

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 29 June 2012

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

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 29 June 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the work being carried out on each of the following priorities of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People (i) Safeguarding; (ii) NEETS; (iii) Special Educational Needs; (iv) Early Years; and (v) Vulnerable Young People. **(AQW 10799/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): A summary of progress on each of the five sub-groups is set out below:

(i) Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011 provides a legislative framework for the creation of a new regional Children's Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) and a Committee structure of the Board. This multi-disciplinary, inter-agency body will be the main statutory mechanism for agreeing how members co-operate to deliver safeguarding and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) will publish guidance for the SBNI before it comes into operation.

(ii) NEETS

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has consulted on its Pathways to Success Strategy which set a broad strategic direction and supports cross-departmental actions to reduce the number of 16 to 19 year-olds who are outside education, employment or training, or at risk of being so. It recognises the need to put in place structures or mechanisms to co-ordinate and make these more effective.

(iii) Special Educational Needs

Work on this issue focused on improving transitions for children with Special Educational Needs. This included: the transition from school to the range of post-school settings eg further and higher education, training, social care; preparing for independent living eg housing and benefits; and those who come within the youth justice system.

(iv) Early Years

In line with direction from the Ministerial Sub-Committee, the Early Years sub-group produced an action plan to monitor progress on aspects of Early Years work. The action plan drafted by the Early Years sub-group identifies DE and DHSSPS as the key departments responsible for Early Years Services. The Sub-Group has not met since 2008, but the actions proposed have been taken forward by other means in the absence of any formal meetings. Officials from DE have continued to work closely with DHSSPS on a range of relevant key issues. The action plan was agreed by the MSC in 2009, the Executive in March 2010, and updated in 2011.

(v) Vulnerable Young People

Work has focused on young people at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and entering the juvenile justice system, with the Department of Justice taking the lead. This work is now being progressed through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Regional Steering Group on Community Safety. Both of these Groups bring key agencies together to co-ordinate actions that support children and young people.

Apprenticeship Programmes

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the apprenticeship programmes available within their Department; (ii) the apprenticeship programmes provided by their Department; (iii) the number of people currently enrolled in these programmes; and (iv) the number of places available on the programmes.

(AQW 12006/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

- (i) OFMDFM, together with other departments, participates in the Programme Led Apprenticeship (PLA) Programme which is run by the Department for Employment and Learning.
- (ii) Nil
- (iii) Nil
- (iv) Three PLA places have been identified in OFMDFM.

Delineation of 'Balmoral Park'

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is the delineation of 'Balmoral Park', and whether the entire Maze/Long Kesh site has been renamed accordingly.

(AQW 12882/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Balmoral Park refers to the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society's 55-acre licensed area at Maze/Long Kesh.

Executive's Investment Strategy

Mr Frew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they plan to implement the Executive's Investment Strategy in the North Antrim area.

(AQO 2178/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Investment Strategy (ISNI) sets out the Executive's high-level strategy for the development of our essential infrastructure across the region in the years ahead – consistent with the level of resources available to us. The investment supports delivery of the Programme for Government by improving and upgrading our economic, social and environmental infrastructure. It also secures much needed jobs in the local construction industry and wider supply chain – in addition to making this region a more competitive place to do business.

Departments and related public bodies have primary responsibility for implementing the ISNI in their respective parts of the public services. They do this by developing capital investment plans consistent with ISNI and their capital budget. For individual projects, a systematic assessment of needs and benefits is undertaken and the best way of meeting this need through investment is identified. This process helps to ensure that value for money is secured for the public purse and that investment is focused on those areas identified as a priority in the ISNI.

The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) within OFMDFM supports departments and related public bodies to implement the ISNI. SIB does this by providing in-house legal, commercial, financial and project management advice at the request of the procuring department. This is particularly important for larger and more complex projects.

Notwithstanding the above support, final investment decisions on individual capital projects rests with the Minister in each respective department.

Following a period of public consultation, we are now considering a final draft of the ISNI 2011-21 prior to publication in the forthcoming period.

In the meantime, work is underway across the region. The Investment Strategy website www.isni.gov.uk which is hosted by SIB provides the facility to view projects being delivered under the investment strategy listed by Assembly constituency. The website currently lists a number of projects underway in the North Antrim area including housing, transport and schools projects. This information is maintained and updated by the departments delivering the projects.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Local Dairy Industry

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans her Department has to support the local dairy industry up to, and beyond, the end of milk quotas in 2015.
(AQW 12484/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The local dairy industry makes a very important contribution to the agri-food sector. It is important that it remains competitive and continues to bring benefit to the economy, particularly in rural areas. My Department's overall aim is therefore to help the industry to improve its performance and grow its potential in the marketplace.

