusal and the bungalows which are being transferred to Oaklee Housing Association.

Jubilee and Bloomfield Estates: Replacement Insulation

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the 20 properties that require replacement insulation in Jubilee and Bloomfield estates in Bangor.

(AQW 30845/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that this scheme for 18 dwellings is currently going through the necessary approvals process and, if approved, is programmed to start on site in July 2014.

The works will consist of removing the existing blown fibre insulation and installing new bead insulation. Roof space insulation will also be upgraded to current standards. There are also other ancillary works which are house specific. Tenants will be informed of maintaining proper heating and ventilation and a follow up monitoring of the completed scheme is anticipated to gauge the success of the project.

FOI Request DSD/2011-0148

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development why FOI Request DSD/2011-0148, which was lodged on 15 August 2011, was not answered until 6 February 2014.

(AQW 30890/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There has been a regrettable delay in replying to FOI request DSD/2011-0148, I would however advise the member that the information has now been provided.

Jubilee and Bloomfield Areas of Bangor: Insulation

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been spent on consultants for the 20 houses identified in the Jubilee and Bloomfield areas of Bangor as having defective insulation.

(AQW 30899/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they have spent £3,458 + VAT to date on Consultants fees.

Warm Home Scheme: Cost

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 30215/11-15, what was the total estimated cost, in each category of expenditure, of the Warm Home Scheme measures for (i) 01 November 2009 to 31 October 2010; and (ii) 01 November 2010 to 31 October 2011.

(AQW 30955/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the Warm Homes Scheme interventions and costs in the Coleraine Borough Council from 1 November 2009 to 31 October 2011.

Warm Homes Scheme

Intervention	01/11/09 to 31/10/10		01/11/10 to 31/10/11		Totals	
Insulation	318	£182,016	259	£147,600	577	£329,616
Heating	3	£13,923	25	£117,690	28	£131,613
Combined	17	£101,363	22	£103,448	39	£204,811
Totals	338	£297,302	306	£368,738	644	£666,040

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.

Departmental Bank Accounts

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) any departmental bank accounts that have been inactive for twelve months or more; (ii) the reason they are inactive; and (iii) the balance of each account.

(AQW 30979/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are six Departmental bank accounts that have been inactive for twelve months or more. These accounts were opened in 2011-12 for the implementation of the new Central Payment System which is the payment and accounting system for social security benefit expenditure. However the accounts were subsequently not required and four of the accounts have been re-used in preparation for new benefits expected to be implemented under Welfare Reform. The NI Welfare Reform Bill is currently making its passage through the NI Assembly.

The other two bank accounts are maintained to accommodate any future banking requirements that may arise within the Department.

The balance on all the current inactive bank accounts is nil.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister for Social Development how many times he has appeared before his Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31000/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I was appointed Minister for Social Development on 16 May 2011.

The table below outlines the number of occasions that I have appeared before the Social Development Committee.

Year	Number of occasions
2011	2
2012	2
2013	6
2014	0

Housing Needs of People with Mental Health Issues

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department is responding to the housing needs of people with mental health issues.

(AQW 31010/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department responds to the housing needs of people with mental health issues as follows: -

Supporting People provision: -

The Supporting People programme funds housing support services for over 1,400 people with mental health issues:

- 106 accommodation based services and
- 10 floating support services.

The 2013-14 budget for existing services is £11.7m.

Supported Living: -

Supported living (over 1,100 units) is generally provided in shared or self-contained accommodation, either on a single site, in 'clusters' or on a dispersed basis. The supported accommodation schemes also vary in size from small unit size to over 25 units. Over half comprise 10 units or less.

In addition to the varying size of schemes, services also differ in the range and type of support they offer. Some provide a continuum of support from more intensive support for people with more complex

mental health needs, to lower level support associated with move-on accommodation provided on site, in preparation for living in their own homes in the community.

Floating Support: -

The ten floating support services provide a service to over 300 clients at any one time. Floating support helps people to move on from supported accommodation as well as assisting others living in their own homes to maintain their existing independent living arrangements.

The majority of services for people with mental health issues are delivered by the voluntary and community sector.

New service developments: -

In line with addressing future needs as well as the government targets for discharge from long term hospitals, a number of planned service developments are in the pipeline for becoming operational in 2014-15, thus increasing housing support provision for people with mental health issues across Northern Ireland. These include three new accommodation schemes (comprising 30 units) as well as the extension to or remodelling of existing schemes.

