

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 16 May 2014

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

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Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 16 May 2014

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

ILEX Regeneration Company

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, since its inception in 2003, how many years has the ILEX Regeneration Company had a Chief Executive in post.

(AQW 31164/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): Since Ilex Urban Regeneration Company was established in July 2003, the company has had Chief Executives in post for a total of 8 years 7 months.

Gapping and Mapping Exercise on Internet Safety

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the report on the Gapping and Mapping Exercise on Internet Safety was given to the Safeguarding Board NI for amendment; and when they expect to publish its findings.

(AQW 31637/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM wrote to the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) on 10 December 2013 to establish whether, in its capacity as the statutory body charged with safeguarding children, it would be willing to carry out an assessment on the risks identified in the Gapping and Mapping Exercise. At that stage, the Department only provided the SBNI with a copy of the template which was used to carry out the exercise rather than the full report until we had obtained their agreement to carry out the assessment.

This issue was raised during the recent Assembly debate on 10 February 2014 to mark Safer Internet Day and Junior Ministers have now written to the Speaker to provide clarification around this issue.

Officials met with the SBNI on 10 March 2014 and a letter has now been issued to DHSSPS to ask it to commission the SBNI to carry out the assessment.

The safety of children is our paramount concern and we want to make sure that any action we take will not expose children to additional risk. As a result, we are also asking DHSSPS to request advice from the SBNI on whether it is appropriate to publish the gap analysis report at any stage.

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within the Strategic Investment Board; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31816/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and the number of employees involved in the last five years are listed in the table below.

Financial year	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
No of staff (Full yr equivalent)	18	17	24	33	40
Total Pension contribution (£)	154,397	126,039	185,217	265,885	350,319

The Strategic Investment Board pension scheme is a money purchase scheme outside the public sector, not a final salary scheme; and all staff, senior managers and junior staff alike receive the same 10% contribution.

Childcare: Costs/Policy

Mrs Cochrane asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how the recent 2014 UK Budget announcement on help with childcare costs will affect their childcare policy.

(AQO 5998/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The first phase of the Bright Start School Age Childcare Strategy will promote current government assistance with the costs of childcare (childcare vouchers and the childcare element of tax credits) with a view to increasing local levels of uptake.

A particular focus will be on encouraging parents who use childcare services supported under Bright Start to avail of the type of financial assistance most suited to their needs. We are aware of the Coalition Government's plans to introduce a tax-free childcare scheme and we are currently considering this in the local context.

Bright Start

Mr F McCann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Bright Start childcare scheme.

(AQO 6004/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Bright Start School Age Childcare Grant Scheme was launched on 27 March 2014 and is currently open to applicants. The Scheme aims to create or sustain up to 7,000 school age childcare places by assisting current and prospective childcare providers. These envisaged childcare places will begin to address the need for additional school age childcare services. The Grant Scheme will assist childcare settings serving disadvantaged and rural communities, and settings based on the schools estate. The first letters of offer are expected to be issued in the autumn.

Bright Start

Mr Newton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how the proposed 8,000 childcare places under Bright Start will be created and sustained.

(AQO 6005/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Bright Start School Age Childcare Grant Scheme aims to create or sustain up to 7,000 school age childcare places by assisting current and prospective childcare providers. These childcare places will begin to address current unmet need for school age childcare services.

The Grant Scheme was launched on 27 March 2014 and is open to applicants. A second grant scheme – to create up to 1,000 new childminder places in rural areas – is currently in development with a view to launching later in the year.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Hazzard asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the role of the Planning Appeals Commission.

(AQW 33136/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent appellate body operating at arms length from government. It was established under statute to deal with a wide range of land use planning issues and related matters.

The function of the body can be viewed on the following website <http://www.pacni.gov.uk/>.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Hazzard asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the process for appointments to the Planning Appeals Commission.

(AQW 33137/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent appellate body operating at arms length from government. Appointments to the Commission are made by us in accordance with The Planning NI Order 1991 legislation.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Hazzard asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether decisions taken by the Planning Appeals Commission can be overturned.

(AQW 33138/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent appellate body. Given its status, we have asked its Chief Commissioner to provide a response directly to you.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Hazzard asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether, when ruling on planning applications, the Planning Appeals Commission is bound to examine and consider all relevant information including (i) district area plans; (ii) economic development; and (iii) local opposition.

(AQW 33139/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent appellate body. Given its status, we have asked its Chief Commissioner to provide a response directly to you.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Animal Welfare Legislation

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the review of the implementation of Animal Welfare legislation, as agreed by the Assembly on 31 March 2014.

(AQW 33024/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): I welcomed the opportunity to debate the issue of animal cruelty in the Assembly on 31 March 2014 and supported the Motion calling for a review of the implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011. My officials are currently developing terms of reference for the review, which will include engagement with the Department of Justice, and I anticipate the review commencing shortly thereafter.

Poultry Litter

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on allowing farmers to store poultry litter 'on field'.

(AQW 33076/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) Regulations (2011) contain a provision allowing poultry litter to be stored in temporary field heaps subject to certain conditions. These include where, how and for how long poultry litter can be stored on field prior to it being spread as an organic fertiliser. The purpose of these conditions is to reduce the risk of water pollution.

There is also a requirement for field heaps of poultry litter to be notified to and authorised by the NI Environment Agency (NIEA), which is responsible for inspection and enforcement of the NAP Regulations.

Since 2011, 24 field heaps of poultry litter have been notified to and authorised by NIEA.

The provision in the NAP for 2011-2014 for poultry litter to be stored in field heaps was agreed by the European Commission on the basis that it was a temporary rather than being a long term measure.

Given this, and the limited uptake by farmers as evidenced by notifications to NIEA, there does not appear to be a sufficient basis for this provision to continue beyond the end of 2014 and into the next NAP for 2015-2018.

Test and Vaccinate or Remove Research Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Test and Vaccinate or Remove (TVR) proposal is classed as a research project.

(AQW 33078/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Test and Vaccinate or Remove (TVR) proposal is a research project. The proposal for this research emerged following discussion with industry stakeholders in 2012, and was informed by the views of the external experts who attended the international TB vaccination symposium in Belfast in May 2012. At the outset I made it clear that it is vital that we should embark on an intervention research project which could provide a unique contribution or insight into TB in cattle and the reservoir of TB in wildlife, such as badgers. Such research will be unique to these islands and avoid simply replicating expensive interventions or research projects being undertaken elsewhere.

Animal Welfare Legislation

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what contact she has had with local councils following the Assembly motion on 31 March 2014 calling for a review of the implementation of animal welfare legislation.

(AQW 33092/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Enforcement of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 by Councils in respect of non-farmed animals is overseen by a Council-chaired Animal Welfare Project Board, on which my Department is represented.

Following the Assembly Motion on 31 March 2014, my officials are developing terms of reference for the review of the implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 and I anticipate the review commencing shortly thereafter.

While I have not been in personal contact with Councils on this subject since the Assembly Motion, my officials have ongoing contact with the Project Board and are engaging with the Board as the terms of reference are developed.

Annual Salary Payable to Staff

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the average annual salary payable to staff at grades (a) AO/AA ; (b) SO/E01/E011; (c) G6/G7/DP; and (d) Senior Civil Servants at G5 and above.

(AQW 33099/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The average annual gross salaries paid to staff in DARD at December 2013 are detailed in the table below:-

Grade	Average Annual Salary (£)
Senior Civil Servants at Grade 5 and above and analogous grades	£71,339
Grade 6 / Grade 7 / DP and analogous grades	£42,164
SO / E01 / E011 and analogous grades	£26,406
AO / AA and analogous grades	£18,147

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Voluntary Testing Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the future of the voluntary Bovine Viral Diarrhoea testing scheme now that some tag suppliers are introducing charges for retests after they receive a blank disc.

(AQW 33110/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Following my announcement, on 5 December 2013, to make the testing of bovines for BVD compulsory, it is envisaged that the voluntary BVD programme will continue to operate as is until new legislation comes into force. We anticipate that this will be later this year.

Under the current voluntary programme, herd keepers are required to bear the costs associated with the tissue tag and testing, and I do not envisage any change to this when new legislation is introduced, given the clear economic benefits of tackling this disease. The arrangement between the individual herd keeper and tag supplier is a commercial matter and it is for the farmer to use the designated supplier of their choice. I am aware that a small number of samples for testing may have to be retested due to empty sample tags and that there may be a charge, which may vary between suppliers. I have been advised, however, by Animal Health and Welfare NI that the incidence of sample failures is low, approximately 1% of tags are empty, and, therefore, would not envisage the additional tag charges having a significant impact on the future of the BVD programme going forward.

People Appointed to Public Bodies

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is the perceived community background of the total number of people she has appointed to Public Bodies that are sponsored by her Department, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 33151/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: During the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 I made 19 appointments, including re-appointments, to Public Bodies sponsored by my Department. Of these appointees, 6 declared community background as Roman Catholic, 11 as Protestant, 1 as Neither and 1 is Unknown. Eight of these appointments were made jointly with the DETI Minister.

From 1 April 2013 to date I made 4 appointments, including re-appointments, to public bodies sponsored by my Department. Of these appointees, 3 declared community background as Roman Catholic and 1 as Protestant.

Department Headquarters in Ballykelly

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given the recent Wales Audit Office Report which questioned the value for money of Welsh decentralisation of civil service jobs, what plans her Department has in place to ensure that the relocation of departmental headquarters to Ballykelly represents good value for money.

(AQW 33157/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: One of the key recommendations from the Welsh Audit Office Report is to have an established governance arrangement to oversee the programme including the monitoring of benefits and in turn the value for money. The governance arrangements for my relocation programme are well established and this includes representation from the Strategic Investment Board, Property Services, Central Procurement Directorate and Land and Property Services. In addition both I and the Departmental Board receive regular updates on the programme.

We have adopted a phased approach to relocation which allows us to gather and apply lessons learned while measuring benefits as we go. Identifying staff willing to relocate seemed to be a problem for our Welsh colleagues but we have surveyed staff across the wider NICS and have established that there is a demand for posts that would be available in Ballykelly.

I fully expect that the benefits identified in the Welsh report, including the greater decentralisation of posts away from the administrative centre, increased job opportunities in rural areas and the improved working environment for staff, will be realised by our relocation programme. I recently issued a paper for discussion at a future meeting of the Executive about our Programme for Government Target to relocate DARD Headquarters to a rural area.

Department Headquarters in Ballykelly

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the relocation of her Department's Headquarters, what consideration has been given to alternative options rather than building new offices at Ballykelly.

(AQW 33159/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The decision to build a new office at the Shackleton Barracks site in Ballykelly to accommodate my departmental headquarters came at the end of a lengthy and considered process.

The first stage in the process was to develop a long list of potential locations derived from the Spatial Framework contained in the agreed Regional Development Strategy. Each of the 23 local government districts were scored each against a defined set of criteria which included 9 different socio-economic factors considering such things as unemployment levels, deprivation and earnings levels, as well as practical considerations such as the number of public sector and civil service jobs already sited in the area. The top two areas identified in this analysis were both in the North West: Strabane and Limavady.

My decision to select Ballykelly takes into account a number of factors not least that the former Shackleton Barracks is an Executive-owned site.

The options for development within the site were informed by a feasibility study carried out by DFP's Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) which examined the use of existing buildings on the site versus new build. The preferred option in the business case is a new build office block of around 400 workstations, to be available in 2017, followed by an additional block of 200 workstations to be available from end of 2020. A paper on DARD Relocation is with the Executive for consideration.

Cattle Markets: Penalties

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the financial implications on farmers and the farming industry of the penalties proposed by cattle markets should cattle have undertaken more than four moves.

(AQW 33175/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At the outset, I must say that we all want a profitable and sustainable local beef industry with farmers seeing a fair return for their efforts. I am aware that local meat plants have been planning to make significant changes to the pricing structures for in-spec and out-of-spec cattle. I understand that, amongst other things, animals with more than four moves are considered to be out-of-spec. However, given that specifications vary from plant to plant and the application of penalties and associated deductions also vary I am unable to provide an accurate analysis of the overall financial impact of the proposed changes. It is worth noting though that, according to the LMC, since April 2013 less than five per cent of slaughtered prime cattle have been resident on more than four farms, with over 95 per cent of prime cattle slaughtered having been resident on four farms or fewer.

I have met with representatives of the local processing industry to impress upon them my concern about the potential impact of the proposed changes to pricing structures in this difficult trading environment. I informed them that they need to re-think these proposed changes. Clearly, robust traceability is the cornerstone of our beef industry. However, it is not fair that farmers who bought animals in good faith should be penalised by the proposed changes in pricing structure at this difficult time. I have also asked the industry to strive for timely and transparent communication with both the farming representatives and the wider beef industry, when any changes in specification are being proposed.

Whilst changes to in-spec incentives are a commercial matter between the cattle keepers, the abattoirs and the major meat retailers, I hope that the industry can work together to get to a mutually agreeable resolution that will ensure a sustainable local beef farming industry. As part of our customer service my Department is trying to support farmers in meeting the new requirements. Whilst we are not in a position to confirm whether individual animals meet abattoir specifications, we can provide herd keepers with a report on the movement history of all the cattle in their herd, allowing them to calculate the number of farm residencies for each animal. This information is being provided to farmers through local DARD Direct offices. There are also improvements planned in the sharing of cattle movement information which will assist in providing the information essential to the effective marketing of all our animals.

Looking to the future, my Department is already supporting efforts to develop additional export markets to add value to the local industry's output. Most recently Singapore announced it was opening its markets to beef from the north and northern beef sourced from southern cattle.

I trust that this response addresses your concerns and reassures you of my commitment to a successful local beef industry.

Official Movement of Cattle

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to define what constitutes an official movement of cattle.

(AQW 33176/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The identification, registration and movement of cattle is regulated by EC Regulation 1760/2000 and enforced by DARD, the competent authority. An official movement takes place when a correctly identified animal, registered on database of the competent authority, moves from one holding to another holding. In this context the term "holding" may refer to a farm, a livestock market, show or abattoir. The animal must be accompanied by a movement document completed by the keeper of the holding from which the animal is being moved. If the animal is subject to a movement restriction, it must be accompanied by a licence issued by DARD. Both the origin and destination holding must be registered on APHIS as part of the official movement approval process.

Flooding in the Glenone Area of Derry

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to flooding in the Glenone area of Derry, what progress has been made on the issue following the Rivers Agency's meetings with NI Water earlier this year.

(AQW 33374/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rivers Agency staff have been pressing NI Water and their consultants for a solution to the flooding issues at this location caused by the installation of undersized pipes. An undertaking has now been given by NI Water that a proposal will be submitted to Rivers Agency for consideration before the middle of May 2014. Rivers Agency is hopeful that this proposal will provide an acceptable long term solution that will resolve the flooding issues. In the meantime Rivers Agency remains available to provide assistance to any future flooding emergency as required.

Department of Education

Pilot Early Years Programme

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Education to detail the benefits of the pilot Early Years programme to date.

(AQW 33046/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) have been involved in ongoing evaluation of the Early Years pilot and to date the feedback has been positive.

After the first full year of operation of the pilot, ETI indicated that considerable progress had been made and that there was evidence of very good practice developing across the range of pilot settings. ETI also indicated that some evidence showed that, as a result of the work of the pilot teams with parents, there had been a dramatic impact on the home lives of children involved. Some settings reported to ETI that the training is the best that has been provided and that the opportunities for clustering and whole setting training have been invaluable.

A number of stakeholders, including various early years' specialists and an attached Health Visitor, have reported their views on the benefits of the pilot to date and again feedback has been positive. Some of their comments have indicated that staff are better informed, can recognise needs early and can put in place appropriate strategies to help.

The pilot is funded to continue over the summer months and is due to finish in the settings at the end of September 2014 when it will move into its evaluation phase. As well as evaluative work conducted within the pilot, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will complete an independent report following the end of December 2014.

Pilot Early Years Programme

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Education whether he will consider continuing the Early Years pilot programme during the summer months.

(AQW 33047/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) have been involved in ongoing evaluation of the Early Years pilot and to date the feedback has been positive.

After the first full year of operation of the pilot, ETI indicated that considerable progress had been made and that there was evidence of very good practice developing across the range of pilot settings. ETI also indicated that some evidence showed that, as a result of the work of the pilot teams with parents, there had been a dramatic impact on the home lives of children involved. Some settings reported to ETI that the training is the best that has been provided and that the opportunities for clustering and whole setting training have been invaluable.

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within the pilot, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will complete an independent report following the end of December 2014.

Primary Schools in the Foyle Constituency: Budget Reduction

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education to detail the primary schools in the Foyle constituency that have experienced a budget reduction in 2014/15; and the (i) 2013/14; and (ii) 2014/15 budgets for the affected schools.

(AQW 33066/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Of the 40 primary schools in Foyle constituency, 10 have seen a reduction in funding against last year's budget allocations. Nine of the schools have lost pupils since last year; with the other school losing 4 Year 2 (Foundation Stage) pupils. Many of the schools have also seen a reduction in the number of FSME pupils.

It should be remembered that budget allocations for individual schools change on an annual basis due, not only to demographic or estate changes at that individual school, but also due to the total impact of all demographic and school estate changes and the size of the Aggregated Schools' Budget.

In line with my commitment that no school would lose funding in 2014-15 solely as a result of any changes I made to the Common Funding Formula, 3 of these schools were awarded transitional funding of between £1,018 and £2,725.

Whilst the remaining 7 schools experienced a budget reduction, this was less than it would have been, had I made no changes to the formula and the budget.

School	Total CFF Funding for 2013/14	Primary School Transitional Funding	Total 2014/15 Funding Including Transition
Craigbrack PS	188,835	1,018	150,331
Hollybush PS	1,079,212	2,725	1,041,234
Mullabuoy PS	366,533		350,182
Culmore PS	306,592	1,421	292,285
St Eugene's PS, Derry	591,476		578,730
Bunscoil Cholmcille	437,970		428,390
Groarty Integrated PS	178,457		175,228
Holy Family PS, Ballymagroarty	1,395,287		1,392,901
Chapel Road PS	600,058		598,961
St Anne's PS, Derry	1,192,677		1,192,291

Hollybush Primary School, Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education to outline the rationale for reducing the budget for Hollybush Primary School, Derry in 2014/15.

(AQW 33067/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is important to note that individual school budgets are impacted not just by the number and type of pupils within an individual school but by changes to the school population and estate as a whole.

If I had made no changes to either, the Common Funding Formula or the budget, Hollybush Primary School's allocation in the current year would have been £1,041,234, some £37,978 less than it received last year.

It is important to note that Hollybush Primary School has 14 fewer pupils this year than last year. Hollybush Primary School's per capita figure is £2,636 – hence the loss of 14 pupils would result in a loss of just under £37,000. In addition, Hollybush Primary School has lost funds for Teacher Salary Protection (TSP) and Foundation Stage funding of approximately £2,000 but has gained funding under the new support for Looked After Children in 2014-15.

These funding losses are not due to my changes and would have impacted the school due to changes in overall Teachers salary costs for the sector and the school's pupil profile as well as pupil numbers.

When I announced my final decisions on changes to the Common Funding Scheme on 13 March 2014, I announced that transition payments would be made to those schools whose budget under the new arrangements is less than the school would have received, had the Common Funding Formula and budget remained the same as in 2013-14. Hollybush Primary School received £2,725 under this transitional funding for 2014-15.

Home to School Transport: Spend

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what percentage of the Education budget has been spent on home to school transport in each of the last five financial years.

(AQW 33095/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The percentage of the Education budget which has been spent on home to school transport in each of the last five financial years is listed below:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
% of Total Budget spent on Transport	4.25%	3.66%	3.68%	3.82%	4.37%

Notes:

- 1 2013/14 information is provisional at this stage.
- 2 Budgets exclude Youth as transport costs are incurred in respect of the Schools element of the DE budget.

Early Years Capacity Building Pilots

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether the multi-disciplinary teams put in place to deliver Special Educational Needs Early Years Capacity Building pilot projects will be kept together to continue their work during the evaluation phase once the pilots have been completed.

(AQW 33098/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Early Years pilot is due to end in the pre-school settings at the end of September 2014 and will be followed by an evaluation phase ending in December 2014. Following on from this, a full evaluation of the pilot will be completed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

In preparation for the Early Years pilot ending in September, DE in conjunction with the Education and Library Boards will consider the possibility of any interim arrangements that might be made, subject to the availability of funding. Decisions on what might be the future shape of SEN early years provision beyond the pilot stage will not be made until the final ETI evaluation has been considered.

Whilst I recognise the importance of collaborative working, there is no provision for the continuation, beyond September 2014, of the pilot multi-disciplinary teams as they currently stand.

Early Years Capacity Building Pilots

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education when the results of the Early Years Capacity Building pilots will be evaluated; and what plans are in place to build on the progress which has been made in identifying and supporting children with special educational needs.