For many years, activity in the dairy sector (including the level of milk production in each Member State) has been subject to various EU restraints and support mechanisms. These, in large measure, had a significant impact on the development of the industry. However, important changes have already taken place and others lie ahead.

Notably, EU milk quotas will end in 2015 and this effectively means there will be no restraints on production after that. My Department is therefore focused on helping the dairy sector as it seeks to grow its potential in the global market place.

For too long, our dairy industry has been reliant on the processing of commodity products which normally generate the lowest returns. However, I am pleased to see that steps have been taken in recent years to move away from the processing of milk powders to higher added value products. But more needs to be done. That is why Arlene Foster and my predecessor provided support to Dairy UK (NI) to undertake an industry-led competitiveness study. The aim was to help the sector plan for the future and representatives from the dairy industry are now taking forward the report's recommendations.

As regards future levels of milk production, I believe that a market-led strategy is vital for the dairy industry. In practice this means that, especially when milk quotas end in 2015, decisions on milk production should be taken by milk producers in the context of their input costs and market returns. Therefore, to help ensure that the industry remains sustainable, my Department through CAFRE and AFBI, remain available to provide education, training, technical support and research to help improve efficiency and competitiveness.

In particular, CAFRE's Loughry Campus supports the processing sector in the key area of product innovation. Additionally, my Department has provided support under the Regional Food Programme and Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme. While a range of financial and non-financial support measures are available to dairy processing companies from Invest NI to help them remain competitive.

I believe that the dairy sector has the potential to grow further and to exploit opportunities arising from the predicted expansion in world population. My Department will continue to help the industry improve its competitiveness and I would encourage the dairy sector to engage positively with the Agri-Food Strategy Board to help shape the future growth of this important sector up to and beyond 2015.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the (i) resource allocation; and (ii) actual spend of the Central Investigation Service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12695/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The resource allocation and actual spend in relation to the Central Investigation Service in each of the last 5 financial years is as follows:

	Budget (£000's)	Spend (£000's)
2007/08	232	Figures not available.
2008/09	214	172
2009/10	279	148
2010/11	158	122
2011/12	165	154

The budget figures represent the allocation at the outset of the financial year. Both the budget and expenditure figures are net of income as appropriate.

Attendance at the Omagh Show

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will reconsider her decision not to attend the Omagh Show, given that it would provide her with an opportunity to interact with the farming community, especially in relation to the delay in issuing Single Farm Payments.

(AQW 12850/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I plan to visit all local agricultural shows during my time in office and welcome any opportunity to interact with the farming community. However, the Tyrone Farming Society Committee have sent in a letter stating that they would not be extending an invitation to me this year, to visit Omagh Show.

I am pleased to say that good progress is being made in completing the remaining claims submitted under the 2011 Single Farm Payment Scheme. A number of measures have been introduced to increase the speed of applying inspection findings to claims and these are helping to increase the number of payments. Over 96% of claims are now finalised and more than £257 million has been paid out to farmers. The claims not yet finalised are outstanding for a variety of reasons including the need for inspection findings to be applied to claims, duplicate claims, the need to determine the availability of land to support an aid application, the award of probate and the provision of bank account details by farmers to enable payment to be credited to the farm business bank account. It is anticipated that the majority of inspection cases will be finalised by the end of July.

Illegally Landed Fish

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an estimate of the percentage of fish that were landed illegally in the last full year for which figures are available.

(AQW 12874/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In 2011 there were five prosecutions cases taken by the Department's Fisheries Inspectorate involving landing or attempting to land illegally a total of 1.02 tonnes of fish and shellfish. A further 13.9 tonnes were subject to investigation but no infringement was found or the evidence was not sufficient to support prosecution proceeding. This represents 0.06% of the total landings of 24,919 tonnes landed in the north of Ireland during 2011. A further investigation is still ongoing.

The Fisheries Inspectorate are continually monitoring fishing activity to prevent and deter illegal landings and during 2011 fishery officers attended 92% of fish markets at the ports, monitored 1611

fish landings and carried out 3085 inspections of catches. In addition there were 121 boardings and inspections of fishing vessels at sea.