Bonnanaboigh, Limavady: PVC Window Replacement Scheme

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development when the PVC window replacement scheme for Bonnanaboigh, Limavady will be completed.

(AQW 31015/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that Bonnanaboigh is one of three double glazing schemes in the East Londonderry constituency which are programmed for 2014/15. The Housing Executive will be firming up the programme for these schemes with the contractor in the next month. Whilst it is not possible to be definitive about the start date at present, it is intended that the schemes – including Bonnanaboigh - will be started and completed by the end of March 2015 in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government.

New Build Accommodation: 2014-15 Financial Year

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Associations he estimates will be engaged in the construction of new build accommodation during the 2014-15 financial year.

(AQW 31159/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Thirteen Housing Associations have committed to participate in the delivery of the Social Housing Development Programme in the 2014/15 financial year.

Social Security Agency's Benefit Entitlement Unit

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently in receipt of Guardians Allowance; and whether he plans to direct the Social Security Agency's Benefit Entitlement Unit to undertake a campaign of awareness in relation to this benefit, particularly for kinship carers

(AQW 31183/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am unable to confirm the number of people currently in receipt of Guardian's Allowance as it is administered by HM Revenue & Customs.

The Social Security Agency's Improving Benefit Uptake team, formally known as the Benefit Entitlement Unit, offers full and confidential benefit checks to assess entitlement to all social security benefits and also to a range of wider benefits, services and supports. Whilst awareness on HMRC allowances is undertaken nationally by HMRC, the Social Security Agency's Improving Benefit Uptake team will signpost claimants accordingly.

Review of Public Administration: Independent Advice Services

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development what arrangements are in place to ensure the appropriate level of funding for independent advice services will be available after the establishment of new councils under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 31191/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department currently funds independent advice services in a partnership arrangement with local councils, through the Community Support Programme (CSP). Under this arrangement my Department provides funding to each of the 26 local councils which in turn add their own funding and take responsibility for commissioning independent advice services in their local areas.

From April 2015, under arrangements for the Reform of Local Government, the 11 new councils will have a duty to make arrangements for community planning in their areas. From April 2015 my Department's funding under the Community Support Programme funding will transfer to the 11 new councils and it will for each council to determine advice provision needs for their areas, having regard to guidance issued by my Department.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will include back boilers in the Boiler Replacement Scheme as an alternative for people who live in areas not served by natural gas.

(AQW 31220/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Boiler Replacement Scheme was designed to improve the energy efficiency of people's homes. The scheme upgrades existing inefficient boilers in central heating systems (i.e. oil, natural gas, LPG) and not solid fuel systems. The current scheme replaces old boilers that have been operational for over fifteen years with a new 'A' rated condensing boiler which on average improves the energy efficiency of a person's home by up to 30%. Solid Fuel back boilers cannot have their operating efficiency increased and therefore, they were not included in the scheme.

Housing Repossessions Taskforce

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development, given that the Housing Repossessions Taskforce will not report until June 2014, what interim measures his Department is taking to ensure that there is a unified and transparent approach from lenders to provide homeowners with every opportunity to remain in their homes.

(AQW 31234/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I established the Housing Repossessions Taskforce in February 2014 to investigate the issue of negative equity and repossessions in Northern Ireland. The Taskforce is due to produce an initial research report detailing the extent and nature of the repossessions issue in Northern Ireland by the end of June 2014. Outcomes from this research will then inform the future work of the Taskforce in making evidence-based recommendations for potential mitigating actions by the end of this year.

It is imperative that homeowners facing repossession have every opportunity to remain in their homes. A representative from the Council for Mortgage Lenders sits on the Taskforce, and I have no doubt that there will be opportunity to examine the role lenders have to play in tackling the issue of repossessions.

Anyone who thinks they are in danger of losing their home due to debt secured on it should seek advice immediately. My Department funds the Mortgage Debt Advice Service, operated by Housing Rights Service, to help those experiencing difficulty making mortgage payments; it can be contacted on 0300 323 0310.

Together: Building a United Community Objective

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the definition of a shared neighbourhood; and what is the target date for the delivery of the Together: Building a United Community objective of ten shared neighbourhoods.

(AQW 31236/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As my colleagues the First and Deputy First Minister outlined to the member in their response to AQW 30621/11-15, the definition of a Shared Neighbourhood is one where a multitude of different traditions live peacefully side by side.