(AQW 33104/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Early Years pilot is due to end in the pre-school settings at the end of September 2014 and will be followed by an evaluation phase ending in December 2014. Following on from this, a full evaluation of the pilot will be completed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

In preparation for the Early Years pilot ending in September, DE in conjunction with the Education and Library Boards will consider the possibility of any interim arrangements that might be made, subject to the availability of funding. Decisions on what might be the future shape of SEN early years provision beyond the pilot stage will not be made until the final ETI evaluation has been considered.

Whilst I recognise the importance of collaborative working, there is no provision for the continuation, beyond September 2014, of the pilot multi-disciplinary teams as they currently stand.

Early Years Capacity Building Pilots

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what consideration he is giving to continuing and mainstreaming the multi-disciplinary work of the Special Educational Needs Early Years Capacity Building pilots across the Education and Library Boards.

(AQW 33105/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Early Years pilot is due to end in the pre-school settings at the end of September 2014 and will be followed by an evaluation phase ending in December 2014. Following on from this, a full evaluation of the pilot will be completed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

In preparation for the Early Years pilot ending in September, DE in conjunction with the Education and Library Boards will consider the possibility of any interim arrangements that might be made, subject to the availability of funding. Decisions on what might be the future shape of SEN early years provision beyond the pilot stage will not be made until the final ETI evaluation has been considered.

Whilst I recognise the importance of collaborative working, there is no provision for the continuation, beyond September 2014, of the pilot multi-disciplinary teams as they currently stand.

Pilot Projects

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to list the pilot projects that his Department has sponsored since June 2011.

(AQW 33106/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The pilot projects sponsored by the Department of Education since June 2011 are:

A voluntary pilot of Computer Based Assessment in primary schools;

Unique Learner Number;

Full Service Schools based at Belfast Boys and Girls Model Schools in North Belfast;

Full Service Community Network in West Belfast;

Léargas Irish Language Programme;

Teacher e-Portfolio; and

Joint QUB/UU Post-Primary PGCE in Main Subject with Special Educational Needs Education and Inclusion;

Early Years Pilot;

The Educational Testing Pilot;

Nurture Units Signature Project,

Sentinus Smart Gear Programme.

Attacks on Teachers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of attacks on teachers in each of the last five years.

(AQW 33203/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
BELB	62	31	40	42	32
NEELB	*	13	14	24	15
SEELB	11	15	32	20	34
WELB	6	10	7	6	9

The Southern Education and Library Board advised that it was unable to provide figures as it does not hold a complete record. CCMS advised that it does not hold this information. *The 2009/2010 figures for the North-Eastern Education and Library Board cannot be provided as the small numbers involved would require a high level of suppression to prevent the identification of an individual, in line with the confidentiality principle of the Statistics Authority's Code of Practice on Official Statistics.

Details provided do not include Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated schools.

Assaults on teachers, or any other staff in schools, whether physical, verbal, written or electronic are intolerable, totally unacceptable and must be condemned.

All the key stakeholders in education must work together and stand together against any abuse or violence directed at the workforce. Teachers and support staff, and indeed pupils too, should feel secure and protected in the school environment. Teachers must be allowed to carry out their duties without fear for their personal safety.

My Department will continue to work with the employing authorities and teachers unions to explore ways of preventing violence and abuse against teachers and support staff who are subjected to it.

Co-operation on this issue has included a workshop hosted by my Department and a working group established by the Teachers' Negotiating Committee. A policy statement on tackling violence against teachers was issued in June 2011 and in November 2012, the NI Teachers' Council issued a follow-up leaflet to all teachers explaining what they should do and where they can get support, if they are subject to violence or abuse.

The Department will also continue to co-operate fully with the police with regard to any advice and recommendations about the protection of teachers and school staff.

Attacks on Teachers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what additional strategies are being pursued by his Department to protect teachers from violent attacks.

(AQW 33204/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
BELB	62	31	40	42	32
NEELB	*	13	14	24	15
SEELB	11	15	32	20	34
WELB	6	10	7	6	9

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The Department will also continue to co-operate fully with the police with regard to any advice and recommendations about the protection of teachers and school staff.

Pilot Early Years Programme

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education whether his Department would reconsider the decision to end the Early Years pre-school Pilot Programme.

(AQW 33209/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Early Years pilot began in 2011/12 and will finish at the end of September 2014. It was initially intended to run for 2 school years but I secured funding to extend the pilot for 12 months to September 2014. I believe that this has provided sufficient time to conduct a proper and thorough evaluation of the work. As well as evaluative work conducted within the pilot, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will complete an independent report.

The Department of Education in conjunction with the Education and Library Boards will consider the possibility of any interim arrangements that might be made, subject to the availability of funding. Decisions on what might be the future shape of SEN early years provision beyond the pilot stage will not be made until the final ETI evaluation has been considered.

School Boards of Governors

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the reconstitution of school Boards of Governors in terms of (i) how many vacancies existed; and (ii) how many application were received to fill those vacancies.

(AQW 33219/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At the reconstitution of school Boards of Governors all governor posts are subject to renewal. In relation to the governor posts which are currently open to public recruitment the information is as follows:

	(i) Number of Posts	(ii) Applications received
DE Governor Posts	1056	1226
ELB Governor Posts	2415	2300

The size and composition of the membership of school Boards of Governors is determined by the Education Orders and the schemes of management for grant-aided schools as approved by the Department.

The owners or former owners of schools, which include the four main Churches, have the right to nominate a proportion of the members and elections are arranged for parent and teacher members.

The reconstitution process includes a number of stages and normally takes 12 to 18 months to complete. Most Boards of Governors will be reconstituted and in operation by the end of 2014.

Elective Home Schooling

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what powers Education and Library Boards have in relation to pupils who are receiving elective home schooling.

(AQW 33226/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The legislation which applies to the education of pupils of compulsory school age, including pupils who are receiving elective home education, confers specific powers on both the Education and Library Boards (the Boards) and on parents.

Article 44 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 requires that the Boards have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils shall be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

Article 45 (1) of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 places a duty on parents of children of compulsory school age to ensure that the education provided to their child, whether by regular attendance at school or otherwise – which can include elective home education - is suited to the child's age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

Schedule 13 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, which makes provision for the enforcement of Article 45 (1), places a duty on the Boards to ensure that children in their area are receiving a suitable education and that parents fulfil their duty in this regard.

Where it appears to a Board that a parent of a child of compulsory school age in its area is failing to perform the duty imposed by Article 45(1), the Board can serve on the parent a notice requiring him/her, within a set period, to satisfy the Board that the child is, by regular attendance at school or otherwise, receiving efficient and appropriate full-time education.

In cases where a parent fails to demonstrate that the education provided meets the child's specific needs the Board may, in accordance with Schedule 13 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, serve a School Attendance Order (SAO) on the parent to require that the child becomes a registered pupil at the school named in the order. Where a parent applies for the order to be revoked

the Board may do so if the parent has demonstrated that suitable arrangements have been made for the education of the child. If considered necessary, a Board may make application for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) to the Family Proceedings Court. Legal provisions for ESOs and Care Orders are contained in the Children (NI) Order 1995. The effect of an ESO is that the responsibility for securing the child's education is removed from the parents and transferred to the Board named in the order.

The Boards may also provide support to parents who chose to home educate including advice and guidance on suitable learning materials, on training or examination options. The level of training and advisory support will relate to the age and developmental profile of the child.

Devenish College

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education why a new build has not been provided for Devenish College.

(AQW 33244/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A Development proposal has been approved for the amalgamation of Devenish College and Lisnaskea High School.

An Economic Appraisal recommending a new build school for 800 pupils on the Tempo Road site has been submitted to the Department for consideration.

Following approval to the Economic Appraisal the WELB will proceed to appoint an Integrated Design Team to take forward the design/planning of the new school.

Slemish College, Ballymena

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how he plans to improve the resources and capital provision for Slemish College, Ballymena.

(AQW 33279/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Following an application by Slemish College to the Schools Enhancement Programme (SEP), and the completion of a scoping report and economic appraisal (EA), the following proposal was deemed to be the most appropriate to address the issues for the school within the SEP criteria:

"Implementation of new sports hall, floodlit synthetic pitch and three tennis courts. Repairs to existing rugby pitch."

The estimated value of the project is between £3 - 4m. The Department is currently proceeding with the procurement of professional teams. Progression to the construction stage will be subject to availability of funding.

Elective Home Education

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Education to outline his Department's policy on Elective Home Education.

(AQW 33320/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 sets out the statutory duty which applies to parents and to the Education and Library Boards in relation to the education of children of compulsory school age including those who are educated at home.

This permits pupils to be educated in accordance with their parents wishes (Article 44), with the requirement that parents ensure that the education provided to their child, whether by regular attendance at school or otherwise – which can include elective home education - is suited to the child's age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have (Article 45 (1)).

In addition, Schedule 13 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, places a duty on the Boards to ensure that children in their area are receiving a suitable education and that parents fulfil their duty in this regard.

Where it appears to a Board that a parent of a child of compulsory school age in its area is failing to perform the duty imposed by Article 45(1), the Board can serve on the parent a notice requiring him/her, within a set period, to satisfy the Board that the child is, by regular attendance at school or otherwise, receiving efficient and appropriate full-time education.

In cases where a parent fails to demonstrate that the education provided meets the child's specific needs the Board may, in accordance with Schedule 13 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, serve a School Attendance Order (SAO) on the parent to require that the child becomes a registered pupil at the school named in the order.

The Boards may also provide support to parents who chose to home educate including advice and guidance on suitable learning materials, on training or examination options. The level of training and advisory support will relate to the age and developmental profile of the child.

Nursery School Provision: Hollywood Area

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education what action the South Eastern Education and Library Board are planning to take to increase nursery school provision in the Hollywood area.
(AQW 33342/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has advised that, at the end of stage one of the pre-school admissions process, 16 pre-school places remained available in the Hollywood area. At that time, 17 children had not received the offer of a pre-school place; six of whom had applied after the closing date for stage one.

The SEELB has also advised that it has engaged a new provider for stage two of the process which will provide between eight and twenty additional pre-school places, depending on demand. Hollywood Nursery School also applied for, and has been granted, temporary flexibility for an additional eight pre-school places for the 2014/15 academic year.

Children Removed from School During Term Time

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education how legal judgements which allow children to be removed by non-resident parents from school during term time for the purpose of holidays can be deterred.
(AQW 33345/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department will not take any action, nor will intervene in any respect, in relation to orders made by a court.

Children Removed from School During Term Time

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to prevent court orders being granted to non-resident parents which enables them to remove children from school during term time for the purpose of holidays.
(AQW 33346/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department will not take any action, nor will intervene in any respect, in relation to orders made by a court.

Pre-School Places: Ballycastle

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 33037/11-15, of the 88 children placed, how many were placed in their first preference location.
(AQW 33378/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that, of the 88 children offered a funded place at stage one of the pre-school admissions process, 81 were offered a place in their first preference setting.

St Patrick's Primary School, Mullanaskea

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education to list the townlands included in the catchment area for St Patrick's Primary School, Mullanaskea.

(AQW 33393/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not set catchment areas for schools. Should a school set catchment area as a criterion for entry, it is the responsibility of that school's Board of Governors to define the nature and extent of the catchment area. The townlands in which pupils attending Mullanaskea Primary School in the 2013/14 school year reside, are listed below:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ Moneynoe Glebe or Chanterhill | ■ Beagh |
| ■ Killee | ■ Bellanaleck |
| ■ Cavanaleck | ■ Carntrone |
| ■ Cavanacross | ■ Carrowkeel |
| ■ Killyvilly | ■ Coolbuck |
| ■ Shankill | ■ Drumsluice |
| ■ Cavanalough Glebe | ■ Killyhevin |
| ■ Mullanaskea | ■ Tamlaght |
| ■ Breagho | ■ Tonystick |
| ■ COA | ■ Tullykelter |
| ■ Agharainy | ■ Tullyrain |
| ■ Cavancarragh | ■ Ballintarsan |
| ■ Ballyreagh | ■ Ballydoolagh |
| ■ Garvary | ■ Breandrum |
| ■ Ballylucas | ■ Cackinish |
| ■ Cavantillycormick | ■ Cornagrade |
| ■ Drumclay | ■ Glasdrumman |
| ■ Tattygare | ■ Killyculla |
| ■ Windmill Hill | ■ Killykeeran |
| ■ Cooltrain | ■ Kilmacormick |
| ■ Derryraghan | ■ Mullyknock or Topped Mountain |
| ■ Killynure | ■ Tattymacall |
| ■ Largy | ■ Tullynagarn |
| ■ Lissan | ■ Woaghternerry |

Department for Employment and Learning

Rathmoyle Day Centre, Ballycastle

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail whether (i) Rathmoyle Day Centre, Ballycastle incurred any financial penalties within the past 6 years when employing further education tutors to teach young people with learning disabilities that cannot attend the local college; and (ii) day care facilities in general occur a fee for this type of service.

(AQW 33043/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):

- (i) All matters relating to the finances of Rathmoyle Day Centre, including whether or not they incur costs for engaging with further education colleges, are issues for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). I have been advised by DHSSPS that Rathmoyle Day Centre has incurred no financial penalties within the past 6 years for utilising further education tutors to teach young people with learning disabilities who cannot attend the local college.
- (ii) The issue of fees charged for the delivery of provision by further education colleges in third party organisations is an arrangement exclusively between the parties involved. My Department has no role in these arrangements.

Rathmoyle Day Centre, Ballycastle

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 32625/11-15, how many times in the last 6 years Rathmoyle Day Centre, Ballycastle has applied to have further education tutors teach young people with learning disabilities that cannot attend their local college.

(AQW 33048/11-15)

Dr Farry: As stated in my response to AQW 33043/11-15, matters relating to Rathmoyle Day Centre are issues for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). I have been advised by DHSSPS, that over the past six years, Rathmoyle Day Centre has had tutoring in Information Technology and Literacy & Numeracy, provided by Northern Regional College, on five occasions.

Adult Day Care Facilities

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to list the names of adult day care facilities in the Northern Trust area, that have had further education tutors taking courses, in the last 5 years.

(AQW 33289/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise that, in the last five years, Northern Regional College and South West College have provided further education tutors to deliver courses at adult day care facilities in the Northern Trust area.

I have attached at Annex A, the list of adult day care facilities in the Northern Trust area in which further education tutors have delivered courses in the last five years.

ANNEX A**Adult Day Care Facilities in the Northern Trust Area in which Further Education Tutors have delivered courses, in the last five years and in which provision is currently being delivered.**

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| ■ Cookstown Adult Centre | ■ Antrim Adult Centre |
| ■ The Base in Cookstown | ■ Antrim Day Centre |
| ■ Armour Day Centre | ■ Magherafelt Adult Centre |
| ■ Pavestone Vocational and Leisure Rehabilitation Centre | ■ Maghera Day Centre |
| ■ Rathmoyle Resource Centre | ■ Wilson House Day Centre |
| | ■ Hawthorns Adult Centre |

Drumross Adult Centre Adult Day Care Facilities in the Northern Trust Area in which Further Education Tutors have delivered courses, in the last five years, but where courses are no longer being delivered currently.

- The Base Ballycastle
- Gloucester Park Day Centre
- Larne Adult Centre
- Inniscoole Day Centre
- Millbrook Adult Centre
- Mountfern Adult Centre

Student Union: Legality of Ban

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the legality of a student union introducing a ban on wearing a poppy.

(AQW 33299/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Departmental Solicitor's office advised that as student unions meet on college premises the matter of the legality of any activity (including wearing any item such as a poppy) is a matter for the college authority, not the Department.

Departmental officials contacted the Equality Commission NI for its views. Its guidance for employers and service providers is that the wearing of poppies, in a respectful manner and within the appropriate period, should not be regarded as something which would cause offence, and that there is no requirement under equality law to exclude people wearing poppies from the workplace or from other premises.

Departmental officials also sought the view of Queen's University Belfast who stated that the Students' Union at Queen's promotes an inclusive and neutral environment which is used by students from all backgrounds, both undergraduate and postgraduate, home and international. The Students' Union is fully committed to actively promoting equality of opportunity and to respecting and celebrating cultural diversity. In line with these values, Queen's University Belfast has stated that any student wishing to wear a poppy in the Students' Union is free to do so.

Occupations of People Registered as Unemployed

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to list the (i) sought occupations and; (ii) usual occupations by people unemployed, or registered as unemployed, from April 2013, in the Dungannon and South Tyrone area.

(AQW 33303/11-15)

Dr Farry: Please find attached table at Annex 1 which lists the sought occupations of clients claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area for the period 1 April 2013 to 8 May 2014. The data in the table relates to clients who attended Dungannon and Enniskillen Jobs and Benefits offices. Occupations are recorded on the Employment Service's Client Management System using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) which is a common classification of occupational information for the United Kingdom. Data on clients' usual occupations is not available.

ANNEX 1

TABLE SHOWING SOUGHT OCCUPATIONS FOR JOBSEEKERS IN THE DUNGANNON AND SOUTH TYRONE AREA (1 APRIL 2013 – 8 MAY 2014)

Standard Occupational Classification	No. of Jobseekers
Sales Assistants	1330
Skilled Construction Trades	1020
Food / Drink Process Operative	818
Clerical Occupations	676

Standard Occupational Classification	No. of Jobseekers
Driver / Machine Drivers	636
Semi Skilled Construction	465
Other Professions	361
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	355
Cleaners	324
Skilled Engineering Trades	314
Childcare	280
Teaching Professionals	255
Care Assistant / Nursing Auxiliary	232
Kitchen/Counter Staff	222
Stores / Despatch Operatives	193
Auto Trade	192
Bar Staff	177
Corporate Managers and Administrators	171
Total	8021

Employers: Dungannon and South Tyrone

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any requests from employers in Dungannon and South Tyrone regarding upskilling.

(AQW 33379/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Skills Solutions service has received 36 upskilling requests from employers in Dungannon and South Tyrone across a range of sectors in the 2013/14 financial year and to date in 2014/15.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Procuring Products and Services

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether companies in receipt of funding from her Department have a duty to prioritise procuring products and services locally.

(AQW 33091/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Attaching such a duty to Invest NI grant support is not possible as this would contravene the EU State Aid and DeMinimis aid regulations that Invest NI schemes operate under. These rules contain a general prohibition on providing “aid contingent upon the use of domestic over imported products”.

Constraint Charges Paid to Electricity Generators

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for a breakdown of the constraint charges paid to electricity generators, broken down by fuel source, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 33189/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not hold this information. However, I am informed by the Single Electricity Market Operator (SEMO) that the following constraint charges have been paid for the tariff years 2011/12 and 2012/13 and the period October 2013 to April 2014:

NET CONSTRAINTS PAYMENTS AND CHARGES BY FUEL TYPE (IN € MILLIONS)

Fuel Type	Time Period (Tariff Year)		
	Oct 2011 - Sep 2012	Oct 2012 - Sep 2013	Oct 2013 - Apr 2014
Coal	34.47	-44.27	-16.64
Distillate	2.90	1.92	1.31
Gas	69.42	79.04	57.55
Multi	18.07	115.76	89.90
Oil	8.34	6.55	4.12
Peat	0.29	0.27	0.07
Interconnector	1.23	-0.47	-1.37
Demand Side Unit	0.00	0.00	-0.01
*Total	134.71	158.80	134.92

* Totals subject to rounding

SEMO has further advised that the values presented are total net figures for each fuel type. Positive values indicate a net payment from the market to the generators and vice versa.

Fibre Optic Broadband: Coopers Mill, Dundonald

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether there are any plans to extend fibre optic broadband provision to Coopers Mill in Dundonald.

(AQW 33262/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project announced on 7th February, aims to provide improvements in access to a basic fixed line broadband service of 2Megabits per second and to increase the availability of superfast broadband of 24Megabits per second, or more. It is anticipated that the project will deliver more choice and improved broadband speeds to some 45,000 premises across Northern Ireland.

Detailed planning is still ongoing and I am unable at this time to provide information on the exact nature of the improvements or the full postcode areas that will benefit from this funding. Plans will be developed on a phased basis that will consider the technical feasibility of the solution for an area coupled with the objective of delivering maximum value for money as well as aiming to benefit the greatest number of premises.

Further details on the roll-out will be published as they become available and DETI officials are currently looking at the most appropriate mechanisms for doing this.

Broadband Provision: Newtownabbey Area

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on future broadband provision in the Newtownabbey area.

(AQW 33341/11-15)

Mrs Foster: On 4 February 2014 my Department signed a contract with BT for delivery of the £23.5 million Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement project, the aim of which is to provide improvements in access to a basic broadband service of 2 Megabits per second (Mbps) and increase the availability

of superfast broadband services of 24 Mbps or more. It is anticipated that this project will bring more choice and improved broadband speeds to over 45,000 premises across Northern Ireland by the end of 2015.

A number of postcodes covering Newtownabbey and the surrounding area (BT36 and BT37) were included in both the basic and superfast broadband intervention areas identified for the project (available on the DETI website at <http://www.deti.gov.uk/deti-telecoms-index/deti-telecoms-whats-new.htm>).