Prior notification of landing and designated landing port requirements allow resources to be targeted. Satellite monitoring and surveillance data is also employed to validate the fishing records submitted by fishermen and detect infringements.

Broadband: Rural Areas

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department can fund, under the Rural Development Programme, the extension of broadband to rural communities.

(AQO 2276/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The lead department in telecommunications is the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) and they have responsibility for access to and the upgrade of the broadband network in the North. The £51m Next Generation Broadband Project, which included a £2.5 million investment from my Department was aimed specifically at improving access to broadband in rural areas.

As you know, I announced my Department's intention to invest a further £5 million in Broadband and my officials are working closely with DETI to ensure that these funds are specifically targeted at rural areas to eliminate "not spots" and improve line speeds. I want to ensure that as many rural dwellers as possible can benefit from future initiatives to ensure that those living, working or conducting business in rural areas have access to services, that can offer download speeds of at least 2Mbps and in some rural areas of the North 100Mbps usually from a number of providers.

DARD: Research

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department spends, on average each year, on agricultural research.

(AQO 2277/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD spend on agricultural research can be divided into three distinct areas. These are the DARD Directed Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute Research Work Programme worth about £8 million per annum; the DARD Research Challenge Fund worth approximately £1 million per annum; and lastly the DARD Postgraduate scheme valued at around £430,000 per annum. This brings departmental total spend per annum to around £9.4 million.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the current negotiations on the Common Agricultural Policy, in relation to Northern Ireland, for the next five years.

(AQO 2278/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In October of last year the EU Commission published proposals for reform of the CAP for the period 2014 to 2019. The key features of these reforms include a move to a regional flat rate payment per hectare by 2019 and the introduction of new environmental requirements known as 'greening'. Further changes to farm support arrangements such as introducing a number of additional compulsory and optional direct support payments are also proposed. The complexity surrounding greening and the fact that the current single support payment would be replaced by as many as six (and in some cases more) separate payments has attracted considerable criticism across the EU. Proposed reform of the rural development regulation has proven less controversial.

There was a full public consultation following publication of the Commission's proposals for CAP reform, which provided valuable feedback from stakeholders. These views helped inform a response paper, which I prepared and presented to EU Commission representative Georg Haeusler, Head of Cabinet for Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Ciolos, on 19 April 2012. In this response, I sought to be constructive and offered various suggestions for improving the focus of the Commission's proposals while achieving

significant simplification. This meeting was very positive and I followed this up a week later with an additional meeting with Gwilym Jones, member of Commissioner Ciolos' Cabinet.

As well as the Commission, I have had a number of discussion on CAP reform with our local MEPs and hosted a briefing of MEPs in Brussels last month. The EU parliament will play a much greater role in these negotiations compared to previous agreements on CAP reform.

I have been engaging directly with Defra Ministers and my Devolved Administration colleagues on the reform proposals, as well as with Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the south. My officials are working with Defra and Devolved Administration counterparts in feeding into the Brussels working groups and discussions and keep in regular contact with officials in Dublin.

Despite the considerable discussion and debate in Brussels since the reform proposals were published last autumn, there has been fairly limited progress in the negotiations. The EU Commission has been unwilling so far to concede to many of the suggestions for change coming from Member States. The European Parliament is currently in the process of preparing its response to the proposals. I expect the negotiations to intensify in the latter part of 2012 and to continue well into 2013. It remains difficult to say exactly when an overall agreement will be reached. However, agreement on the EU budget for 2014-20 will be an important and necessary first step to a deal on CAP.

My approach has been and will continue to be one of engaging directly with the Commission, with Defra and the Devolved Administrations, with MEPs and with the Irish Agriculture Minister, (including through the North/South Ministerial Council). The goal remains a well funded, flexible and simplified CAP that meets our local needs.

Brucellosis

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on the eradication of Brucellosis.

(AQO 2279/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: We have made very significant progress with brucellosis and the confirmed herd incidence was down to 0.02% at 31 March 2012. This good progress has been achieved as a result of the combined efforts of farmers in the north working along with my Department to tackle this serious disease. We are on track to achieve the target in the Programme for Government to eradicate brucellosis by March 2014 which means that there must be no confirmed case of brucellosis in the preceding 12 months.

Eradication of brucellosis will pave the way to achieving Officially Brucellosis Free status, provided that there has been no confirmed case of brucellosis in the preceding three years. Achieving OBF status will benefit all cattle farmers here through the progressive relaxation of annual and pre-movement testing, which represent an annual £7 million compliance cost to farmers.