My Department are preparing proposals to meet the objective of ten shared neighbourhoods. I expect the development of these major capital investment projects to take several years to bring to delivery.

Community Support Programme

Mr B McCreagh asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has made the decision to stop funding provision for advice services under the Community Support Programme; and whether money had been ring-fenced for this service.

(AQW 31278/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have not taken a decision to stop funding provision for advice services under the Community Support Programme (CSP). My Department currently funds independent advice services in a partnership arrangement with local councils, through the CSP. Under this arrangement my Department provides ring-fenced funding to each of the 26 local councils, which in turn add their own funding and take responsibility for commissioning independent advice services in their local areas.

From April 2015, under arrangements for the Reform of Local Government, the 11 new councils will be responsible for community planning in their areas and my Department's funding under the CSP will transfer to the 11 new councils. It will be for each council to determine advice provision for their areas, having regard to guidance issued by my Department.

Universal Credit: IT Solution

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development when a final Universal Credit IT solution will be available.

(AQO 5616/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Work and Pensions is further developing the work started by the Government Digital Services to test and implement an enhanced online digital service, which will be capable of delivering the full scope of Universal Credit and make provision for all claimant types.

The Department for Work and Pensions announced on 5 December 2013 that the current planning assumption is that the Universal Credit service will be fully available in Great Britain during 2016.

Welfare Reform: Flexibilities

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has taken account of the issues identified by the voluntary sector and advice sector when drawing up his package of Welfare Reform flexibilities.

(AQO 5617/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Since coming into office in May 2011, I have been listening to the concerns about welfare reform expressed not only by the voluntary and advice sector but by Executive colleagues and a large number of individuals who have written to me on this issue. The outcome of this is that I have developed a package of measures which potentially deals with many of these concerns and which will not only help simplify the social security system but more importantly it will involve measures which protect the most vulnerable in our society.

I hope this package will be seen as significantly addressing the key concerns around welfare reform and will enable Executive colleagues to agree that the Welfare Reform Bill move to Consideration Stage in the Assembly.

Shared Housing

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions he has had with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the shared housing objectives under Together: Building a United Community.

(AQO 5618/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As a Member of the Ministerial Panel for the Together: Building a United Community Strategy, I attended the inaugural meeting of this group on 16 December 2013. This group will meet on a quarterly basis and will set objectives and actions plans; assign resources and targets; and monitor progress to ensure Departmental policies are achieving the objectives of the Strategy, including the shared housing objectives.

Furthermore, from May to November 2013 my officials participated in a number of planning meetings with OFMdFM and other Departments to develop the proposals/objectives for the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

In December 2013 the Good Relations Project Board, comprising officials from all Departments advancing Headline Actions under the Strategy, was established. This group will provide advice to the Ministerial Panel on the effective use of resources and questions of policy and report on delivery and performance against the range of actions and commitments within the Strategy.

Gas Installation

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development to outline any plans the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has for gas installation projects in East Londonderry in the 2014/15 financial year.

(AQO 5619/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing executive has advised that there are three gas installation schemes planned for East Londonderry in their 2014/15 heating programme as follows:-

- 146 dwellings in Coleraine Phase 1
- 130 dwellings in Coleraine Phase 2 and
- 125 dwellings in Limavady.

Welfare Reform: Underoccupancy Penalty

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development what assurances he can give that the under-occupancy penalty will not be implemented as part of Welfare Reform.

(AQO 5620/11-15)

Mr McCausland: None. Until the Executive gives me clearance to do so, I am unable to give any assurances.

Pathfinder Pilot Projects

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the findings of Pathfinder Pilot projects in Great Britain.

(AQO 5621/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Work and Pensions Universal Credit Pathfinder has been designed to test the ICT, the claimant experience and inform the ongoing development of systems before further expansion.

I am not in a position to provide an assessment of the Pathfinder as any evaluation by the Department for Work and Pensions is based on a very limited sample of potential claimants.

My officials are engaged at a number of levels with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that Northern Ireland is aware of progress with the ongoing development of the system and any learning from the operation of the Pathfinder. This is informing decisions as to when the system will go live in Northern Ireland.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the demand for the Disabled Facilities Grant.

(AQO 5622/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Member will be aware that this is a mandatory grant which provides help to carry out essential property adaptations to enable disabled people to remain in their own homes. Eligibility is based on a recommendation from the relevant Occupational Therapist that the proposed adaptations are essential to meet the needs of the disabled person.