BT has commenced the project implementation phase and is currently undertaking an extensive survey and design process using an agreed engineering model that has been used across the UK and which addresses technical feasibility, quality of existing infrastructure, reasonable costs and number of anticipated customers.

Until this is complete, it will not be possible to be precise as to which areas or premises are likely to benefit but the aim is to seek to achieve the greatest value for money and the highest number of beneficiaries.

Further details on the roll-out will be published as they become available and DETI officials are currently looking at the most appropriate mechanisms for doing this.

Department of the Environment

Draining of Portavoe Reservoir

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the environmental damage resulting from the draining of Portavoe reservoir by NI Water.

(AQW 32981/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) met with NI Water (NIW) in 2012 for initial discussions on how best to minimise the environmental impact that could potentially result from the emptying of 17 reservoirs. The lowering of the water levels is necessary in order to carry out essential maintenance work related to the inspection and planned valve replacement works required from a health and safety / reduction in flood risk perspective.

NIEA officials have met with NIW officials and their consultants to discuss mitigation measures. As part of these measures NIW commenced draining Portavoe Reservoir in autumn 2013, well before the start of the breeding season for wildfowl (such as grebes, ducks and swans) although there will be temporary displacement of some these birds during this breeding season. The work has also had an impact on a local population of swan mussels, where water levels have been lowered the mussels have been left exposed and have died. However, NI Water has advised NIEA that by way of mitigation a proportion of the mussels are to be collected alive and transferred to a temporary holding facility. They propose to return these mussels to the reservoir on completion of the works, thereby creating a seed population.

The above mitigation measures are being adopted to try to ensure that the essential valve replacement works are undertaken in a manner that will reduce the impact on the wildlife. NIW is currently reviewing its approach and drafting a revised action plan to ensure that the remainder of the work will not further adversely impact upon the wildlife living within or around Portavoe reservoir. NIW officials have been unable to give an exact timeframe for this revised action plan, however they have assured me that once drafted by NIW it will be shared with local stakeholders.

After visiting the site and considering the species affected by the water level lowering it is the assessment of the NIEA Wildlife Team that no breaches of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 have occurred during the water lowering at Portavoe Reservoir.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Scrabo Tower

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he will take with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to ensure that Scrabo Tower will reopen to the public at the earliest possible opportunity.

(AQW 33018/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I appreciate the historical and cultural importance of Scrabo Tower and the deep attachment that many people feel towards it. Its closure, following severe water ingress, is an unfortunate but necessary temporary measure to ensure visitor safety.

The ingress of water has compromised the Tower's internal electrical supply and caused slippery, unsafe conditions within the Tower structure. As a first step, the NIEA has asked electrical experts to specify the actions needed to quickly restore a safe electrical supply to the tower.

The Agency is also arranging for immediate maintenance to address the other physical risks. In addition, I have instructed officials to introduce longer term improvements so that in future, visitors' enjoyment of this important landmark is uninterrupted.

It is my aim to ensure that the building is once again safe for the public to visit and enjoy at the earliest opportunity.

Driver and Vehicle Agency Staff

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) number; and (ii) location of Driver and Vehicle Agency workers in Northern Ireland, other than those based in Coleraine.

(AQW 33029/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There is currently a total of 681 permanent staff based outside Coleraine in the Driver and Vehicle Agency. These staff are based in 14 locations, excluding Coleraine. The staff numbers and location are as detailed in the table below.

Town/City	No. of Staff in Each Location
Armagh	31
Ballymena	39
Belfast	229
Cookstown	32
Craigavon	48
Downpatrick	30
Enniskillen	27
Larne	25
Lisburn	32
Londonderry	44
Mallusk	34
Newry	32
Newtownards	48
Omagh	30
	681

Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Dunluce Castle

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the management structure of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency at Dunluce Castle.

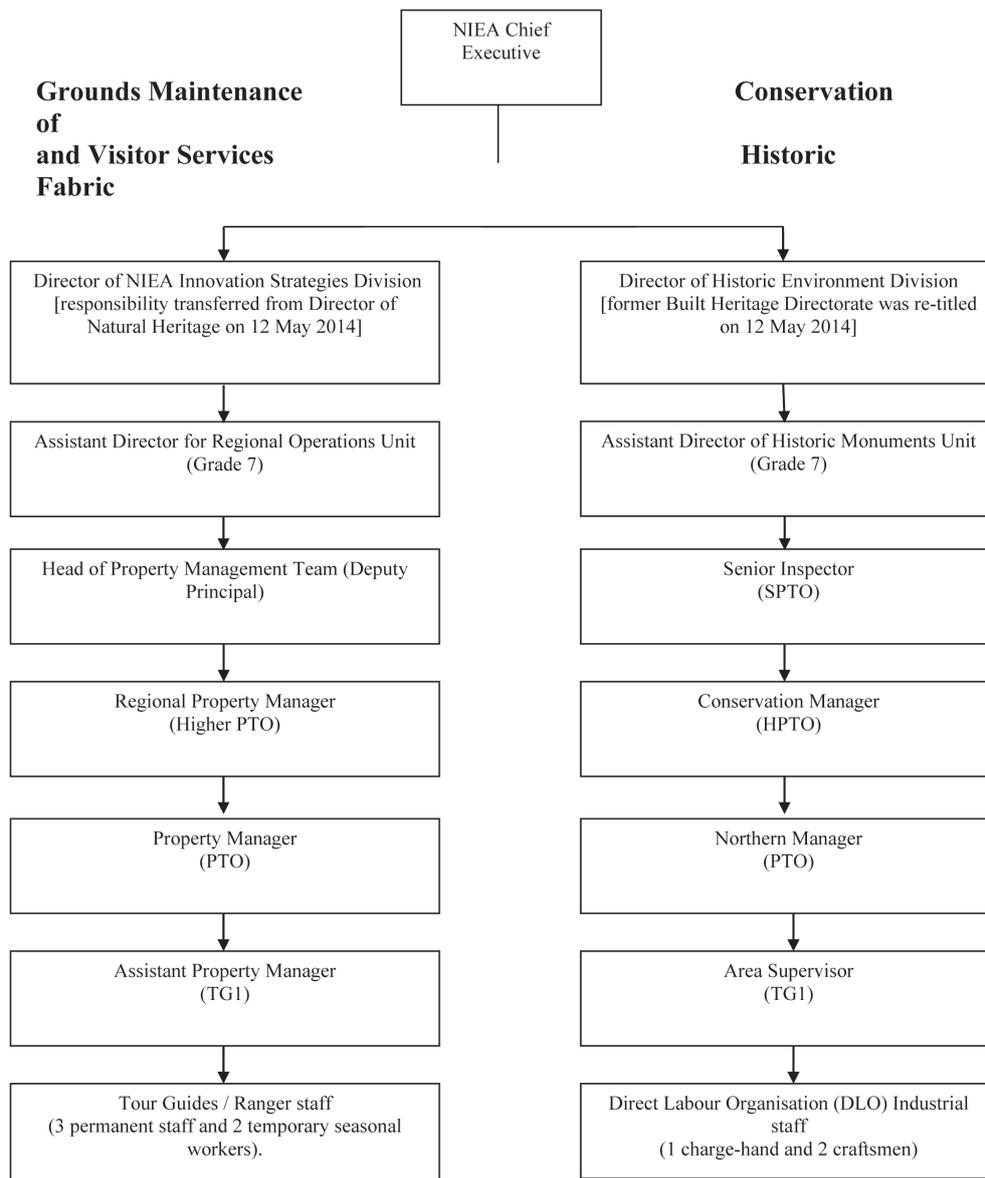
(AQW 33039/11-15)

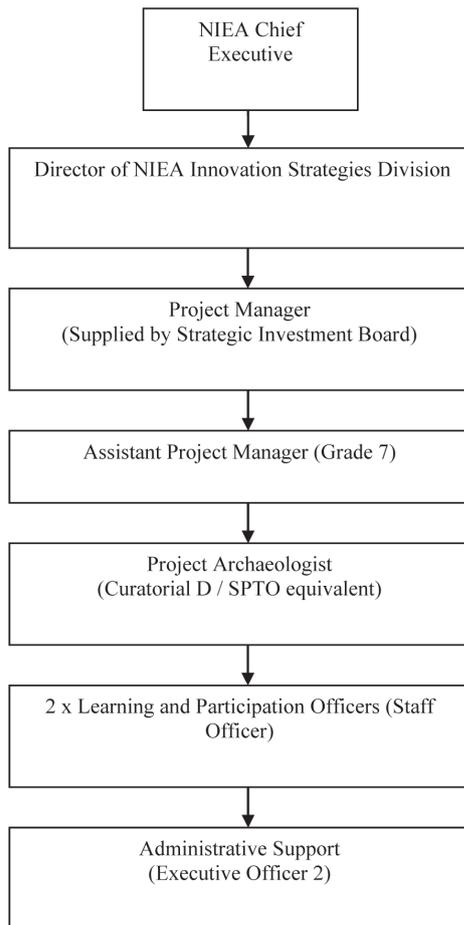
Mr Durkan: The flow chart provided in Appendix 1 details the new management structure of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) regarding responsibilities for the day-to-day management of Dunluce Castle. These have been put in place following my direction to the NIEA Chief Executive to implement the results of a root and branch review of the Agency.

The Innovation Strategies Division now has responsibility for visitor access and grounds maintenance and an ‘Innovation Trial’ at Dunluce Castle. This Innovation Trial Development Project at Dunluce Castle is designed to provide visitors with a world-class experience at this site. The Dunluce Development Project Team will establish and deliver a strategic plan for the future of Dunluce and the staff structure for this team is provided as Appendix 2. The Historic Environment Division supports all of this work by providing the heritage expertise for the management of the historic fabric of the Castle.

The flow chart reflects the new structure in place as of 12 May 2014.

APPENDIX 1 DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



APPENDIX 2 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT TEAM STRUCTURE**Dunluce Castle: Contractors**

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to list the contractors who provide services for Dunluce Castle.

(AQW 33075/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The table provided in Appendix 1 lists the contractors who currently provide services for Dunluce Castle.

APPENDIX 1

Contractor	Description of service
Acoustiguide	Maintenance of multimedia guides.
Graham Facilities Management	Planned Property Maintenance (PPM) Services (provided through DFP Properties Division).
Crane Communication	Audio equipment maintenance.
Irish Arms Historical Reproductions	Event support services (Living History events)
1440 Design	Event support services (Medieval fair)
Queens University Belfast - Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork	Archaeological fieldwork support services.
Deloitte	Development of business case and business plan for the Dunluce Development Project.

Contractor	Description of service
Strategic Investment Board	Partnership agreement for the provision of Dunluce project support.
Kennedy Recruitment	Seasonal support workers

Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Dunluce Castle Consultants

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment how much the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has spent on consultants in relation to Dunluce Castle, in each of the last four years.

(AQW 33077/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Since 2010, £3,195 has been spent on consultants in relation to Dunluce Castle. During the development of the current exhibition and interpretation at Dunluce Castle, £3,195 was spent on consultants in the 2010/11 financial year. There has been no other spend on consultants in any of the other years in question in relation to Dunluce Castle.

The breakdown of this spend is as follows:

- £2,700 was to provide archaeological and historical consultancy in order to deliver the Dunluce Castle interpretation project.
- £495 was paid for a consultant to sit on the tender evaluation panel for the appointment of an interpretive company to carry out the full interpretive refit of the castle.

Factory Girls Sculpture in Harbour Square, Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the planning application for the Factory Girls sculpture in Harbour Square, Derry.

(AQW 33080/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has not received a planning application for the erection of the Factory Girls Sculpture in Harbour Square, Derry. However, I am aware that pre application discussions have taken place. My planning officials have met with officials from the Department of Social Development and also Derry City Council regarding the proposed development. It is anticipated that a planning application will be forthcoming.

Public Inquiry into Mobuoy Road

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the steps that he has taken and the progress made in setting up the public inquiry into Mobuoy Road and other waste crime as directed by the Assembly on 12 March 2014.

(AQW 33132/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I wrote to my Ministerial Colleagues on 7 April asking them to agree to establishing a full independent public inquiry into waste management and disposal arrangements in Northern Ireland and to commit to funding the costs associated with such an inquiry. I have received a response from five Executive Ministers and I am awaiting responses from the others.

River Faughan Special Area of Conservation: Pollution

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the pollution of the tributary of the River Faughan Special Area of Conservation adjacent to Campsie Sand and Gravel, given there are recent signs of leachate, sewage fungus and other types of pollution visible in this stream and adjoining embankment; and whether any pollution is reaching the river.

(AQW 33133/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is taking a structured approach in dealing with the waste issues on the Mobouy Road site. In the past 9 months, works at the site have focussed on removing waste materials from the City Waste Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) site and implementing immediate works to try and capture polluting liquids and leachate from reaching surrounding watercourses.

A significant volume of contaminated surface water is currently being directed to a cut-off drain on the site and removed on a regular basis through tankering from the City Waste site. This contaminated liquid is treated at a local Wastewater Treatment Works, working in conjunction with Northern Ireland Water. To date 1,426,435 litres of leachate has been removed from the site.

In addition NIEA is undertaking environmental monitoring of the water quality in rivers upstream, in the middle of and downstream of the site, including the River Faughan. No significant pollution has been identified in the River Faughan. There has been some pollution in the local stream adjacent to the site, however a visual inspection by NIEA staff in April noted that this has receded. This may be due in part to the works undertaken to remove leachate or it may also be due to low levels of rainfall causing lower levels of infiltration at the site.

NIEA will continue to monitor the water quality in the local watercourses whilst developing both an extensive plan to clearly identify the risk of further leachate impacting on local environmental receptors and a management plan for resolving the issues in both the short and medium future term.

Consultation on Wheelchair Accessibility

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment what is the (i) cost to date; and (ii) estimated final cost for the consultation on wheelchair accessibility specifications for taxis.

(AQW 33166/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The consultation on proposed Taxi Accessibility Regulations ran from 7 February to 4 April 2014. The direct costs (classified advertising and postage) of the consultation to date have been £2,347.81. No further direct costs are expected. The amount of staff time to prepare, issue and collate the responses to the consultation cannot be separated from the staff's time on other duties.

Single Tier Taxi System: Consultations

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 32974/11-15, why is not possible to provide costings for these consultations and whether he will review his response on the grounds that public money has been expended in each of these four processes; and if, following a review, his Department is still unwilling to provide same, to supply an estimated costing in respect of each consultation in total and cumulatively.

(AQW 33194/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Direct costs figures for consultations 1 and 2 below have been estimated based on the actual costs of consultation 3. The costs for consultation 3 were for postage and printing of A6 postcards to all licensed taxi drivers notifying them of the consultation. Consultation 4 was in the form of a letter which was sent to all licensed taxi drivers.

1 The Regulation of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles Consultation (2005)

The direct costs of this consultation are estimated at £4,000.

2 Consultation on proposals for a draft Order in Council (2006)

The direct costs of this consultation are estimated at £4,000.

3 Taxi Licence and Powers of Seizure Consultation (2011)

The direct costs of this consultation were £4,730

4 Single Tier Taxi Licensing Consultation (2013)

The direct costs of this consultation were £6,978

The amount of staff time to prepare, issue and collate the responses to these consultations cannot be separated from the staff's time on other duties.

Taxi Drivers: Touting for Passengers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment whether it is legal for a taxi driver to tout for passengers for a taxi other than his or her own vehicle; and if so, to outline the relevant legislation.
(AQW 33317/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Regulation 49 of the Public Service Vehicles (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1985 prohibits a person employed as driver of a vehicle from touting, calling out or importuning any person to be carried for hire in the vehicle.

Avian Botulism

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether cases of avian botulism have been confirmed in any dead birds found in the area of Portavoe Reservoir; and if so, to detail (i) what action has been taken to prevent any further spread of this disease; and (ii) what investigations will take place to ascertain the source of the disease.

(AQW 33351/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are no confirmed reports of avian botulism in any dead birds in the area of Portavoe Reservoir.

Wildlife protection at Portavoe is the responsibility of the site owners, Northern Ireland Water.

The PSNI has received complaints about the impacts of the water lowering at Portavoe and is currently carrying out an investigation at the site to determine whether any wildlife crime has been committed.

NIEA staff have visited the site on a number of occasions and have reported their observations to the PSNI to assist in their investigation.

Illegal Dumping: Costs

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of the Environment to outline any action he is taking to recover the costs incurred by his Department from those responsible for illegal dumping.
(AQO 6089/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Provision is made under waste legislation to seek the recovery of costs incurred by the Department in circumstances where a person has been convicted of charges relating to the deposit or disposal of waste. A compensation order may be sought by the Department (or others) in removing waste or taking steps to reduce the consequences of the deposit or disposal. This provision was made in June 2007, however there are a range of operational and legal issues (including the significant costs involved in dealing with illegal waste, which defendants often do not have available) that have made its use challenging.

Further options are presently being considered through use of the Environmental Liability Regulations. This regime makes provision for cost recovery where an operator fails to comply with a statutory notice. In the event of an operator failing to comply with a notice they are liable for any reasonable costs incurred by the Department in taking reasonable action to discharge its duty.

Local councils also have powers under Article 28 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 as amended – these powers enable councils to remove waste following a prescribed process and to recover costs from the occupier. I am not aware of any significant case where these powers have been used.

The NIEA makes regular use of Proceeds of Crime legislation to carry out investigation of the criminal benefit that waste offenders make and in identifying assets held by the offender. The PPS can then ask the prosecuting court to make a confiscation order to recover the benefit from offending. While the monies paid for confiscation orders cannot be used directly for cleaning up illegal waste, the use of this tool is very powerful in acting as a deterrent to waste offending and in rendering offenders unable to continue illegal activity.

It is worthy of note that many of those involved in waste crime are careful to manage their finances in a way that attempts to limit the ability of enforcement organisations to trace or restrain/confiscate assets. This is not unexpected given that we know organised crime is present in the waste sector and serves to highlight the challenges my Department faces while working with law enforcement partners to tackle this form of criminality.

Road Traffic Collisions

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment what further action has he taken to work with road safety partners to tackle causes of death and serious injury as a result of road traffic collisions, given the recent rise in fatalities.

(AQO 6090/11-15)

Mr Durkan: 57 people were killed on our roads in 2013. This was a rise on the 2012 figure of 48 deaths but was lower than in 2011 when there were 59 deaths. There were 720 serious injuries last year, which was a reduction from 795 in 2012 and 825 in 2011. Up to 13 May this year 24 people had died, compared with 21 at the same date last year and 12 in 2012.

It is impossible to be definitive about the reasons for the rise in deaths in 2013 because of the range of different factors that can impact on road safety and on individual collisions. We do know that the principal causes of collisions in which someone died or was seriously injured were inattention or attention diverted, speeding, carelessness and drink/drug driving. These same causation factors tend to recur in collision statistics each year.

The rise in fatalities in 2013 and so far this year is disappointing, but we must not become disillusioned. The overall trend in road casualties in recent years has been down. Indeed, over the last five years the number of people killed on our roads in Northern Ireland has halved. In terms of serious injuries, the 2013 total of 720 is the lowest level of serious injuries since records began being collated on this figure in 1971: a reduction of 66% on the 1971 total of 2,135 and a reduction of 30% over the last five years, from 1,035 in 2009.

Neither must we allow ourselves to be complacent. I convened an urgent meeting of the Road Safety Forum in January and a number of immediate actions were agreed by its members. A further meeting of the Forum was held on 17 April 2014 at which encouraging progress was reported. DOE has provided additional focussed road safety advertising and messages. We have also provided young people's groups with materials to help them better communicate key road safety messages to their members. PSNI has continued its focus on visible road traffic policing while DRD reviewed its provision of information to those who make decisions on road gritting.

I have recently written to the Chief Constable suggesting that we meet to assess the current road safety position and determine if there is anything further we might do to help address the rise in road fatalities.

I am very pleased to have introduced the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill to this Assembly earlier today. The Bill includes measures to tackle drink driving; and to better prepare, test and protect young drivers as they gain experience. This legislation will therefore help tackle the main causes of serious and fatal collisions I referred to earlier.

My Department has also commenced the development of a Motorcycle Safety Strategy, in partnership with key stakeholders including statutory bodies and groups representing the motorcycle community.

My Department addresses high risk behaviours through our information campaigns. Most recently, a cyclist safety campaign was launched on 18 April. I have also commissioned a campaign that will address inappropriate speed which I will launch next month. Cyclist safety and inappropriate speed have both been identified as priority issues.

I believe that every death on our roads is one too many. I can assure you that I will continue to keep the position under review and work with all stakeholders further to improve road safety and continue to reduce casualties. We will continue to place a strong emphasis on road user responsibility, recognizing that almost all casualties on our roads result from poor road user behaviour. My Department and our road safety partners can educate, engineer and enforce, but ultimately collisions occur through poor road user behaviours.

Dereliction Funding

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of the Environment when the next tranche of dereliction funding will be made available to council areas that did not benefit from the last scheme.

(AQO 6091/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As many of you know, the Dereliction Intervention Funding Programme was introduced in March 2012 to provide councils with funding to enhance and improve the cosmetic and aesthetic appearance of an area, whether it is a city, town, village or neighbourhood. Over the past three years over £4m has been allocated by my Department to councils through the Programme.

The scheme is a competitive one, designed to ensure that the limited funds available to it are directed to projects which will have the greatest possible impact for those monies. Each council bid is assessed against set criteria. Given that background, it would not be fitting to automatically make funding available to any council which did not benefit from either the last scheme, or any other bidding opportunity. It is a matter for each council to put forward a bid which is the strongest it can be in terms of the scheme criteria. The bidding process has been explained to all councils, and indeed my officials continue to work with them to ensure that submissions are made with a clear understanding of the scheme's requirements.

There are only two councils that have not received any dereliction funding. One only applied once, while the other has not applied in any of the three opportunities for all councils to apply to the scheme.

I will be making a bid for additional funding for the Dereliction programme in the June Monitoring Round. My officials have already written to all councils inviting them to prepare bids for submission at the end of May.

Listed Buildings

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will consider a review of the restrictions placed on people who own homes that are designated as listed buildings.

(AQO 6092/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I do not consider that such a review is necessary. The restrictions imposed upon listed buildings were subject to public consultation and scrutiny by the Assembly, during the passage of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Strategic planning policy is also currently out to public consultation.

The principal additional restriction imposed upon the owners of listed buildings is that they must apply for Listed Building Consent for demolition of their building or for its 'alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.' This special interest is also a material concern in regard to any planning application which affects the building or its setting.

Recycling Targets

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on achieving targets for recycling.
(AQO 6093/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Over the past four years the Department's Rethink Waste Programme has assisted local councils to increase their recycling rates through a range of incentives from the provision of financial assistance to technical advice to communications.

Under the Rethink Waste Fund, grants of over £8.8 million have been awarded to councils to cover the capital costs of improving or extending their existing waste collection, re-use and recycling infrastructure. To date in 2014/15 a further £2.9 million of capital monies has been allocated for councils.

Although recycling rates plateaued in 2012/13 (the inclement weather had a significant impact), recent quarterly figures have shown a return to increasing recycling rates. The most recent figures show that household waste recycling between October to December 2013 was 39.2%; an increase of 2.9 percentage points compared with the same period in 2012 when 36.2% was recycled or composted

Councils and other stakeholders have made great strides in increasing recycling rates and encouraging waste prevention over the last decade. To maintain the momentum of increasing recycling rates, further plans for significant funding for the development of kerbside services and recycling infrastructure, communications and training are being developed by my Department to assist the new councils.

Home to School Transport

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment what involvement his Department will have in the Department of Education's Home to School Transport Review.
(AQO 6094/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is involved in the Department of Education's review of home to school transport because of its responsibility for road transport regulation. Officials met with representatives of the independent review panel on 27 February to discuss the review and, in particular, matters related to the licensing of buses, their operators and drivers.

At that meeting, my officials briefed the review team on the rules which apply to buses, their operators and drivers to ensure compliance with the law and to promote road and passenger safety. They also covered the current review of bus operator licensing, in terms of potential impact on the regulation of home to school transport, and answered the review team's questions on these issues.

My Department will continue to engage with the independent review team where appropriate to ensure that any proposals they make comply with road transport rules and recognise the need for all parts of the bus industry here to be safe, fair and fit for purpose.

Lisburn and Castlereagh Council: Dundonald Residents

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the concerns of Dundonald residents who are opposed to the establishment of the new Lisburn and Castlereagh Council.
(AQO 6095/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The decisions relating to the reorganisation of local government and the creation of the eleven new local government districts, including the new Lisburn and Castlereagh district, have been subject to extensive public consultation and Assembly scrutiny.

In 2008, following a review by the Northern Ireland Executive, Arlene Foster MLA (then Minister of the Environment) announced the Executive's decision to create 11 new councils.

This commitment was reaffirmed by the Executive in its Programme for Government 2011-2015.

In order to give effect to the Executive's decision, a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner was appointed to make recommendations on the boundaries of the 11 new local government district and the boundaries and number of wards therein.

Prior to submitting his final recommendations report in June 2009, the Commissioner's recommendations underwent an extensive public consultation process, including a series of public meetings in various locations throughout Northern Ireland.

These recommendations were made into law by way of the Local Government (Boundaries) Order (NI) 2012, which was subject to debate in the Assembly before a vote was taken to approve the legislation.

I have no doubt that the new council for Lisburn and Castlereagh will serve the interests of residents in Dundonald and all other areas within the district, and that those residents will benefit from a modern, efficient and streamlined system of local government which caters to the needs of all people in Northern Ireland.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the key emerging themes contained in responses to the public consultation on his Department's Draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement. **(AQO 6096/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: The Draft Strategic Planning policy Statement (SPPS) was published on 4th February 2014 for a 12 week period ending on 29th April. A total of 726 responses were received by the close of the consultation period from a wide range of stakeholders such as Business and Industry interests (including CBI, NIIRTA, IOD, NIFHA); Environmental interests (including NIEL, RSPB); Community/Academic/NGO interests (including Royal Town Planning Institute, Belfast Civic Trust, Historic Monuments Council, various residents groups); and, Local Government interests (including NILGA and a number of local councils).

Work is ongoing to acknowledge, collate and transfer these responses to a database designed for the purpose of facilitating detailed analysis of the comments received. Until this initial work is progressed further it is not possible for me to provide a fair and accurate summary of the information on key themes emerging from the consultation responses. My officials are aiming to have completed their analysis of consultation responses before the summer recess and I will make public a summary of the consultation responses as soon as possible thereafter.

Equality: Subordinate Legislation

Mr Milne asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department will develop subordinate legislation and guidance in relation to the Local Government Bill (NIA 28/11-15) in order to strengthen the promotion of equality. **(AQO 6097/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: I want to reiterate the commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity in the operation of the new councils that I made during the debates on the Local Government Bill, which was passed by the Assembly on 8 April.

The Bill makes detailed provision for the sharing of positions of responsibility across the political parties represented on a council and, for the membership of committees to reflect the political balance of the council. My Department will issue guidance to assist council officers and elected members in their understanding of the practical operation of the processes.

The Bill also introduces a process for members of a council to requisition the reconsideration of a decision in specified circumstances – the call-in process. My officials are working with senior officers from local government and NILGA to develop the practical operational aspects of this process. These will be specified as a mandatory element of a council's standing orders. Provision is also made in the Bill for standing orders to specify decisions that must be taken by a qualified majority to ensure that the interests of minority communities are protected.

These draft Regulations will be the subject of a public consultation associated with an in-depth targeted consultation with local government. The draft Regulations will also be shared with the political parties through their members on the Political Reference Group.

The statutory guidance that will be issued by my Department to support the operation of community planning will assist councils and their community planning partners in taking forward their statutory duties in relation to this important function. This guidance will draw on the experiences in other regions that have been operating community planning for a number of years and lessons learned from the Community Planning Foundation Programme. It will provide material on all the key aspects that a council and its community planning partners will need to consider in taking forward community planning including in relation to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.

Heavy Goods Vehicle Road User Levy

Mr Brady asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department is currently involved in enforcing the Heavy Goods Vehicle Road User Levy on hauliers from the rest of the island of Ireland.
(AQO 6098/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The HGV levy is a tax which has been introduced by the UK Government. As a tax, it is an excepted matter under the Northern Ireland Act. It has applied, under UK law, across the UK's roads since 1 April 2014.

The Department for Transport's plans for enforcement of the levy have been based on the premise that my Department, through DVA, will enforce it in Northern Ireland by means of the use of fixed penalty notices and deposits. I have to date not agreed to this position.

My Department is therefore not currently involved in enforcement of the levy. DVA staff have been issuing information leaflets to non-UK hauliers who they stop for roadside checks. These leaflets provide information on the levy and guidance on how it can be paid.

Department of Finance and Personnel

16th North South Ministerial SEUPB

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why it took over three months to report to the Assembly on the 16th North South Ministerial SEUPB meeting held on 6 December 2013.
(AQW 32283/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The statement on the sixteenth North South Ministerial Council SEUPB Sectoral meeting was arranged and reported to the Assembly as soon as was practicable.

INTERREG IV A

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much funding remains unclaimed in the INTERREG IV A programme in respect of the financial year 2013/14.
(AQO 6104/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The INTERREG IVA Programme has met and exceeded all of its annual N+2 expenditure targets to date. The programme is now fully committed.

Economic Growth

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of current economic growth, including its impact on overall public expenditure.
(AQO 6103/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Whilst the Office for Budget Responsibility has indicated that economic recovery is forecast to continue over the coming years, it is important to note that a relatively buoyant economy will not immediately translate into increased Public Expenditure.

The Chancellor has indicated that his austerity plan will see the benefits of economic growth go to addressing the UK Government deficit. It is therefore expected that the Public Expenditure position will remain constrained until the end of this decade, especially on the Resource DEL side.

Payroll Failures

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline what measures his Department is taking to ensure that public sector staff receive their full pay on time following recent payroll failures.
(AQO 6105/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department is only responsible for the payroll services to the Northern Ireland Civil Service and a small number of public bodies, not the wider public sector, which I understand has experienced recent payroll difficulties.

My Department makes over 30,000 individual payments each month and monitors the performance of the payroll service continuously. As a result, I am pleased to report payroll accuracy of over 99% and, more often than not, over 99.9%.

Resource Budgets 2014-15

Mrs Cameron asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the need to cut all 2014/15 resource budgets in the June monitoring exercise.
(AQO 6106/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Executive is facing a range of inescapable pressures in 2014-15, not least the impact of a significant reduction to our resource budget as a consequence of not progressing welfare reform.

I recently wrote to Executive colleagues informing them that in order to fund these inescapable Resource DEL pressures, the 2014-15 June Monitoring round would require departmental baseline reductions in the order of 1.5 per cent.

Without urgent agreement on welfare reform, there is no alternative to the proposed reductions to departmental budgets.

Gross Operating Surplus

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the reasons for his Department's adjustment of the estimate of Gross Operating Surplus generated locally.
(AQO 6107/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The UK figure for Gross Operating Surplus (GOS) is produced by ONS and as a regional breakdown of this is not provided, a share of GOS is apportioned to Northern Ireland in the Net Fiscal Balance Report. Our general approach here is to replicate as far as is possible the approach used in the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland (GERS) report, which is a certified national statistic. During production of the 2012-13 Net Fiscal Balance Report officials were able to source data which enabled them to refine the apportionment process and in doing so bring the methodology more into line with that used in GERS.

Land and Property Services: Payment Refunds

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the process Land and Property Services use to refund payments.
(AQO 6108/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Land & Property Services follow a standard process to refund an overpayment of rates.

When an overpayment of rates is identified, LPS check the potential refund against the relevant rate account. This involves examining all transactions, preparing refund papers, and ensuring that the refund amount and address are correct. When a refund is approved, it triggers the issue of a Payable Order (similar to a cheque). All Payable Orders are issued by post, accompanied by a letter that clearly states the property for which the refund is due.

Peace III and INTERREG IV A

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the effectiveness of the Peace III and INTERREG IV A funding programmes.

(AQO 6109/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The PEACE III Programme aims to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation, and has a specific focus on reconciling communities and contributing towards a shared society. INTERREG IVA aims to support strategic cross-border co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable region.

All projects supported contribute towards the achievement of the goals outlined, and mid-term evaluations have indicated that both programmes are achieving their objectives.

Under INTERREG IVA, for example, over 1,800 businesses have been assisted, over 300 have developed new products or processes, and almost 400 have collaborated on a cross border basis as a result of participation in networks supported. Survey research has indicated that participants in PEACE III projects are more likely to engage with and trust members of the other community, and achievements of PEACE III projects include facilitation of over 24,000 participants in conflict resolution workshops, and provision of trauma counselling to over 7,000 people.

Both programmes have fully committed their budgets, and have met all of their annual EU expenditure targets to date.

Civil Service: Gender Balance

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when he expects to be able to report progress in achieving a more equal gender balance in the senior civil service by the appointment of at least one female permanent secretary.

(AQO 6110/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I acknowledge that women are under-represented in the most senior grades in the NICS and action to ensure that gender should not be an impediment to recruitment, promotion or retention will continue. Whilst there have been female Permanent Secretaries appointed in the past, currently there is only one woman employed at a level equivalent to Permanent Secretary.

Property Management

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the review of regulation for apartment and property management companies.

(AQO 6111/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Northern Ireland Law Commission has recommended the regulation of managing agents rather than management companies and, in doing so, has favoured the Scottish model of regulation, which provides for complaints in respect of managing agents to be considered by a specific body, namely the Homeowner Housing Panel.

The Apartments Report Implementation Group, which is comprised of senior officials from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the Department of Finance and Personnel, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Development has been considering how a regulation scheme for managing agents would operate in this jurisdiction.

In particular, it has been considering which body should handle disputes in relation to the conduct of the management agent and the Department of Justice is undertaking further work in that regard. It is also considering whether there are any services that could be put in place to assist apartment owners involved in a dispute.

It is envisaged that the outcomes from that additional work will be fed through to the Implementation Group to allow for the preparation of the final policy proposals with regard to the regulation scheme and advisory services. Thereafter attention will turn to the broader recommendations in the Law Commission's report. However, at this stage, I should point out that an initial assessment has suggested that some of those broader recommendations could be more difficult to implement, particularly where they envisage the revision of existing property rights.

Cerberus Capital Management

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any development opportunities that have been identified following the acquisition of the National Asset Management Agency's Northern Ireland portfolio by Cerberus Capital Management.

(AQO 6112/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I believe the sale of NAMA's Northern Ireland portfolio to an investor such as Cerberus Capital Management that takes a long term approach, has the experience globally of improving the assets it acquires and has the ability to invest in those assets will lead to many positive development opportunities in the future.

Rates Bill

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the average rates bill.

(AQO 6113/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The average domestic rates bill based on an average capital value £113,000 is £825 and the average non-domestic rates bill is £10,544 based on an average NAV £18,000.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Retired Consultants

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of Consultants, and their specific speciality, that have retired from the (i) Tyrone County Hospital; and (ii) Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, in each of the last five financial years; and how many of these Consultant posts have been filled by Consultants who were based in the (a) Tyrone County Hospital; (b) Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital; and (c) South West Acute Hospital, detailing the specialities of the replacement Consultant.

(AQW 33020/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The information requested is set out in the table below which was provided by the Western Health and Social Care Trust:

	Number of consultants retired from TCH & speciality	Number of consultants retired from T&F & speciality	How many of these posts were filled by consultants based in TCH & speciality	How many of these posts were filled by consultants based in T&F & speciality	How many of these posts were filled by consultants based in SWAH & speciality
09/10	1 x ENT		ENT service centralised at Altnagelvin with outreach to TCH and SWAH		
10/11		1 x Psychiatry		1 x Psychiatry	
11/12	1 x Renal		1 x Renal		
12/13	1 x Care of Elderly		Agency doctor covering 0.5 TCH and 0.5 SWAH. Post awaiting interview		
13/14		1 x Psychiatry		Post awaiting interview	

TCH = Tyrone County Hospital

T&F = Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital

SWAH = South West Acute Hospital

Diabetic Specialist Nurse: Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any plans for additional funding to be made available for the provision of an additional diabetic specialist nurse at Altnagelvin Hospital.

(AQW 33030/11-15)

Mr Poots: Currently, there are two full-time Diabetic Nurse Specialists within the Emergency Care & Medicine Division at Altnagelvin Hospital. At this stage, plans are being progressed to establish two further part-time Diabetic Nurse Specialists at Altnagelvin Hospital.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Guidelines: Bariatric Surgery

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether, under National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines, the first line of assessment for bariatric surgery is a BMI of greater than 50 and a secondary condition; (ii) whether sleep apnoea is a secondary condition; and (iii) whether any special funding will be made available for bariatric surgery.

(AQW 33031/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Clinical Guideline 43 (CG 43) states that bariatric surgery is recommended as a treatment option for adults with obesity if all of the following criteria are fulfilled:

- they have a BMI of 40 kg/m² or more, or between 35 kg/m² and 40 kg/m² and other significant disease (for example, type 2 diabetes or high blood pressure) that could be improved if they lost weight;
- all appropriate non-surgical measures have been tried but have failed to achieve or maintain adequate, clinically beneficial weight loss for at least six months;
- the person has been receiving or will receive intensive management in a specialist obesity service;
- the person is generally fit for anaesthesia and surgery; and
- the person commits to the need for long-term follow-up.

CG 43 also recommends bariatric surgery as a first-line option (instead of lifestyle interventions or drug treatment) for adults with a BMI of more than 50 kg/m² in whom surgical intervention is considered appropriate.

- (ii) CG 43 cites sleep apnoea as a co-morbidity of being overweight or obese.
- (iii) The Health and Social Care (HSC) Board is currently evaluating the outcome of its 2009/10 bariatric surgery pilot in order to assess demand for a comprehensive bariatric service in Northern Ireland. An interim evaluation report is expected in June 2014. In the meantime, if a patient has an exceptional clinical need for bariatric surgery, a consultant clinician may make an extra-contractual referral (ECR) request for funding to the Board through their HSC Trust for that patient to be referred for this procedure to be carried out elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Patients on Hospital Waiting Lists for Heart Surgery

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients on hospital waiting lists for heart surgery have died in each of the last five years while awaiting surgery. **(AQW 33049/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Information on the number of patients who have died whilst on a hospital waiting list for heart surgery is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Thrombolysis Treatment

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the thrombolysis treatment provided at Antrim Area Hospital is on a 24 hour basis. **(AQW 33051/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The Northern HSC Trust has confirmed that thrombolysis is available at Antrim Area Hospital on a 24 hour basis.

People Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis: Costs

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to address the costs that people diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis have to pay to get access to drugs such as famprya. **(AQW 33061/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Research conducted by the MS Society shows that Northern Ireland is at the head of the field in terms of ensuring access to specialist drugs for MS patients. More than 1500 patients are currently receiving these drugs in Northern Ireland, that's around 68% of suitable patients and higher than the overall UK figure of 60%. The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) aims to make all MS drugs available subject to evidence on clinical and cost effectiveness as determined by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

This access to MS drugs is supported by significant investment; the current budget for this service is in excess of £10m per year.

Fampyra (fampridine) is currently not under consideration within the NICE Technical Appraisal work programme. In instances where there is no explicit advice from NICE the HSCB takes into consideration guidance issued by other recognised appraisal bodies. In this context it should be noted that the use of this therapy is not recommended for use by the Scottish Medicines Consortium and the NHS England Commissioning Board recently issued its Commissioning Policy in April 2013 advising that this therapy would not be routinely funded for use within its licensed indication. In these circumstances I would not expect to see this treatment routinely commissioned in Northern Ireland.

For treatments not currently commissioned in Northern Ireland, the HSCB has a clear process by which individual patient requests can be considered, details of which can be found at the following link;

http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/Protocol_ECR_and_IFR_arrangements.pdf

Licensing and Adoption of New Drugs

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the process for the licensing and adoption of new drugs such as fampyra, without a direct cost to the user.

(AQW 33063/11-15)

Mr Poots: Before a medicine can be sold in the UK it must have a marketing authorisation or licence. In order to gain a marketing authorisation a drug must demonstrate safety, quality and efficacy. New drugs are granted marketing authorisations by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency only after a rigorous assessment process has established that they are safe and efficacious.

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has responsibility for commissioning all drug therapies in Northern Ireland. In determining what new drugs should be adopted and made routinely available in Northern Ireland the HSCB is guided by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). NICE is a Non Departmental Public Body which publishes national guidance on good clinical practice and on the clinical and cost-effective use of new drugs which hold a marketing authorisation.

The Department established formal links with NICE on 1 July 2006 whereby guidance, including guidance on new drugs, published by the Institute from that date would be locally reviewed for applicability to Northern Ireland and, where appropriate, endorsed for implementation in Health and Social Care (HSC). This link has ensured that Northern Ireland has access to up-to-date, independent, professional, evidence-based guidance on the value of health care interventions.

In instances where there is no explicit advice from NICE the HSCB takes into consideration the guidance issued by other recognised appraisal bodies.

Sarcoma Multi-Disciplinary Team

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether the opportunity exists for patients diagnosed with sarcoma to be referred to a Sarcoma Multi-Disciplinary Team, as recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, within Northern Ireland; and (ii) whether the composition of this team includes a specialist sarcoma surgeon, a radiologist with a special interest in sarcoma, a pathologist with a special interest in sarcoma, and a sarcoma nurse specialist.