It is clear that demand for this grant remains high, taking into account that, between January 2011 and December 2013, the Housing Executive issued 6,380 schedules of works for Disabled Facilities Grants and approved almost £34.7m in Disabled Facilities Grant aid.

Co-ownership Housing

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding has been allocated to Co-ownership housing since May 2011.

(AQO 5623/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The recent economic downturn has generated a number of difficulties for buyers and sellers within the housing market in Northern Ireland and providing assistance to help overcome these difficulties remains a high priority for me.

In conjunction with private finance resources, funding from my Department has allowed Co-Ownership to support the purchase of many affordable homes; helping to meet the aspirations of those seeking to be homeowners but who cannot do so without the assistance the Co-Ownership Scheme brings.

The funding allocated to the Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association since 2011 is as follows:

- 2011/12 £28.25m
- 2012/13 £33m
- 2013/14 £50m

Housing: Private Rented Sector

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his commitment, as contained in the Facing the Future Housing Strategy Action Plan, to review the regulation of the private rented sector.

(AQO 5624/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Strategy contains a commitment to review private rented sector regulation during 2014/15, consult on proposals and to implement any agreed proposals during 2016/17.

I want to focus on improving the regulatory framework in a targeted way which makes the private rented sector a more attractive housing option. The review will be comprehensive and will consider all current regulation contained in the Private Tenancies Order 2006 and 1978 Rent Order. Initiatives introduced and proposals being considered in other jurisdictions will also form part of this review, for example, licensing of private landlords and letting agent practice.

Licensed Premises

Mrs Cameron asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the recent emergency incident at the Odyssey arena, for his assessment of the voluntary code for licensed premises.

(AQO 5625/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As Social Development Minister, I am concerned about irresponsible drinking and drunken behaviour and the negative impact this has on our society. Under the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 it is an offence to sell or supply alcohol to anyone under the age of 18. Enforcement of this law is the responsibility of the PSNI. As I understand it many of the young people attending the recent incident at the Odyssey arena were intoxicated on arrival and were not permitted to enter the venue. It is unclear at this stage where they obtained the alcohol.

Since coming into effect on the 1 September 2012, the Joint Industry Code for the Responsible Promotion and Retail of Alcohol in Northern Ireland (the Code) has been seeking to ensure that the sale and promotion of alcohol is done in a way that promotes responsible consumption.

Following the publication of the first annual report on the Code in November, I am encouraged by the response towards the Code and am satisfied that the role played by the Independent Complaints Panel provides a valuable mechanism for monitoring performance and ensuring compliance.

My Department will be continuing to monitor how the Code is operating and, if I feel it has not been effective in addressing what it set out to do, I reserve the right to bring in legislation.

The Code can only go so far in tackling alcohol misuse. In particular it does not seek to set standards in fixing the selling price of any alcohol product. To this end, I am continuing to work with my colleague, the Minister for Health, to consider a minimum unit price for alcohol. Research is ongoing and it is anticipated that it will be completed within the next few months. This research will help inform future decisions on how price controls can assist in tackling alcohol harm.

Social Housing: Strabane

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his plans to address the shortage of social housing in Strabane.

(AQO 5626/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has identified a five-year projected need for 29 social housing units across the Strabane District Council area as follows:

- Strabane town: 20 units
- Sion Mills 5 units
- Ballymagorry: 4 units

However, as sites have been difficult to source, there are no social housing units currently programmed for these areas in the Social Housing Development Programme for 2014/15 – 2016/17. To publicise the need for land in these locations, they are all listed on the Unmet Housing Need Prospectus – the Housing Executive's publication which outlines areas of housing need and which encourages Housing Associations to identify suitable sites within these areas to address the identified need.

The Housing Executive is also currently examining the potential for any land which it owns that could be used to meet housing need across the Strabane Council area.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 28 February 2014

(AQW 30878/11-15)

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that the following costs have been incurred since the evacuation of Skeagh House on 27 March 2013:

Estates costs - to December 2013.

Professional/Legal Fee (approx)	£16,000
Security Measures & hoarding for protection from debris	£6,000
Total	£16,000

Staff & Goods & Service costs

Payroll Costs	£379,741.31
Goods & Services	£ 33,567.91
Total	£413,309.22

Payroll costs quoted are for displaced Skeagh House staff only.



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