(AQW 33064/11-15)

Mr Poots: Patients in Northern Ireland diagnosed with sarcoma have the opportunity to be referred to one of several sarcoma multidisciplinary teams. These include the bone and soft tissue sarcoma multidisciplinary team (MDT), the soft tissue sarcoma MDT and where appropriate the paediatric sarcoma MDT. These meetings are attended by appropriately trained and skilled specialist staff including consultant surgeons, consultant radiologists, consultant pathologists, consultant oncologists and a specialist nurse – all of which have a specialist interest in sarcoma.

For a cohort of patients with very complex/rare disease, highly specialist treatment is available via tertiary referral to English centres (through the Extra Contractual Referral route).

In addition the Northern Ireland Cancer Network (NICaN) is currently establishing a Network Site Specific Group for sarcoma and it is anticipated that its first meeting will take place in September 2014. This group's remit will be to streamline referral routes and patient pathways, and to standardise supporting information and care provided to people with sarcoma regardless of geographic location.

National Institute of Health and Care Excellence Guidance

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether this year's budget will allow for the implementation of the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence guidance of three treatment cycles of IVF, or whether a phased approach of two treatments will be considered.

(AQW 33082/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since 2006, my Department has established formal links with NICE whereby all Clinical Guidelines and Technology Appraisals published by them from that date are locally reviewed for their applicability to Northern Ireland and, where appropriate, endorsed here.

NICE Clinical Guideline CG156 on fertility has recently been considered and endorsed by my Department, and it is now the responsibility of the HSC Board, as commissioner of services, to set out its approach to implementing the guidance within the context of currently available resources and other HSC priorities.

Full implementation of the revised guideline is expected to have significant financial implications and, until my Department's budget allocations for 2014/15 are finalised, the Board is unable to give definitive plans for implementation at this time.

Sarcoma Cancer Diagnosis

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures can be taken to raise awareness of the increasing levels of sarcoma cancer diagnosis.

(AQW 33083/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Public Health Agency (PHA) is taking forward work to establish a baseline of the levels of knowledge and awareness of cancer amongst the population. The PHA is also hosting a stakeholder workshop to ensure that key individuals and organisations are fully engaged in planning and supporting the cancer awareness programme. This work is essential in order to develop a cancer awareness campaign that is evidence-based and appropriate to the needs of the public in Northern Ireland. It is expected this work will be finalised by September or October with commencement of the campaign shortly thereafter.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guideline CG27: "Referral for suspected cancer" includes guidance on bone and soft tissue sarcomas and forms the basis for red flag referrals by GPs. The guidance aims to improve awareness amongst doctors of those symptoms which may be due to sarcoma which need urgent investigation.

Commissioner for Older People: Mediation Process

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the mediation process facilitated by the Commissioner for Older People, between residents of Slievemore Nursing Unit, their families and the Western Health and Social Care Trust, will be completed.

(AQW 33107/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Health and Social Care Trust advise that the mediation process between the Trust, families and clients in the Slievemore Nursing Unit is ongoing and in order to maintain this meaningful engagement they would not wish to put a time frame on a completion date.

Under the Surface Campaign

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there have been any changes to the policy on public information campaigns to improve the impact in rural communities following the Public Health Agency's evaluation of the Under the Surface campaign.

(AQW 33108/11-15)

Mr Poots: The "Under the Surface" campaign was designed to convey key messages on mental health awareness, support, and help-seeking to the entire Northern Ireland population but with the primary target being those most at risk of attempting suicide - males and those from more deprived backgrounds. Post-campaign evaluation found that "Under the Surface" was successful across Northern Ireland in terms of raising public awareness. The recall rate was 79% for the campaign overall, with the largely rural Northern Area recording a slightly higher recall rate of 80%. Furthermore, a significant number of adults exposed to the campaign stated that they had engaged in positive health actions as a direct result of this exposure. The survey results were analysed by gender, age, social class group and Trust area to inform future campaign planning and media buying.

The Public Health Agency's public awareness campaigns are designed to reach a mass audience across Northern Ireland rather than being tailored for specific groups. These campaigns are one element of the Agency's broader mental health promotion programme which also includes regional training programmes and very localised community support, including rural areas, to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. There has been no specific change, regarding the impact in rural communities, to the Agency's policy on mass media campaigns. Rural issues are handled by local Public Health Agency offices for specific locality targeting. There are locally commissioned initiatives and services, resources and publications based on evidence of need from local self-harm and suicide data, and on knowledge of local issues.

Return of Medicines

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is scope for the return of medicines, which patients are prescribed in case of need but do not take, particularly medications in blister packs which would remain untouched, to pharmacies for re-issue.

(AQW 33109/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Code of Ethics for pharmacists requires that the prime concern of pharmacists is the safety and welfare of patients and as such they should ensure that products supplied to patients are safe and effective and of the required quality. A pharmacist cannot be sure that unused medicines returned to pharmacies, even in untouched blister packs, have been stored under suitable conditions nor whether they have been tampered with. These medicines cannot, therefore, be reused.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) people who have a diagnosis of relapsing or remitting multiple sclerosis (MS); (ii) these patients who are currently being treated with disease-modifying drugs approved for prescription by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and his Department (NICE); (iii) these patients who are currently being treated with disease-modifying drugs available on the guidance of the Association of British Neurologists; and (iv) these patients who are currently being treated with disease-modifying drugs which are licensed for the treatment of MS without NICE approval.

(AQW 33111/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Information on the number of people who have a diagnosis of relapsing or remitting multiple sclerosis is not available.
- (ii) The number of patients currently being treated with disease-modifying drugs approved for prescription by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and my Department at the end of March 2014, are listed in the table below by HSC Trust.

Trust of Residence	Disease-modifying drugs approved by NICE		Total Number of Patients on Treatment
	Tysabri	Fingolimod	
Belfast HSC Trust	15	1	16
Northern HSC Trust	26	6	32
South Eastern HSC Trust	24	10	34
Southern HSC Trust	6	2	8
Western HSC Trust	15	4	19
Northern Ireland	86	23	109

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

- (iii) The number of patients currently being treated with disease-modifying drugs available on the guidance of the Association of British Neurologists at the end of March 2014, are listed in the table below by HSC Trust.

Trust of Residence	Disease-modifying drugs available in accordance with ABN 2009 Guidelines						Total Number of Patients on Treatment
	Copaxone	Rebif 22	Rebif 44	Betaferon	Avonex	Extavia	
Belfast HSC Trust	61	37	43	8	64	8	221
Northern HSC Trust	75	82	74	31	116	2	380
South Eastern HSC Trust	75	28	62	20	85	9	279
Southern HSC Trust	50	55	47	16	83	0	251
Western HSC Trust	52	7	58	7	92	0	216
Northern Ireland	313	209	284	82	440	19	1,347

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

- (iv) All patients detailed in part (iii) are being treated with disease-modifying drugs licensed for treatment of multiple sclerosis without NICE approval.

Specialist Neurological Services

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether specialist neurological services for people with relapsing or remitting multiple sclerosis comprise of consultant neurologists, specialist nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, clinical psychologists, and social workers in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines; and whether arrangements are in place for the specialist neurology services to access dietetic, liaison psychiatry, continence advisory and management, pain

management, chiropody and podiatry, and ophthalmology services for patients with relapsing or remitting multiple sclerosis.

(AQW 33112/11-15)

Mr Poots: The two tables appended at Annex A provide the requested information by individual HSC Trust for both aspects of this question.

ANNEX A

Trusts	Whether Specialist Neurological Services for People with Relapsing or Remitting ME Consist Of The Following Listed Disciplines						
	Consultant Neurologists	Specialist Nurses	Physio-Therapists	Occupational Therapists	Speech & Language Therapists	Clinical Psychologists	Social Workers
Belfast	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (but have access within Trust)	No (but have access within the Trust)	No (but have access within Trust)	No (but have access within Trust)
Northern	Yes	No (but have access within Trust)	No	No (but have access within Trust)			
South Eastern	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Southern	No (but have access within Trust)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No (but have access within Trust)
Western	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (but have access within Trust)	No (but have access within Trust)	No	No (but have access within Trust)

Trusts	Whether Specialist Neurological Services for Patients with Relapsing or Remitting MS can Access the Following Services in the Trust					
	Dietetic	Liaison Psychiatry	Continence Advisory & Management	Pain Management	Chiropody & Podiatry	Ophthalmology Services
Belfast	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Northern	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
South Eastern	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Southern	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Western	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Specialist Neurological Services

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the accessibility of specialist neurology services for people with relapsing or remitting multiple sclerosis; and whether provision will be made within these specialist services to offer additional review appointments for eligible patients when the disease-modifying drug Aubagio, approved in February 2014 by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, becomes available in Northern Ireland.
(AQW 33113/11-15)

Mr Poots: Patients with relapsing or remitting multiple sclerosis (MS) should have access to neurologists and nurses with a specialist interest in MS, although the provision of access does vary across the Health and Social Care Trusts.

I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Board that it has recently been notified of the positive NICE recommendation for the use of the oral preparation teriflunomide (trade name Aubagio) for MS patients. While the Board is in the process of finalising a service notification for this drug it can be made available now to patients in Northern Ireland on a cost per case basis if requested by their clinician.

I have also been advised by Trusts that they have no plans to offer additional review appointments when the drug becomes available. The timing of review appointments for patients is a clinical decision and will be arranged as required.

Addiction Services

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to enhance addiction services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
(AQW 33114/11-15)

Mr Poots: The recent consultation by the Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) provided everyone with opportunity to influence what Addiction Treatment Services will look like across Northern Ireland over the next 5 to 10 years. The issue of access to specialist addiction services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area was reflected in many of the comments received, and this has been noted by the HSCB along with other key issues raised by the consultation exercise.

HSCB is currently considering a revised position with regard to the future configuration of addiction services, taking account of service user concerns regarding the original consultation proposals. At this stage, HSCB is clarifying potential funding requirements for a revised proposal and anticipates bringing forward proposals for future service developments by the end of June 2014.

Accordingly no decisions have as yet been made about the future of Tier 3 and Tier 4 addiction services across the whole of Northern Ireland, including the Western Trust area.

Surgical Podiatrists

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail each step in the timeline of the process by which his Department came to the decision to use Surgical Podiatrists to fill the demand gap in foot and ankle surgery provision rather than Orthopaedic Surgeons; (ii) to list the stakeholders who were consulted in this process; (iii) to outline the specific procedures which Surgical Podiatrists are competent to carry out; and (iv) for his assessment of the impact that redirection of such procedures to a Surgical Podiatry service would have on the training opportunities afforded to junior Orthopaedic trainees.
(AQW 33115/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The Commissioning Plan Direction for 2012/13 required the Health and Social Care Board to examine the potential development of a podiatric surgical service in Northern Ireland.

- (ii) The Board has discussed the proposed development with representatives of the orthopaedic consultant body and the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists.
- (iii) The majority of the procedures carried out by a podiatric surgeon (approximately 85%) are on the forefoot; these include correction of lesser toe deformities, Hallus Valgus/bunion surgery, removal of soft tissue swellings and minor amputations.
- (iv) The Health and Social Care Board has advised that demand for these services is such that it is likely there will be minimal impact on the training opportunities afforded to junior orthopaedic trainees.

Royal Victoria Hospital: Managers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has any plans to employ more managers in the Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 33130/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised that the Belfast HSC Trust is currently recruiting 7 Senior Manager posts at Agenda for Change Pay Band 8a and above. All of these are replacement posts. Five of these are clinical based and 2 purely administrative.

Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an explanation for the increased waiting times at Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department.

(AQW 33148/11-15)

Mr Poots: Emergency department performance is subject to fluctuating pressures and increasing demand. The emergency department in Antrim Area Hospital has seen an increase in attendances and admissions in 2013/14 compared to the previous year, with attendances up by around 2% and non-elective admissions up by 5.6%. Improved performance in waiting times was sustained for much of 2013, although it has declined over the winter months.

Although there has been an increase in recent months in the number of patients waiting longer than 12 hours, the overall trend is an improving one compared to the same period in the previous year. Nonetheless I find it unacceptable that anyone should have to wait for long periods in our emergency departments and I look to the Health and Social Care Board to continue to work with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to sustain the improvement achieved last year.

The Northern Trust has introduced a number of developments to support further improvement, with other measures planned. Improvements include: changes to the work patterns for senior medical, nursing, allied health professional and managerial staff including enhanced 7 day working; direct admission to specialty wards; an Acute Assessment Area where GPs can refer patients directly for assessment by senior clinicians; and, improvements in integrated community teams and community care services.

Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why there has been an increase in the number of twelve hour waiting time breaches at Antrim Area Hospital's Emergency Department.

(AQW 33149/11-15)

Mr Poots: Emergency department performance is subject to fluctuating pressures and increasing demand. The emergency department in Antrim Area Hospital has seen an increase in attendances and admissions in 2013/14 compared to the previous year, with attendances up by around 2% and non-elective admissions up by 5.6%. Improved performance in waiting times was sustained for much of 2013, although it has declined over the winter months.

Although there has been an increase in recent months in the number of patients waiting longer than 12 hours, the overall trend is an improving one compared to the same period in the previous year. Nonetheless I find it unacceptable that anyone should have to wait for long periods in our emergency departments and I look to the Health and Social Care Board to continue to work with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to sustain the improvement achieved last year.

The Northern Trust has introduced a number of developments to support further improvement, with other measures planned. Improvements include: changes to the work patterns for senior medical, nursing, allied health professional and managerial staff including enhanced 7 day working; direct admission to specialty wards; an Acute Assessment Area where GPs can refer patients directly for assessment by senior clinicians; and, improvements in integrated community teams and community care services.

Parkinson's Disease

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 32760/11-15, why Health and Social Care Trusts do not meet the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommendation of providing two specialist nurses; and what action will be taken to provide cover of future maternity leave.

(AQW 33152/11-15)

Mr Poots: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Clinical Guidelines (CG35) recommend that patients with Parkinson's disease should have access to a Parkinson's Nurse Specialist. Currently, each Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland employs one Parkinson's Nurse Specialist, with the Western Trust employing 2 nurse specialists. I am not aware that NICE makes any specific recommendation about the number of Parkinson's Nurse Specialists that each Health and Social Care Trust should employ.

Some HSC Trusts report no particular issues around the provision of staff cover for maternity leave in respect of nurse specialists whilst others in such circumstances ensure sign-posting for patients to information and support workers within Parkinson's UK for general support and, as appropriate, their GP or Consultant for medical support.

GP Practices: Foreign Language Interpreters

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many GP practices employ foreign language interpreters; and what is the annual cost to the Health Service.

(AQW 33158/11-15)

Mr Poots: GP Practices do not employ foreign language interpreters. Under current arrangements GPs can access interpreting services through the Regional Interpreting Service hosted by the Belfast HSC Trust and through three separate external providers that have contracts with the Business Service Organisation to provide interpreting services. The cost of providing the services during 2012/13 was as follows:

- Regional Interpreting Service £2.6m;
- External provider face to face interpreting service £59k (February 2012 – 31 January 2013); and
- External provider telephone interpreting service £38k (February 2012 – 31 January 2013).

I am not aware of GP practices engaging in block booking patient appointments for foreign nationals. As independent contractors GPs are responsible for the day to day management of their Practice, including patient appointment arrangements. GP practices are required to provide services as appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of registered patients during core hours. Practices respond to patient requests for appointments and manage these on an individual patient basis depending upon clinical need, and the volume of appointments requested or the level of demand at any given time.

GP Practices: Foreign Language Interpreters

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many GP practices engage in block booking patient appointments for foreign nationals, including those supported by language interpreter services.

(AQW 33160/11-15)

Mr Poots: GP Practices do not employ foreign language interpreters. Under current arrangements GPs can access interpreting services through the Regional Interpreting Service hosted by the Belfast HSC Trust and through three separate external providers that have contracts with the Business Service Organisation to provide interpreting services. The cost of providing the services during 2012/13 was as follows:

- Regional Interpreting Service £2.6m;
- External provider face to face interpreting service £59k (February 2012 – 31 January 2013); and
- External provider telephone interpreting service £38k (February 2012 – 31 January 2013).

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Spot Purchase

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 32661/11-15, (i) what is a spot purchase; (ii) how much does this cost; and (iii) how does it affect a patient who is requiring a step down bed because of a hip break or fracture.

(AQW 33161/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The term “spot purchase” is used to describe the short term purchase of a bed in the private sector to facilitate an intermediate care patient. They are used at times of increased demand for intermediate care/step-down beds and are only ever considered once all core community bed stock is fully utilised.
- (ii) The regional tariff for private nursing home care is £567 per week and that for private residential home care is £450 per week.
- (iii) Orthopaedic patients are part of the intermediate care pathway. Therefore patients assessed as requiring on-going bed care following a hip fracture will be placed in a community bed. These patients are often planned admissions and generally are placed in one of the core community beds. It is unusual to “spot purchase” a bed for these patients and this would only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Compression Bandaging

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many staff in the Downe Hospital are authorised to carry out compression bandaging.

(AQW 33171/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust has advised that no staff at the Downe Hospital are able to apply high compression bandaging. Application of this compression is a highly skilled technique, which requires regular training and practice. Where a patient presents in an acute setting with existing compression bandaging, or a suspected need for this, they are assessed by the Tissue Viability Nursing Team, which then carries out, or refers the patient for, the most appropriate dressing.

My Department's policy on compression bandaging is based on the Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN) Clinical Guidelines for Lymphoedema. Complex Decongestive Therapy, which initially uses compression bandaging, is the recommended treatment for conservative management of lymphoedema.

The provision for compression bandaging in hospitals for patients suffering from oedema, and the list of those hospitals within each Trust where provision is available is as follows:

Belfast HSC Trust

The Tissue Viability Nursing team provides a wide range of specialist wound care services, including compression bandaging, to patients in all of its hospitals, as well as community settings (Health and Well-Being Centres, GP surgeries, residential homes, the patient's own home, and the hospice). In the acute setting, compression bandaging is most commonly applied in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast City Hospital, the Mater Hospital and Musgrave Park Hospital. It is also carried out in Muckamore Abbey and Knockbracken if required.

Northern HSC Trust

There is a Tissue Viability service three days a week at Antrim Area Hospital, and two days a week at Causeway Hospital. Urgent cases are centrally managed by the Tissue Viability Team on a daily basis and responded to within 24 hours depending on clinical need. Within the remaining hospital sites there are aligned Community Tissue Viability nurses who provide this care. Tissue Viability Link nurses have also been identified for each hospital site/ rehabilitation/ community hospital sites.

South Eastern HSC Trust

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Patients with limb oedema are commonly referred to the Tissue Viability Team which assesses and advises on appropriate dressings to manage exudate, elevation of the limb, and usually light compression such as wool and crepe. For most mild oedemas this is suitable management. However, in some cases where the patient is unable to elevate the limb, or where severe oedema is present, higher compression is required.

Southern HSC Trust

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Western HSC Trust

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Southern HSC Trust

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Western HSC Trust

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Each Trust advised that the frequency of compression bandage change is determined by patient need.

Compression Bandaging

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his Department's policy on compression bandaging for hospital patients.

(AQW 33173/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust has advised that no staff at the Downe Hospital are able to apply high compression bandaging. Application of this compression is a highly skilled technique, which requires regular training and practice. Where a patient presents in an acute setting with existing compression bandaging, or a suspected need for this, they are assessed by the Tissue Viability Nursing Team, which then carries out, or refers the patient for, the most appropriate dressing.

My Department's policy on compression bandaging is based on the Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN) Clinical Guidelines for Lymphoedema. Complex Decongestive Therapy, which initially uses compression bandaging, is the recommended treatment for conservative management of lymphoedema.

The provision for compression bandaging in hospitals for patients suffering from oedema, and the list of those hospitals within each Trust where provision is available is as follows:

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Compression Bandaging

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provision for compression bandaging is made in hospitals for patients suffering from Oedema; and (ii) to list the hospitals where such provision is available.

(AQW 33174/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust has advised that no staff at the Downe Hospital are able to apply high compression bandaging. Application of this compression is a highly skilled technique, which requires regular training and practice. Where a patient presents in an acute setting with existing compression bandaging, or a suspected need for this, they are assessed by the Tissue Viability Nursing Team, which then carries out, or refers the patient for, the most appropriate dressing.

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Compression Bandaging

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many nurses in each Health and Social Care Trust are authorised to apply compression bandages, broken down by hospital. **(AQW 33177/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust has advised that no staff at the Downe Hospital are able to apply high compression bandaging. Application of this compression is a highly skilled technique, which requires regular training and practice. Where a patient presents in an acute setting with existing compression bandaging, or a suspected need for this, they are assessed by the Tissue Viability Nursing Team, which then carries out, or refers the patient for, the most appropriate dressing.

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Compression Bandaging

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how frequently each hospital refresh patients' compression bandages.

(AQW 33178/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust has advised that no staff at the Downe Hospital are able to apply high compression bandaging. Application of this compression is a highly skilled technique, which requires regular training and practice. Where a patient presents in an acute setting with existing compression bandaging, or a suspected need for this, they are assessed by the Tissue Viability Nursing Team, which then carries out, or refers the patient for, the most appropriate dressing.

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Anti-Anginal Medicine: Ranolazine

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the anti-anginal medicine Ranolazine is included within Chapter 2 of the Northern Ireland Formulary.

(AQW 33182/11-15)

Mr Poots: I can confirm that the antianginal medicine Ranolazine is included within Chapter 2 of the Northern Ireland Formulary.

Northern Ireland Formulary

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Northern Ireland Formulary applies to all Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 33183/11-15)

Mr Poots: The aim of the Northern Ireland Formulary is to promote safe, clinically effective and cost-effective prescribing of medicines. It provides guidance to prescribers on first and second line drug choices covering the majority of prescribing choices in Northern Ireland. It is intended to be used across both the primary and secondary care sectors in Northern Ireland to ensure consistency and continuity of supply and it applies to all Health and Social Care Trusts.

Anti-Anginal Medicine: Ranolazine

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether hospital doctors can prescribe the anti-anginal medicine Ranolazine in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 33184/11-15)

Mr Poots: The antianginal medicine Ranolazine is included in Chapter 2 of the Northern Ireland Formulary and can be prescribed by hospital doctors in each Health and Social Care Trust.

Early Intervention Transitional Fund

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the allocation and timeline for the introduction of the Early Intervention Transitional Fund.

(AQW 33210/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) is a proposed investment delivered as part of the Delivering Social Change initiative, which seeks through a commitment to prevention and early intervention approaches to transform how children's services are designed, planned and implemented, leading to improved outcomes for children. Funded by five government Departments (DHSSPS, DSD, DOJ, DE, DEL), OFMDFM and private philanthropy, the Early Intervention Transformation Programme presents a unique opportunity to address the lifelong poor outcomes that some children experience in Northern Ireland.

The Early Intervention Transformation Programme is currently going through the final stages of approval, at Executive level, and I expect that confirmation of allocations and timelines will be able to be outlined imminently.

Second Acute Mental Health Unit

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the Health and Social Care Board's recommendations on the location of the second Acute Mental Health Unit in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area; and to detail the date for his decision on this matter.

(AQW 33255/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not yet received the Health and Social Care Board's option appraisal report. I understand the report will be considered by the Board of the HSCB at its meeting on 8 May and, if approved, forwarded to me soon thereafter.

As with any capital investment, the proposed second Mental Health In-patient facility in the Western Trust area will require a business case which must be developed in line with the Northern Ireland Guidance on Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGEAE). The HSCB work will inform the business case, covering all the options and outlining the costs of each, which the Western Trust will be invited to develop and submit to the Department. Only after consideration of the business case by both the Department and DFP will Minister be in a position to decide and announce the location.

Timing of this project will be subject to budgetary availability and it will be considered alongside all other demands on my capital budget as we move to the next budgetary period commencing in 2015/16.

Addiction and Treatment Unit in Omagh

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will provide reassurance to the people of Tyrone and Fermanagh by committing to the retention and development of the Addiction and Treatment Unit in Omagh.

(AQW 33257/11-15)

Mr Poots: The recent consultation by the Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) provided everyone with opportunity to influence what Addiction Treatment Services will look like across Northern Ireland over the next 5 to 10 years. The issue of access to specialist addiction services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area was reflected in many of the comments received, and this has been noted by the HSCB along with other key issues raised by the consultation exercise. The particular issue of The Addiction Treatment Unit at the Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital in Omagh was discussed extensively at the Adjournment Debate on 21 January 2014.

Taking due account of responses to the consultation, and a number of issues that were raised, HSCB is developing final proposals for the future configuration of Tier 3 and Tier 4 addiction services across the whole of Northern Ireland.

At this stage, HSCB is clarifying potential funding requirements and anticipates bringing forward revised proposals for future service developments by the end of June 2014. Accordingly no decisions have as yet been made about the future of addiction services, including those currently provided by the Omagh Addiction Treatment Unit.

Purchase of Medicines Online

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what safeguards are in place regarding the purchase of medicines online.

(AQW 33282/11-15)

Mr Poots: In the UK, there are strict legal controls imposed by the Human Medicines Regulations on the retail sale, supply and advertising of prescription only medicines (POMs). Such medicines can only be sold or supplied at registered pharmacies by, or under the supervision of, a pharmacist and in general only in accordance with a prescription from an appropriate practitioner. However, these restrictions do not apply to countries outside UK jurisdiction and UK legislation does not place an impediment on an individual who imports a medicine into the UK provided it is for their own personal use.

In the UK, there are registered, regulated internet pharmacies which are attached to a 'bricks and mortar' registered pharmacy. The General Pharmaceutical Council, which regulates pharmacies in GB, operates an internet pharmacy logo scheme to identify legitimate online pharmacies. A similar system is in operation in Northern Ireland which allows members of the public to access the pharmacy register (which is maintained by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland) and link through the register directly to the websites of any registered internet pharmacy here.

The availability of medicines via the internet is a global issue and UK regulatory bodies recognise that a multi-faceted approach is essential to ensure any illegal activity is countermanded. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and this Department through the Medicines Regulatory Group (MRG), work with key partner agencies including Police and Customs to continue to act against those illegally importing or selling medicines. MRG have had a number of notable successes in a Northern Ireland context including multiple seizures of illegal POMs (including controlled drugs) destined for addresses throughout Northern Ireland. MRG have successfully instigated proceedings against those involved.

To ensure international co-operation, MRG is an active member of the Permanent Forum on International Pharmaceutical Crime and Heads of Medicines Agencies Working Group of Enforcement Officers. In June 2013, Northern Ireland was one of some 100 countries worldwide who took part in Operation Pangea VI, an International Internet Week of Action. This consisted of co-ordinated action led by Interpol and involving Police, Medicine Regulators and Customs and Excise Officers and was aimed at disrupting the supply by illegal web-sites offering sub-standard and counterfeit medicines on-line. It resulted in an estimated 9610 illegal websites being closed down worldwide and over 9 million doses of unlicensed medicinal products to the value of an estimated £26 million being seized. In Northern Ireland illegal medicinal products worth over £100,000 on the black market were seized as part of the international crackdown week. MRG will be leading Northern Ireland's response to Operation Pangea VII during 2014.

In addition, a Senior Medicines Investigator from within MRG sits on the Organised Crime Task Force Drugs Expert Group and regularly briefs the Group on the activities of MRG allied to its role in enforcing medicines-related legislation here.

National Screening Committee: Pulse Oximetry

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, following the announcement by the National Screening Committee on pulse oximetry, whether he will commission a pilot on this monitoring process, taking into consideration the cross party support obtained to the motion debated in the Assembly on 3 March 2014.

(AQW 33398/11-15)

Mr Poots: The UK National Screening Committee (NSC) has recommended piloting the use of pulse oximetry to screen newborn babies for congenital heart defects. The pilot study will be commissioned in England, but officials from DHSSPS will be meeting with the NSC and officials from the other Devolved Administrations to agree the protocols and questions to be answered through the pilot study.

The NSC will use the pilot to better understand the implications of using the test in services for newborn babies. Following the evaluation of this pilot the NSC will make a policy recommendation for the UK.

It would not be cost-effective to commission a separate pilot study for pulse oximetry in Northern Ireland. I will await the evaluation of the NSC pilot study and the NSC's recommendations before making a policy decision on this for Northern Ireland.

Emergency Departments:12-Hour Waits

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the number of 12 hour waits in Emergency Departments in winter 2013/14 compares with previous years.

(AQO 6118/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am pleased to say that last winter we had the fewest number of people in the last 5 years waiting more than 12 hours in our emergency departments. The numbers waiting reduced from 5,574 in the winter months of 2011/12 to 1,085 in 2013/14. While this is a significant improvement I find it unacceptable that anyone should have to wait unduly and I look to the Health and Social Care Board to continue working with the Trusts to secure further improvement. I have also asked the RQIA to review unscheduled care in the Belfast Trust with learning from this to be applied regionally. I expect to receive the RQIA's report in June which will compliment the work being undertaken by the College of Emergency Medicine and the Royal College of Nursing to bring forward proposals to improve the delivery of emergency care.

Transforming Your Care

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many of the 99 original proposals in Transforming Your Care have been either completed or measured in terms of progress.

(AQO 6128/11-15)

Mr Poots: 'Transforming Your Care: A Review of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland' set out 99 proposals for change across Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. The transformation set out in TYC, provides a roadmap for a 3 to 5 year journey to reshape services in order to ensure that they are safe, resilient and sustainable into the future.

My Department is preparing a written summary of actions to implement the 99 recommendations for the Health Committee. I would be happy to provide the Member with a copy of that document and I will place a copy in the Library of the House.

City Hospital: Emergency Department

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the recent concerns expressed by staff at the Royal Victoria Hospital Emergency Department, what assurances he can provide to the residents of South and East Belfast who are concerned about the continued closure of the City Hospital Emergency Department.

(AQO 6122/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following the temporary closure of the Belfast City Hospital's (BCH) emergency department, additional capacity was created at the Royal Victoria, Mater and Ulster Hospitals, and community services were enhanced to support discharges and prevent unnecessary admissions. There is also GP direct access to the Medical Assessment Unit at the BCH for elderly medical patients and arrangements for patients with stable chest pain to attend rapid access chest pain clinics and cardiology outpatient clinics. There are also direct access arrangements at the BCH for cancer, haematology, renal and urology patients. On 3 March 2014 the Belfast Trust commenced the OPTIMAL 7 service (Older People's Timely Intervention, Management and Admission service) in the BCH, providing an alternative pathway for frail older people who do not need the services of an emergency department.

I trust that these significant measures will provide reassurance for the residents of south and east Belfast that all available action has been taken to alleviate the impact of the temporary closure of the emergency department.

Home Adaptations

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he has taken to assist people with a disability to be more involved in any adaptations made to their homes. **(AQO 6123/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The Housing Adaptations Design Communications Toolkit, which I jointly launched with Minister McCausland in April 2014, is the product of cross sector collaborative working with disabled people, occupational therapists and housing designers/providers and will give disabled people more say in their housing adaptations.

DHSSPS and DSD have both endorsed the toolkit as best practice guidance for cross sector housing adaptations design benchmarking, for interagency communications protocols, and for the provision of those minor housing adaptations which do not require Health and Social Care Trust Occupational Therapy assessment.

The Toolkit includes improved design formats that will help disabled people visualise and discuss proposed housing adaptations.

The consultation events on the Interdepartmental Review of Housing Adaptations in 2013 enabled full participation and ensured inclusiveness on a pan-disability basis.

In addition, service user responses on the final report on housing adaptations services will help inform the development of an action plan to take forward the implementation of the review's recommendations, which it is anticipated will be subject to public consultation later this year.

Cancer Drugs: Fund Model

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to engage with his ministerial counterparts in England and Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland regarding the establishment of a local cancer drugs fund model. **(AQO 6125/11-15)**

Mr Poots: During a debate on this issue, held on the 6th May, many Members spoke of their concerns regarding access to specialist drugs, including cancer drugs. I have listened carefully to those concerns and to the views of other key stakeholders and as a result I have instructed my Department to evaluate the process of access to specialist and cancer drugs in Northern Ireland. This evaluation will take account of measures that other devolved administrations are considering in their approach towards access to specialist drugs. The terms of reference for the evaluation are being finalised and I will inform members as soon as they have been agreed. I expect my Department to report on their findings later this year.

Independent Review into the Death of a Firefighter

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he is considering an independent review into the death of Firefighter Joseph McCloskey in Limavady in 2003. **(AQO 6126/11-15)**

Mr Poots: I have met with Mrs McCloskey and her family and listened carefully to their concerns about Joe's death. I have every sympathy with them and genuinely feel for their loss.

That said there has already been three separate investigations, into the circumstances of this tragic incident, and none of these was able to provide a definitive conclusion. Two of these investigations were independent. I am not aware of any fresh evidence on which to base a further review and it is with regret therefore that I advise I have no plans to commission one.

Outpatient Capacity and Facilities

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to improve local outpatient capacity and facilities.

(AQO 6127/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board works with the Trusts to determine an agreed position in relation to the level of capacity in each elective specialty (outpatients and inpatient/day-case), taking into account levels of productivity and efficiency, and the demand for each specialty based on referrals received.

Individual Trusts are taking forward a range of initiatives to improve facilities. These include a new general outpatients facility at Craigavon Area Hospital and the expansion of Antrim Area Hospital's outpatient facility which is nearing completion. These developments have increased both the quality and capacity of outpatient facilities.

Department of Justice

Sexual Offences Prevention Order: Address

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how John George Kennedy Reid, who is currently under a ten year Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO), has been permitted to reside at an address given as the bus stop beside the Europa Hotel, Belfast; (ii) what monitoring can be put in place in such circumstances; and (iii) whether the terms of SOPO state this is the address at which he is to reside; and if so, whether it is enforceable in respect of the potential risk to the public and under public protection arrangements.

(AQW 33011/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPO) are civil court orders and the conditions which may be attached are a matter for the presiding judge to determine. A SOPO can, where the court believes this is necessary for the protection of the public from serious harm, include a prohibition from residing at an address which is not approved by a relevant authority. There is no such requirement on Mr Reid's SOPO.

On conviction, Mr Reid was also ordered by the court to comply with notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and must, amongst other things, notify police where he is living and of any change in those arrangements. PSNI are the designated public protection risk managers in this case and monitor his compliance with the statutory requirements.

Rehabilitation of Former Prisoners

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice how much his Department has spent on the rehabilitation of former prisoners in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 33017/11-15)

Mr Ford: Rehabilitation of former prisoners is at the core of the work undertaken by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) whose work is grant funded by the Department of Justice. PBNI delivers this through one to one intervention work with offenders, group programmes and a Community Grants scheme. The DOJ also provides grants to a number of voluntary and community organisations for work they undertake in this area.

Table one, below, provides detail of expenditure since the creation of the DOJ in April 2010.

TABLE ONE

Year	Total £K
2010/2011	22,561
2011/2012	22,014
2012/2013	21,806
2013/2014	20,869
Total	87,250

Voluntary Redundancy Package: Disciplinary Investigations

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 32729/11-15, whether there are any pending disciplinary investigations in respect of the anticipated beneficiary of the voluntary redundancy package; and to detail how this would be impacted by any such proceedings.

(AQW 33059/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no pending or past disciplinary actions and, therefore, no impact in respect of the beneficiary of the voluntary redundancy package.

Non-Payment of Television Licence Fee

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 32800/11-15, following the Court ruling and given that the number of people sentenced to a period of imprisonment for non-payment of a television licence fee has reduced by 90 per cent, what has replaced the imprisonment option for those 90 per cent.

(AQW 33094/11-15)

Mr Ford: The penalty for failure to pay a court imposed fine, including fines imposed for non-payment of a television licence, is a period of imprisonment.

Later this year, I plan to introduce a Bill into the Assembly to establish a new fine collection and enforcement service with a wider range of options to encourage payment. In cases where default occurs, a community-based Supervised Activity Order will be available as an alternative to imprisonment.

In the interim, until the new fine collection and enforcement service becomes available, new processes are being put in place to introduce default hearings. At the default hearing the Judge will set the default imprisonment period and a fine warrant will be issued for enforcement purposes.

In the longer term, I consider it would be desirable to treat non-payment of a television licence as a civil money debt rather than a crime. This is, however, not a devolved matter.

Person in Custody: Photographs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Lee McCausland, (i) why he was permitted to have a mobile phone whilst in custody in the cells of Dungannon Court House from where he took a photograph of himself which was later posted on social media; (ii) whether he was a remanded prisoner when an additional photograph was taken of the courtroom and if this was taken from the dock, or on the way to or from the cells; and (iii) whether he will be charged with contempt of court or any similar offence in respect of the taking of these images; and to detail whether current searching techniques for prisoners leaving custody to travel to court and on their return, as well as before entering courtrooms, particularly the dock, will be reviewed.

(AQW 33101/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is NIPS policy that no prisoner should have access to an illicit telephone and as such Lee McCausland was not given permission to have a mobile phone on his person when in Dungannon Crown Courthouse holding cells.

The photograph showing a courtroom setting was taken from the public gallery area and directed through the glass panels of the Dock area. This photograph was taken several days before Mr McCausland's case was heard. At that time Mr McCausland was on bail and was not a remand prisoner.

As the photograph of the courtroom was taken at a time when the Court was not in session the Court Service does not intend to take any further action.

Male prisoners leaving Prison establishments to travel to Courthouses are required to be full body-searched and again on their return. Mr McCausland was not in custody prior to his court appearance. When he appeared in Court off-bail he was given a rub down search prior to entering the Dock area in accordance with search procedures. When taken from the Courtroom to the holding cells he was again rub-down searched which was followed up by using a hand held electronic search detector. PECCS management reviewed the search procedures applied to Mr McCausland and are satisfied they were appropriately followed. PECCS management has reminded staff in all other Courthouses of this incident and to be vigilant in respect of small and easily concealable electronic communication devices, during search procedures.

Sexual Offences Prevention Order: Address

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given that John George Kennedy Reid's address was given as "The Bus Stop Beside the Europa Hotel", and prior to this Ciaran Kelly's address was given as residing at "Under the Bridge, Campsie", whether he will instigate an immediate review into the living arrangements of sex offenders and people with Sexual Offences Prevention Orders, particularly in the wake of cases such as David Paige who was not residing at his required address and was not appropriately monitored as a result.

(AQW 33170/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are a range of measures in place, and further enhancements which will shortly be implemented, which address the issue of sex offenders who have no fixed abode in the community.

Sexual and violent offenders sentenced to a period of imprisonment of 12 months or more under the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 are subject to post-release supervision with standard licence conditions which include residence at an address approved by a probation officer. Where it is appropriate, this may be in approved premises or other managed hostel accommodation. Where this is not required in terms of risk management, and an individual being supervised is homeless, the Probation Board and Northern Ireland Housing Executive will explore options to identify suitable accommodation commensurate with the level of risk being managed.

Where the court has ordered an individual to comply with notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 they must, amongst other things, notify police where they are living and of any changes in those arrangements within prescribed statutory timescales.

The Department has already reviewed the legislation covering sex offender notification requirements and draft regulations will shortly be laid in the Assembly which will strengthen the existing arrangements. One of the new provisions will require sex offenders with no fixed address to make confirmatory notification to the police on a weekly basis, as to a place where they can regularly be found.

Offenders who are subject solely to a civil Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) may be prohibited from residing at an address which is not approved by a relevant authority but this is a decision for the court where it believes this is a course of action necessary for the protection of the public from serious harm. Provisions were made in the Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 to strengthen the SOPO by enabling a court to order that an offender comply with specific requirements which could include, for example, residing at a particular address where this is considered necessary for the protection of the

public. This provision is due to be commenced at the same time as the regulations on changes to the sex offender notification requirements are made.

On this basis, I am satisfied that there is no requirement for an immediate review of accommodation issues for sex offenders in the community at this time.

Bus Service: Europa Buscentre, Belfast to Hydebank Wood

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Justice to detail any consultation his Department had with the Department for Regional Development in regard to the decision to terminate the 313 bus service from the Europa Buscentre, Belfast to Hydebank Wood.

(AQW 33181/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prior to 26 April 2014, Hydebank Wood funded a bus service from Europa Buscentre into Hydebank Wood Prison two days a week.

As part of the 2014/15 budget allocation process for NIPS, Hydebank undertook a review of the services and with reluctance it was agreed funding for this service would be withdrawn. Given the low usage of the service, Translink decided to discontinue the route.

Visitors to Hydebank Wood were informed of the proposed change in advance and information was provided to inform them of the alternative Translink services on the routes close to the Prison.

Night Custody Officers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what changes have been made for night custody officers as a result of the death in custody of Colin Bell, shown against the original procedures and/or working arrangements they replaced, and including all dates of amendment.

(AQW 33193/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following her investigation into the death in custody of Colin Bell the then Prisoner Ombudsman Pauline McCabe made 44 recommendations to the Northern Ireland Prison Service, 16 of which related to the recruitment, training, secondary employment and working practices of Night Custody Officers.

All 16 recommendations were accepted by the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the appropriate changes introduced for each. Most of these were implemented by 30 September 2009 and the last one relating to the recruitment of staff was introduced in August 2012, which was the earliest opportunity to do so given this was the first recruitment campaign by the Northern Ireland Prison Service since the publication of the report. The Ombudsman's report is readily available in the public domain should the Member wish to view the recommendations.

Senior managers within the Northern Ireland Prison Service scrutinise all practices and procedures within the organisation on an ongoing basis.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders: Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders imposed for public order offences in the Dungannon area in each of the last five years have not been breached.

(AQW 33195/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been no Anti-Social Behaviour Orders granted in Dungannon during the period 2009 to 2013.

Mixed Committal Proceedings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Preliminary Investigations involving mixed committal proceedings have been at Magistrates Court, broken down by court division, in each of the last five years; and of these, to detail (i) how many were funded by Legal Aid; (ii) how many required more than one day for hearing; and (iii) how many had counsel instructed, broken down by (i) senior; and (ii) junior.

(AQW 33196/11-15)

Mr Ford: The tables below outline the information requested for the calendar years 2011 to 2013. Provision of data prior to 2011 would incur a disproportionate cost.

MIXED COMMITTALS AT MAGISTRATES' COURT IN 2011

Court Division	No. of mixed committals	No. of defendants involved	No. of defendants funded by legal aid	No. of mixed committals requiring more than one hearing day	No. of defendants funded by legal aid with counsel instructed	
					Senior	Junior
Belfast	14	31	31	7	0	16
Londonderry	4	5	4	0	0	1
Antrim	4	5	5	0	0	1
Fermanagh and Tyrone	3	3	3	2	0	1
Armagh and South Down	8	10	10	5	0	3
Ards	2	2	2	2	0	0
Craigavon	7	7	7	5	0	2
Total	42	63	62	21	0	24

Source: Integrated Court Operations System

TABLE 2: MIXED COMMITTALS AT MAGISTRATES' COURT IN 2012

Court Division	No. of mixed committals	No. of defendants involved	No. of defendants funded by legal aid	No. of mixed committals requiring more than one hearing day	No. of defendants funded by legal aid with counsel instructed	
					Senior	Junior
Belfast	15	43	43	9	0	17
Londonderry	1	1	1	0	0	1
Antrim	2	2	2	2	0	1
Fermanagh and Tyrone	2	2	2	1	0	1
Armagh and South Down	2	2	2	1	0	1
Ards	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craigavon	2	7	7	2	0	3
Total	24	57	57	15	0	24

Source: Integrated Court Operations System

TABLE 3: MIXED COMMITTALS IN MAGISTRATES' COURT 2013^P

Court Division	No. of mixed committals	No. of defendants involved	No. of defendants funded by legal aid	No. of mixed committals requiring more than one hearing day	No. of defendants funded by legal aid with counsel instructed	
					Senior	Junior
Belfast	15	22	22	10	0	6
Londonderry	0	0	0	0	0	0
Antrim	5	11	9	3	0	1
Fermanagh and Tyrone	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armagh and South Down	9	16	13	3	0	3
Ards	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craigavon	2	4	4	0	1	3
Total	31	53	48	16	1	13

Source: Integrated Court Operations System

^P Data are currently provisional and may be subject to change

Preliminary Investigations and Mixed Committals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given the excessive costs of Legal Aid in respect of Preliminary Investigations and Mixed Committals, whether their abolition would bring Northern Ireland in line with England and Wales and help achieving savings in Legal Aid, particularly as such cases generally require counsel at Magistrates Court stage; and to provide an estimate of potential savings from each of the last five years.

(AQW 33224/11-15)

Mr Ford: The proposed abolition of preliminary investigations and mixed committals will not bring Northern Ireland into line with England and Wales, where all committal proceedings have been abolished and cases are sent directly to the Crown Court. The current proposals in Northern Ireland would result in most cases being committed to the Crown Court by way of preliminary inquiry. Certain offences would be transferred to the Crown Court without committal. This would apply initially to murder and manslaughter cases and to cases where a defendant indicates his intention to plead guilty.

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that cases are managed at the appropriate court level and to expedite the disposal of cases where defendants are pleading guilty. They are not designed to reduce costs and I do not envisage that there will be any significant impact on the cost of legal aid.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders: Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been handed down (i) in conjunction with; or (ii) as an alternative to, a sentence or binding over, conditional discharge or any other disposal for public order offences in the Dungannon area, in each of the last two years to date.

(AQW 33225/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been no Anti-Social Behaviour Orders granted in Dungannon during the years 2012 and 2013.

Victims and Witnesses of Crime

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what additional measures are being taken to protect the victims and witnesses of crime in courts and the justice system.

(AQW 33241/11-15)

Mr Ford: A range of measures are available to protect victims and witnesses of crime, both at court and during their engagement with the criminal justice system.

A formal needs assessment process has been introduced to identify the particular needs of individual victims and witnesses, including through the use of special measures at court and other support. The needs of the victim are considered by both the police and the new Victim and Witness Care Unit. This is completed at the earliest stage possible after contact has been made with one of the criminal justice organisations.

This process means that a range of measures may be applied for to help vulnerable and intimidated witnesses (which can include a victim) give their best evidence at court. These measures include screening a witness from the defendant, live links to enable the witness to give evidence from outside the court, evidence being given in private, the use of Registered Intermediaries to enable witnesses with significant communication difficulties give their best evidence and the use of video recorded interviews.

I have also given a commitment in the Victim and Witness Strategy to introduce video-recorded cross examination and re-examination of victims and witnesses. This will allow victims and witnesses to give their account in advance of the trial and be cross-examined in front of a judge. A recording would then be shown to the jury during the subsequent trial.

In terms of more general protection, where a victim or witness has concerns about their safety, they should bring this to the attention of the police so that any necessary safeguards and additional protections can be put in place. At court, where facilities permit, victims and witnesses can use a separate entrance and waiting facilities to reduce the risk of contact with the defendant and their supporters. Where someone poses a threat to the safety of other court users, they will be removed from the court building.

My Department will shortly be publishing intimidation guidance, in the form of a manual for police and criminal justice practitioners who are responsible for identifying and supporting intimidated witnesses. This outlines strategies for effectively identifying, managing and supporting intimidated witnesses as they progress through the criminal justice system.

As part of the Victim and Witness Strategy, the facilities available in courthouses are also being reviewed, with the aim of identifying specific improvements to provide a more comfortable environment where victims and witnesses can feel safe.

Rehabilitative Programmes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the judgement of 21 December 2010 in the Court of Appeal in respect of the sentencing of Eamon Coyle, to detail the rehabilitative programmes he participated whilst on bail, including who hosted the programmes.

(AQW 33242/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Data Protection Act 1998 gives individuals certain rights in relation to personal information held on them by public authorities. The additional information requested over and above that already in the public domain through the judgement of 21 December 2010 in the Court of Appeal cannot be provided as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders: Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) have been handed down for public order offences in the Dungannon area in each of the last two years to date in instances where there has been an indication and/or reports of behaviour leading to necessitating an application for an ASBO but no action was taken to prosecute in conjunction with, or separately for, public order offences.

(AQW 33264/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been no Anti-Social Behaviour Orders granted in Dungannon during the years 2012 and 2013.

Magherafelt Courthouse/Hearing Centre

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the proposed closure of Magherafelt Courthouse/Hearing Centre.

(AQW 33266/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 22 November 2012 I announced my decision to close Magherafelt Hearing Centre and transfer court business to Antrim Courthouse.

At that stage I anticipated these changes would take effect in 2014 following the implementation of a single territorial jurisdiction for County Courts and Magistrates' Courts. These provisions will be carried in a Justice Bill to be introduced into the Assembly later this year. The administrative arrangements to facilitate the transfer of business will be agreed once the supporting legislation receives Royal Assent. It is anticipated the Bill will be enacted by Autumn 2015.

Northern Ireland Courts Tribunal Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 31148/11-15, when he will take action to correct this and issue a regulation/directive ensuring that the Northern Ireland Courts Tribunal Service refuse to accept cases for listing from either the PSNI or the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland, without correct names clearly stated.

(AQW 33323/11-15)

Mr Ford: As noted in my previous answer, in a case where details are unclear or incomplete they may be clarified or amended in court. I have no plans to take any further action.

Security Cameras: Lower Oldpark Road Junction

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many hours, in the last six months, security cameras situated in the Lower Oldpark Road junction with the Hillview Road have recorded activities in the area.

(AQW 33438/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are two cctv cameras situated on the Oldpark Road, close to the junction with Hillview Road. Images from these are recorded twenty four hours a day, every day. The images are fed back to Antrim Road police station where they are also displayed constantly on one of the screens for viewing by the monitoring staff.

In line with PSNI retention policy the recordings made are held for one calendar month and, if not required for evidential purposes, will then be overwritten.

Department for Regional Development

Park and Ride Facility in Portadown

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the provision of a park and ride facility in Portadown.

(AQW 33027/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): The provision of additional Park & Ride facilities to serve Portadown Railway Station has been included in my Department's Strategic Park & Ride delivery programme.

My Department has determined that the site bounded by the A3 Northway/Corcraan Road/Curran Street (known as Bodega Junction) is the most suitable prospect for a Park & Ride at Portadown.

Translink estimates that a Planning Application and Economic Appraisal will be complete by February 2015, with construction commencing in February 2016. This will be dependent upon the successful completion of the necessary statutory processes and the availability of funding.

Footpath Resurfacing in Millisle

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons for the delay in footpath resurfacing in Millisle, as agreed in the last financial year.

(AQW 33087/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department had originally planned to carry out this work during the last financial year, however, due to the location coinciding with the diversionary route for traffic arising from the road closure at Whitechurch Road, Ballywalter associated with the tidal surge event earlier in the year, it was decided to defer commencement of the works until the road had re-opened. I can, however, confirm the work should be completed within the next 6 weeks.

Footpath Resurfacing: Beechfield and Ashfield Estates

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons for the delay in footpath resurfacing between Beechfield and Ashfield Estates, as agreed in the last financial year.

(AQW 33088/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member this work is well under way. He may not be aware that my Department has decided to take the opportunity to extend the scheme with additional footway and drainage work. In addition, upgrading of the existing street lighting system is taking place but there has been a difficulty with equipment supply which has impacted on the timing of the final resurfacing of the footpath. This, coupled with the Easter holiday period taken by the construction industry, has resulted in a minor delay in completing the scheme.

Gransha Roundabout, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on pedestrian safety proposals for the Gransha Roundabout, Bangor.

(AQW 33089/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has commissioned consultants to examine possible options to improve pedestrian facilities at the Gransha Road Roundabout, Bangor. An initial report has now been received, which is intended to place my Department in a better position to establish the best way forward.

While it will take some time for the report to be fully considered, I have asked Mr Simon Richardson, Divisional Roads Manager for Southern Division, to keep you updated on the outcome.

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 32667/11-15, given that pay and display car parks have been in operation for some time, whether any research has been carried out to ascertain the reasons for the increase in Penalty Charge Notices issued between 2012 and 2013.

(AQW 33096/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In overall terms, the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued has been decreasing since the commencement of decriminalised parking enforcement in 2006, from 163,586 issued in 2007 to 112,755 in 2012 and 108,558 in 2013.

During this period, my Department introduced charges in 25 previously free car parks and all of the Department's 29 kiosk-operated car parks were converted to pay and display. This increase in the base number of charged car parks and change to the method of operation of others required enforcement in car parks where previously none was necessary.

Power Points on Private Property for Electric Vehicles

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the (i) number; and (ii) location of power points installed for charging electric vehicles on private property.

(AQW 33123/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In terms of the publically accessible charge points installed by ecar on private property, there are two 3kW single headed charge points, 26 double-headed 22kW AC Fast Charge Posts, and thirteen 50kW DC Rapid Charge Posts.

My Department does not maintain records of privately installed charge points for public use on private property.

Details of the locations of the ecar public charge points on private property are set out in the table below:

Charge Point ID	Type	Charge Point Name	Location
	2x3kW "dumb" Charge Points	Titanic Belfast	Titanic Belfast Queen's Road, Titanic Quarter, Belfast, BT3 9EP
SC55	Fast Charger	Slieve Donard Hotel	Downs Road, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 0AH
SC56	Fast Charger	Junction 1 Shopping Centre	Junction One Shopping Centre, 111 Ballymena Rd, Antrim, BT41 4LL
SC57	Fast Charger	Roe Park Resort	Drumrane Road, Limavady, Co Londonderry BT49 9LB
SC60	Fast Charger	Supervalu, Ballymena Rd, Ballymoney	Supervalu, Ballymena Rd, Ballymoney, Co Antrim BT53 7AB
SC65	Fast Charger	The Fir Trees Hotel	Dublin Road, Strabane, Co Tyrone BT82 9EA
SC70	Fast Charger	Newtownstewart 2000	17 Moyle Road, Newtownstewart, Omagh Co Tyrone BT78 4AP
SC75	Fast Charger	Rushmere Shopping Centre	Central Way, Craigavon, Co Armagh BT64 1AA

Charge Point ID	Type	Charge Point Name	Location
SC78	Fast Charger	Glenavon House Hotel	Cookstown Road, Cookstown, Co Tyrone BT80 8JQ
SC80	Fast Charger	The Burnavon Theatre	Burn Road, Cookstown, Co Tyrone BT80 8DN
SC84	Fast Charger	Barbican Filling Station Newcastle	Dundrum Road, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 OLN
SC92	Fast Charger	Bloomfield Shopping Centre	South Circular Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7HB
SC93	Fast Charger	Galgorm Manor Hotel Ballymena	136 Fenaghy Road, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT42 1EA
SC114	Fast Charger	Hilton Templepatrick Hotel	Hilton Templepatrick Castle Upton Estate, Templepatrick, Co Antrim BT39 ODD
SC116	Fast Charger	Logan's of Cloughmills	Logan's of Cloughmills, 235 Frosses Road, Cloughmills, Co Antrim BT44 9PU
SC122	Fast Charger	Oak Shopping Centre	Oaks Road, Dungannon, Co Tyrone BT71 4NA
SC127	Fast Charger	Stormont Hotel	Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3LP
SC128	Fast Charger	Ivanhoe Hotel	Ivanhoe Inn & Hotel, 556 Saintfield Rd, Castlereagh, Co Down BT8 8EU
SC129	Fast Charger	The Quays Shopping Centre	The Quays Shopping Centre, Newry, Co Down BT35 8QS
SC131	Fast Charger	The Outlet Shopping Centre	Bridgewater Park, Banbridge, Co Down BT32 4GJ
SC139	Fast Charger	Sainsbury's Car Park	Kennedy Centre, 564-568 Falls Road, Belfast, BT119AE
SC140	Fast Charger	Spar Car Park	Spar Car Park, 46 Main Street, Derrylin, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT92 8JW
SC153	Fast Charger	Car Park Fairhill Shopping Centre	Thomas Street, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT43 6UF
SC156	Fast Charger	Brunswick Cinemaplex	Brunswick Moviebowl, Brunswick Lane, Londonderry BT48 0LU
SC158	Fast Charger	Ballygally Castle Hotel	274 Coast Road, Larne, Co Antrim BT40 2QZ
SC161	Fast Charger	Dobbies Garden World	Saintfield Road, Lisburn, Co Down BT27 5PG

Charge Point ID	Type	Charge Point Name	Location
RC01	Rapid Charger	M1, Junction 15 Rapid Charger	Donnelly Motor Group Garage, 59 Moy Rd, Dungannon, Co Tyrone BT71 7DT
RC02	Rapid Charger	Glenshane Pass	Glenshane Tourist Services, Jamesie's Garage, 31 Glenshane Rd, Maghera, Co Londonderry BT46 5JZ
RC03	Rapid Charger	Fiveways	Fiveways Shops and Service Station, 101 Armagh Rd, Newry, Co Down BT35 6PW
RC04	Rapid Charger	Portrush Rapid Charger	Causeway Street, Portrush, Co Antrim BT56 8JE
RC05	Rapid Charger	Phoenix Service Station	Phoenix Service Station, 14 Antrim Rd (Queen St), Ballymena, Co Antrim BT42 2BJ
RC06	Rapid Charger	Larne Rapid Charger	Topaz Service Station, Unit 1A Larne Business Pk, Redlands Rd, Larne, Co Antrim BT40 1AY
RC07	Rapid Charger	Texaco Garage, Junction 1 International Outlet	Ballymena Road, Antrim, BT41 4LQ
RC08	Rapid Charger	Barbican Centra A1	Halfway Road, Banbridge, BT32 4ET
RC10	Rapid Charger	Omagh Rapid Charger	Beltany Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT78 5RA
RC11	Rapid Charger	Derry-Londonderry Rapid Charger	Maxol Service Station, Waterside, 29 Glendermott Rd, Londonderry, BT47 6BG
RC12	Rapid Charger	A7 Rapid Charger	Bell's Spar, 7 Saintfield Rd, Crossgar, BT30 9HY
RC13	Rapid Charger	Shane Retail Park	Boucher Road, Belfast, BT12
RC14	Rapid Charger	Belvoir Rapid Charger	Maxol Service Station, Belvoir, 60 Milltown Rd, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast, BT8 7XP

In addition, 71 home and workplace charge points have been installed under the ecar grant scheme, however, details of the addresses of grant recipients cannot be provided due to Data Protection restrictions.

E-Car Charging Points

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amount of grant aid provided for installing e-car charging points and to indicate the number installed by each contractor.

(AQW 33124/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: From the commencement of the Home & Workplace Charge Point Grant aid scheme in April 2012 until May 2014, my Department has provided £96,443.59 for installing charging points.

Details of the number of ecar charging points installed by each contractor are provided in the table below:

Contractor	Charge Points Installed
Charging Solutions	3
Eaga NI Ltd / Carillion Energy Services / powerni	14
GP Electrical & Security	1
M2C	9
MCC Energy	34
Podpoint Ltd	10
Total	71

Bus Routes in Derry: Ulsterbus

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the terms and conditions attached to the take over of bus routes in Derry by Ulsterbus which were previously operated by the former Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company.

(AQW 33125/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department was informed by Translink of local news reports that the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company had ceased trading. Translink was aware that this unfortunate development would result in a significant number of people in the Culmore area, including many school children not having any bus service. In light of this Ulsterbus as the licensed public transport network provider for Northern Ireland, felt that this loss of service would not be acceptable and applied to the Department of the Environment (NI) for a licence to provide services between Foyle Street and Culmore Point. The licence application was approved by the Department of the Environment as they currently have responsibility for the granting of bus route licences and for setting the terms and conditions attached to such licences.

In the circumstances I believe this was a pragmatic solution to a potentially difficult situation.

Coleraine: Third Bridge

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what long term provision has been made for of a third bridge in Coleraine to alleviate traffic congestion for vehicles travelling to the North West.

(AQW 33126/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: A third bridge across the River Bann within Coleraine, linking Union Street to Castlerock Road was included in the Coleraine Town Centre Masterplan, which was prepared by the Department for Social Development and Coleraine Borough Council. The Masterplan considered this bridge would be required at some stage in the future to assist internal traffic circulation within Coleraine Town, should significant development proposals identified within the Masterplan proceed.

Eastern Link Road Project in Downpatrick

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress of the Eastern Link Road project in Downpatrick as outlined in the current Down Area Plan.

(AQW 33129/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The position regarding the Downpatrick Eastern Link Road remains as detailed in my answer in July 2013 to your AQW 25060/11-15. The potential Link Road is a developer led proposal in the Ards Down Area Plan 2015.

The delivery of such a road scheme is fully dependent upon the structured development of zoned lands, as detailed in the Ards Down Area Plan 2015, and approvals through the various Planning processes. As mentioned previously, the Plan also makes separate provision for the upgrading of the northern section of Rathkeltair Road and its junction with Strangford Road.

My Department's contribution to such an improvement is subject to the availability of the necessary funding. Given current pressures on budgets and uncertainty regarding future funding, it is not possible to advise when this improvement scheme may be included in a departmental work programme.

Review of Public Administration: Road Closure Powers

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what road closure powers councils will have following the implementation of the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 33143/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The creation of the 11 council Model with effect from 1 April 2015 will not, in itself, provide councils with any powers to close roads.

Bus Service: Europa Buscentre, Belfast to Hydebank Wood

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development why the 313 bus service from the Europa Buscentre, Belfast to Hydebank Wood, which had operated on Thursdays and Saturdays, will cease to operate from 30 April 2014; and to detail the level of public consultation conducted before this decision was taken.

(AQW 33180/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The 313 bus service from the Europa Buscentre to Hydebank Wood was a contract service paid for by the Northern Ireland Prison Service and not a Public Transport service. The service ran directly from the Buscentre to Hydebank Wood, with no stage carriage stops en route.

Translink was informed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service on 27 March 2014, that due to budget pressures the prison would no longer be able to continue to subsidise this service into Belfast and the service was withdrawn on 26th April 2014.

Translink has liaised with the Northern Ireland Prison Service and provided timetable information setting out alternative public transport options which can be passed onto visitors or staff.

Community Transport Services: Funding

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the funding of community transport services, to detail (i) how much funding has been granted to each transport provider by his Department in 2014/15, compared to 2013/14; (ii) what consultations took place prior to any reduction in funding; and (iii) what equality impact assessments have been carried out prior to any reduction in funding.

(AQW 33252/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The budget allocation to Rural Community Transport Partnerships is made up of a baseline or starting budget and can be supplemented by in year funding and from other sources. It is also worth noting that the Rural Transport Fund within my Department provides support to service providers other than the Rural Community Transport Partnerships.

The table below details the level of funding to the Rural Community Partnerships in 2013-14 and the number of Dial-a-Lift trips which were provided. This level of funding includes additional strands of support sourced from within the Departmental allocation as a result of monitoring rounds and from other sources. It should be noted that there is no guarantee that additional in year funding can be found year on year and this has always been made clear.

It is impossible to determine at this time what other sources of funding may be available for 2014-15. Given this it is not possible to confirm how much grant funding each of the Partnerships will receive

by the end of 2014-15. Baseline budgets will be communicated to the Rural Community Transport Partnerships as soon as possible. In overall terms those baseline budgets are expected to be at the same level as in 2013/2014. In year funding that may arise from monitoring and other sources will also be communicated within the next few months and after individual business plans are assessed.

Rural Transport Fund Support by Operational Area for the Rural Community Transport Partnerships in 2013-14	Total Annual RTF Grant Funding
CDM (Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt)	£564,284.74
Down District Accessible Transport	£439,843.16
Easilink (Strabane, Foyle and Omagh)	£534,627.42
Fermanagh Community Transport	£519,070.99
Lagan Valley Rural Transport	£209,358.78
NCCT (Roe Valley, Coleraine, Ballycastle, Ballymena)	£605,224.00
South Antrim Community Transport	£212,665.39
Southern Area (Armagh, Newry & Mourne & Banbridge)	£392,246.97
Total	£3,477,321.45

For the reasons set out above the issue of consultation or equality impact assessments does not arise.

Road Safety: Kilcoole/Rosscoole Area of North Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development what proposals his Department has to improve road safety in the Kilcoole/Rosscoole area of North Belfast.

(AQW 33344/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department developed plans to implement a traffic calming scheme within the Kilcoole/Rosscoole area of Belfast in 2006, although this did not proceed to implementation due to a lack of local community support.

In response to a recent request for traffic calming measures in the area, officials now plan to carry out a further survey to obtain up-to-date data on the speed and volume of traffic. This will facilitate the completion of a full reassessment and reprioritisation of the area for potential provision of traffic calming measures.

The area will then compete with other potential schemes for inclusion within a works programme.

Design Guide for Residential Developments

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the minimum width of carriageway in a shared surface development as specified in his Department's design guide for residential developments; and (ii) whether this design guide has been approved by the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland or other road safety specialists.

(AQW 33363/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The concept of shared surfaces is detailed in the document 'Creating Places', which was published by DoE Planning in May 2000.

Section 19 of this document specifically relates to the design considerations for shared surface schemes and, in relation to widths, paragraph 19.06 states:

Shared surfaces should be wide enough to allow pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to pass each other comfortably and for vehicles to manoeuvre. The normal minimum width for a shared surface is

6.0metres, but it should always be 4.8metres wide at its entrance. Carriageway narrowing to 4.8metres is also acceptable, but only for short lengths (around 20metres).

The preparation of this guide involved extensive public consultation and discussions with housing developers, design professionals, service providers, public transport undertakers and other interested parties, including the Institution of Highways and Transportation, Queens University of Belfast, RUC Traffic Policy Branch, Housing Executive and Ulsterbus and Citybus. The Health and Safety Executive, with its focus on safety in the workplace, did not submit a response to the consultation.

Department for Social Development

Housing Executive: West Belfast Constituency

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of meetings he has held with officials from the Housing Executive in relation to the West Belfast constituency since 17 September 2013; and which other elected representatives attended these meetings.

(AQW 32709/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): In my role as Minister for Social Development, I have not had any meetings with Housing Executive officials in relation to the West Belfast constituency since 17 September 2013. However, I have had two meetings since that date in relation to housing issues in the West Belfast constituency which did not involve Housing Executive officials. One was at the request of Fra McCann MLA in relation to housing issues and one was a visit to Springmartin, Highfield and Glencairn at the request of William Humphrey MLA and Councillor Frank McCoubrey.

Ventilation System in Dales Flats, Conway, Dunmurry

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development what maintenance programme is in place to service the ventilation system in Dales Flats, Conway, Dunmurry; and what further maintenance is scheduled for the flats.

(AQW 32888/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The ventilation systems in the Dales multi storey flats are currently being maintained via the Housing Executive's response maintenance contractor. However, the Housing Executive will be replacing the ventilation systems as part of the kitchen replacement scheme which is programmed for 2015/16. This scheme will be subject to a separate procurement process.

Other works programmed for the Dales flats are:

- Refurbishment of halls and stairwells – estimated start date August 2014
- Repairs to concrete balconies – estimated start date October 2014
- Window replacement scheme in 2015/16

In relation to the Housing Executive's maintenance of Tower Blocks, such as the Dales Flats, I have already raised my concerns about the lack of an appropriate maintenance and investment strategy for Tower Blocks with the Housing Executive Chairman and we will be discussing this further shortly.

Phase 2 of the Child Maintenance Reform Programme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development whether he expects Phase 2 of the Child Maintenance Reform Programme to begin as scheduled in June 2014.

(AQW 32953/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Child Maintenance Reform programme in Northern Ireland will be aligned with changes being made in the rest of the United Kingdom by the Department for Work and Pensions

(DWP). My officials are continuing to work towards the timetable as scheduled. I expect to be able to confirm the actual commencement date in the near future.

Housing Units on the Rathmoyle Site

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 32592/11-15, whether he has discussed the proposals for the housing units on the Rathmoyle site with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety; and when construction of these units will begin.

(AQW 33042/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have not discussed any proposals for the housing units on the Rathmoyle site with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

Clanmil Housing Association is working with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to progress this scheme. I understand that the construction of 28 housing units will commence in the final quarter of the 2014/15 programme year.

People Declared Homeless or Living in Temporary Accommodation

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people in each council area (i) currently declared homeless; and (ii) living in temporary accommodation.

(AQW 33118/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to (i): Table 1 provides details of those applicants who have been assessed under homeless legislation and to whom Full Duty Applicant status applies by Council area at 31 March 2014.

In relation to (ii): Table 2 provides on the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation again by Council area at 31 March 2014.

Table 1 – Full Duty Applicant's on the waiting list by Council area at 31.03.14

Local Council Area	Total
Antrim Borough Council	331
Ards Borough Council	427
Armagh City & District Council	81
Ballymena Borough Council	637
Ballymoney Borough Council	104
Banbridge District Council	93
Belfast City Council	3,744
Carrickfergus Borough Council	252
Castlereagh Borough Council	251
Coleraine Borough Council	401
Cookstown District Council	60
Craigavon Borough Council	177
City Council of Londonderry	1,613
Down District Council	446
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	364

Local Council Area	Total
Fermanagh District Council	109
Larne Borough Council	82
Limavady Borough Council	90
Lisburn City Council	902
Magherafelt District Council	100
Moyle District Council	103
Newry & Mourne District Council	719
Newtownabbey Borough Council	553
North Down Borough Council	479
Omagh District Council	39
Strabane District Council	112
Total	12,269

Table 2 – Temporary Accommodation Placement by Council Area at 31.03.14

Local Council Area	Total
Antrim Borough Council	27
Ards Borough Council	44
Armagh City & District Council	4
Ballymena Borough Council	67
Ballymoney Borough Council	8
Banbridge District Council	3
Belfast City Council	470
Carrickfergus Borough Council	10
Castlereagh Borough Council	48
Coleraine Borough Council	29
Cookstown District Council	4
Craigavon Borough Council	14
City Council of Londonderry	341
Down District Council	45
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	34
Fermanagh District Council	26
Larne Borough Council	4
Limavady Borough Council	9
Lisburn City Council	207

Local Council Area	Total
Magherafelt District Council	6
Moyle District Council	10
Newry & Mourne District Council	55
Newtownabbey Borough Council	16
North Down Borough Council	44
Omagh District Council	6
Strabane District Council	6
Total	1537

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.

Direct Labour Organisation: Cost

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 29987/11-15, whether he will provide the actual cost of running the Direct Labour Organisation in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, not just the turnover.

(AQW 33122/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I would refer the Member to my answer to AQW 32975/11-15. The figures I provided are the total cost figures.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in North Down have yet to have a carbon monoxide alarm installed; and what is the timescale for installation.

(AQW 33144/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that within the North Down area 1,840 properties had been identified which fell within the NIHE Board's approval to have a carbon monoxide detector installed. To date the Housing Executive has installed 1,208 carbon monoxide detectors in its properties, with No Access or refusals recorded against the remaining 632 properties.

Although there is no obligation to retrofit the detectors, the Housing Executive is installing a carbon monoxide detector in each dwelling (where none exists) through their heating contractors during the annual planned service. They advise that this will ensure that all properties will have a carbon monoxide detector fitted within the next twelve months.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in North Down have had a carbon monoxide alarm installed in each of the last three years.

(AQW 33145/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that over the last three years they have installed the following number of carbon monoxide detectors in properties in North Down.

2011/12	936
2012/13	17
2013/14	309

Landlord Registration Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Social Development how many landlords have registered under the landlord registration scheme, broken down by council area; and what action has been taken against any landlord who has not yet registered.

(AQW 33150/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the number of landlords registered since the launch of the Landlord Registration Scheme in February 2014, broken down by council area of the permanent address provided.

Council	Number of Landlords (at 31st April 2014)
Antrim	286
Ards	445
Armagh	147
Ballymena	197
Ballymoney	108
Banbridge	222
Belfast	848
Carrickfergus	243
Castlereagh	115
Coleraine	184
Cookstown	42
Craigavon	320
Derry	151
Downpatrick	-
Dungannon	151
Fermanagh	71
Larne	74
Limavady	54
Lisburn	210
Magherafelt	-
Moyle	66
Newry & Mourne	88
Newtownabbey	30
North Down	101
Omagh	53
Strabane	27
Great Britain	132
International	81
Total	4,446

Banbridge District Council has issued two warning letters in respect of complaints received under the Landlord Registration Scheme. No other instances of enforcement action have been reported.

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 the UK Statistics Authority.

Appeals Service Panel Members: Complaints

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether a complaints policy or procedure exists in respect of the conduct of Appeals Service panel members and their handling of hearings; (ii) if so, to provide copy of same; and (iii) is the policy made available to all participants of an appeal hearing.

(AQW 33165/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Appeal tribunal panel members are judicial office holders and independent of Government. The conduct of judicial officer holders is governed by the Office of the Lord Chief Justice's Code of Practice. Complaints regarding the conduct of panel members are dealt with by the President of Appeal Tribunals.

The Code of Practice can be downloaded from the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website <http://www.courtsni.gov.uk>. When investigating a complaint, the Office of the President of Appeal Tribunals issues an information bulletin about the code with each response.

The Appeal Service Complaints Procedure, which is accessible from the website of the Department of Social Development, directs appellants who wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the judiciary to the Office of The President of Appeal Tribunals.

Promotion of Credit Unions

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what steps his Department is taking to assist in the promotion of Credit Unions and the facilities they offer to people living in working class Protestant areas.

(AQW 33167/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Credit unions play an important role in local communities across Northern Ireland in not only offering a convenient and secure way to save but also providing affordable credit to many people who are unable to access mainstream banking. I am therefore committed to exploring options on how the credit unions services can broaden their services, in particular for those people living on low incomes.

Over recent months I have had discussions with representatives of both the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions and the Irish League of Credit Unions on a range of issues relating to the modernisation of local Credit Unions. My Department has developed initial proposals which the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions and the Irish League of Credit Unions are currently considering how best to support smaller credit unions to encourage growth and improve accessibility for their members.

A proposal has also been developed to improve accessibility to a wider range of banking service type products through the credit unions. It is accepted that this proposal can deliver significant benefits for Northern Ireland particularly by improving access to transactional bank accounts. My Department is also considering the recent request from the credit unions for financial support to introduce new banking services. However, consultations are ongoing to determine if my Department has the appropriate authority to proceed with this request.

I am hopeful of reaching agreement with the credit unions to allow both parties to test the practical implementation of these measures. It is likely that these types of initiatives will be of particular benefit to credit unions in Protestant communities as available evidence indicates that there are fewer credit unions in Protestant communities and they also tend to have significantly fewer members

Double Glazing Contracts

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 32616/11-15, what is the total value of the contracts for the 597 properties that will have double glazing fitted this year.

(AQW 33168/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the estimated value of the contracts for the double glazing schemes in Coleraine, Limavady, Claudy and Banagher is £1.1m.

They also advised that when the consultation on the scheme in Coleraine began, 22 dwellings were found to already have double glazing therefore they were removed from the contract which has reduced the number of properties requiring double glazing to 575.

Sale and Supply of Alcohol in Northern Ireland

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the findings of the Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Law Regulating the Sale and Supply of Alcohol in Northern Ireland, and the restrictive nature of the current licensing system, particularly at Easter, when he plans to bring forward a relaxation of the current legislation.

(AQW 33197/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have been aware of the ongoing concerns surrounding alcohol misuse in our society. However, I also recognise the contribution made to our economy by the licensed trade, and indeed the significant contribution it makes to our tourism offering. The Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Law Regulating the Sale and Consumption of Alcohol in Northern Ireland therefore aimed to seek views on a wide range of proposals which aimed to contribute both towards a reduction in alcohol related harm and to help the licensed trade offering more sustainable and attractive to tourists.

The consultation, which ended in November 2012, generated considerable interest with over 2500 responses received from a wide variety of stakeholders. These included the licensed trade, the health lobby, faith groups, other key stakeholders and the general public. The responses highlighted a wide spectrum of strongly held views. Following detailed analysis of the responses, a report on the consultation was issued on 18 December 2013.

I am currently giving careful consideration to all of the issues consulted on and expect to make an announcement on the way forward in the near future. It is intended that my officials will brief the Social Development Committee on my proposed way forward in advance of any announcement being made.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Houses of Multiple Occupation Regulatory Regime

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 28191/11-15, (i) whether the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) has completed its review of enforcement practices under the Houses of Multiple Occupation regulatory regime as far as they relate to converted owner-occupied flats; and (ii) for an update on NIHE plans to pursue registration in respect of owner-occupied properties.

(AQW 33206/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that a Review Group consisting of members of Belfast City Council's Environmental Health Department and Building Control, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the Northern Ireland Fire Safety Panel, as well as Housing Executive staff, has completed its review and made recommendations.

The report relating to this review, and the associated recommendations, has undergone legal scrutiny and has been returned to the Housing Executive which will make a decision on the way forward shortly. Any amendment to the NIHE's Statutory Registration Scheme for HMOs will require Departmental approval.

At present, until the necessary approvals are obtained permitting the amendment of the statutory registration scheme of HMOs, the Housing Executive is not currently pursuing HMO registration in respect of self-contained flats in converted houses where an owner/occupier is in residence.

Foreign Nationals Resident in Northern Ireland: Benefits

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total amount paid on a weekly basis in benefits to foreign nationals resident in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 33214/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The payment of benefits in Northern Ireland is administered via IT systems, which are owned and maintained by the Department for Work and Pensions. As these systems do not have the facility to record the nationality of claimants, the requested information is therefore not available.

Information Sharing: Housing Associations and the PSNI

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development what steps his Department is taking to improve information sharing between Housing Associations and the PSNI.

(AQW 33217/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My officials contacted the PSNI in October 2013 in relation to improving information sharing with registered housing associations. The lack of a formal information sharing protocol was identified as an impediment to the exchange of information and I understand that the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations is currently developing the necessary protocol with the PSNI.

Living Accommodation for Older People

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the funding available to convert or extend a family home for living accommodation for elderly relatives.

(AQW 33218/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive normally only considers providing grant aid for work on private homes under a Renovation or Home Repairs Assistance Grant. Both of these grants are awarded at its discretion and such grants can only be processed where applicants can demonstrate exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist where there is an imminent or significant health risk to the occupier as a consequence if the work was not carried out to address the condition of the dwelling.

The Housing Executive has also advised that Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are available to facilitate adaptations to an existing family home to assist an elderly person with a disability who is residing or is planning on residing in the property. The owner makes an application for the grant which requires a recommendation from an Occupational Therapist from the local Health and Social Services Board.

The maximum amount of DFG available is £25,000 although this may, in certain circumstances, be increased to £50,000 where works are deemed necessary.

DFGs are subject to a means test which is conducted on the person for whom the grant work is required. The test determines whether they need to contribute towards the Housing Executive's costing of the grant works.

Social and Affordable Homes: Clogher Valley, County Tyrone

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Programme for Government 11/15 target to deliver 8,000 homes by 2015, how many new social and affordable homes are anticipated for the rural area of Clogher Valley, County Tyrone.

(AQW 33236/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Housing Development Programme is reported upon in terms of District Council area. Over the Programme for Government period, no new social housing schemes have been

completed or are planned for the specific geographical area of the Clogher Valley. However, from the start of the Programme for Government period up to the 31 January 2014, 17 new social homes have been started in Omagh District Council, 30 in Fermanagh District Council and a further 107 in Dungannon District Council.

The Department's main mechanism for the delivery of affordable housing is the Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association. Affordable housing is a demand led activity as co-ownership participants approach the Co-ownership Housing Association with a desirable property already selected, in a location of their choice.

From the start of the Programme for Government period up to 31 January 2014, 65 affordable homes were supported by Co-ownership in the Dungannon and South Tyrone local council area.

I have recently launched the Affordable Homes Loan Fund, a £19 million initiative which is planned to deliver a further 600 affordable homes (both new-build and refurbished empty properties) over the next 6 years. It is my hope that these schemes will be as geographically widespread as possible meeting housing need and demand where it exists.

Employment Support Allowance Recipients: Lagan Valley

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Social Development how many Employment Support Allowance recipients in the Lagan Valley constituency have been waiting for their Work Capability Assessment to be carried out for (i) between 13 and 26 weeks; (ii) between 26 and 52 weeks; and (iii) more than 52 weeks.

(AQW 33270/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information on Employment and Support Allowance claimants is available on a post code basis and is not available in the format requested. Although there are 10 post code areas related to the Lagan Valley constituency all of these include addresses outside the constituency area.

Planned Maintenance Contractors

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Housing Executive's alleged overpayment of £18m to four Planned Maintenance contractors, (i) what is the current projected level of this overpayment as calculated by his Department following its investigations; and (ii) when the matter is expected to be resolved.

(AQW 33272/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to (i) my Department has never calculated any projected level of overpayment. In relation to (ii) I understand that the parties have reached a position where it is anticipated that this matter will be resolved by agreement. This is subject to relevant approvals being obtained.

Disability Living Allowance: East Antrim

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in East Antrim are claiming Disability Living Allowance, broken down by eligibility criteria.

(AQW 33290/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the number of Disability Living Allowance claimants in the East Antrim Assembly area broken down by eligibility criteria.

Disability Living Allowance Component	Number
Higher rate care only	130
Middle rate care only	450
Lower rate care only	560

Disability Living Allowance Component	Number
Higher rate mobility only	400
Lower rate mobility only	140
Higher rate care and higher rate mobility	1,230
Higher rate care and lower rate mobility	680
Middle rate care and higher rate mobility	1,590
Middle rate care and lower rate mobility	1,870
Lower rate care and higher rate mobility	610
Lower rate care and lower rate mobility	180
Total	7,830

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: Secondary Competition

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 30492/11-15, (i) whether the Housing Executive has completed the secondary competition; (ii) what businesses were successful in these secondary competitions; and (iii) how many framework members submitted prices that provided better value to the Housing Executive than their entry to the framework.

(AQW 33292/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to:

- (i) they have completed the secondary competition;
- (ii) the successful businesses were:
 - Belfast East Combined Facilities Management Ltd
 - Lisburn Antrim Street WJM Building Services Ltd
 - Lisburn Dairy Farm WJM Building Services Ltd;
- (iii) the number of framework members submitting prices that provided better value to the Housing Executive than their entry to the framework are as follows:
 - Belfast East Four tenderers
 - Lisburn Antrim Street Four tenderers
 - Lisburn Dairy Farm Three tenderers

Public Realm Works: Groups that Represent the Visually Impaired

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what consultation or discussions have taken place with groups that represent the visually impaired to ensure that safe and suitable pavement surfaces will be provided under Public Realm Works.

(AQW 33327/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department consults with a wide range of groups as part of the design stage and planning approval process for all proposed Public Realm Schemes. This includes groups that represent the disabled and visually impaired members of the public as to ensure that safe and suitable pavement surfaces are provided for in the scheme.

Affordable Warmth Scheme

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development to detail whether (i) the new proposed Affordable Warmth Scheme will use the skills of existing staff within the Warm Homes Scheme; and (ii) the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations will apply; and if not, to outline why.

(AQW 33357/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The proposals for the new Affordable Warmth Scheme, as set out in the public consultation, represent a complete change in the business being provided. The question of Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations can only be fully answered when the shape and format of the new scheme to replace the Warm Homes Scheme has been finalised.

Belfast Response Maintenance Repairs Framework

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 30491/11-15, whether the Housing Executive will replace any of the contractors no longer involved in the Belfast Response Maintenance Repairs Framework.

(AQW 33381/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they will not be replacing any contractors on the Belfast Response Maintenance Repairs Framework.

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