However, the last case of brucellosis was confirmed here on 28 February 2012, which shows that we cannot be complacent. DARD and the industry need to continue to be vigilant against any reversal of the downward trend – either from genuine infection or resulting from reckless or fraudulent activity.

The changes that we are making to the brucellosis compensation scheme are aimed at encouraging better biosecurity on the part of all farmers and helping to achieve brucellosis eradication by 2014 and maintaining freedom thereafter. I also call on all farmers to continue to report any suspicions of brucellosis, particularly abortions in cattle, without delay. The earlier we can detect disease the more likely it is that we will be able to stop it from spreading further. The combination of all our actions should enable us to eradicate the disease by 2014 and ensure that it remains eradicated.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the overall cost, since 1996, of implementing the Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Programme.

(AQO 2280/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The overall cost of implementing the Bovine Tuberculosis eradication programme since 1996 is £325.2m. This includes costs for 2011/12 which are provisional at this time.

Dairy Farming

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what efforts are being made by her Department to address the problems being faced by the dairy farming sector.

(AQO 2282/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The dairy industry makes an important contribution to the local economy and life in rural areas. I am also aware of the recent changes in fortunes for our dairy farmers. However, you will understand that like many other businesses, dairy farmers experience difficult times as well as good times. Nevertheless, I want to see farmers receiving a good price for their milk.

The current weak prices for dairy products are a result of an increase in milk production in the major dairy exporting countries, as well as here. The economic reality is that the milk price obtained by producers is closely linked to the returns received in the market place and our dairy industry remains too reliant on the processing of commodity products which normally generate the lowest returns.

However, I am pleased to see steps have been taken in recent years to move away from the processing of milk powders to higher added value products. Also, Arlene Foster and my predecessor provided support to Dairy UK(NI) to undertake an industry-led competitiveness study. The aim was to help it plan for the future and I welcome the fact that representatives from the dairy industry are currently taking forward the report recommendations.

The sector also receives significant assistance from my Department through AFBI and CAFRE. In particular, CAFRE's Loughry Campus supports the processing sector in the key area of product innovation. Additionally, my Department has provided support under the Regional Food Programme and Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

In view of the predicted expansion of the world population I believe that the dairy sector may have opportunity to grow further. I would therefore encourage the dairy sector to engage positively with the recently established Agri-Food Strategy Board to articulate its views on the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

1913 Ulster Proclamation of a Provisional Government

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans her Department has to secure the only copy of the 1913 Ulster Proclamation of a Provisional Government which is due to be auctioned in London next month, given its historical importance.

(AQW 11549/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The Public Record Office NI has no plans to bid for this document. Any procurement decision by National Museums would be a matter for its Board of Trustees.

In line with best practice, I do not expect the Trustees to publicly express an interest in procuring an object in advance of public auction as such an action could adversely affect the bidding process.

Capital and Revenue Savings

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the capital and revenue savings her Department has made in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11657/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: It is important to make a distinction between capital and revenue budgets.

Capital savings

In contrast to resource budget, it is not possible to give meaningful information about savings in capital budget since there is no baseline or standard against which to measure changing allocations.

Revenue savings

The years in question straddle two Spending Review settlements, CSR 2007 and CSR 2010.

CSR 2007 covers the years 2008/2009, 2009/10 and 2010/11. The Department delivered efficiency savings of £2.92m in 09/10 and £4.78m in 11/12 respectively. In addition to this, the Department had to find further savings in its budget of £5.9m in 2010/11, as its share of the costs of wider pressures in respect of water and sewerage charges, Equal Pay claims and reductions in the Block Grant.

CSR 2010 covers the most recent complete financial year of 2011/12. Using the previous year as a baseline, the Department delivered a saving of £1.26m in 2011/12.

Internships

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many internships are available in her Department; and if none, what plans she has to introduce an internship scheme.

(AQW 12480/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: NICS Policy on work Experience includes provision for internships, arranged through Colleges or University to provide undergraduates with work experience relating to the degree course undertaken by the student. During 2011/12 DCAL provided internships to two students through QUB Politics Internship Scheme, which is managed by Corporate HR in the Department of Finance and Personnel. A further placement has been arranged under this scheme for the first semester of the 2012/13 academic year. In addition my Department considers and accommodates, where appropriate, requests received directly from educational organisations.

Galbally Pearses GAA Club Awarding Medals Featuring an IRA Terrorist

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the presentation of medals commemorating a republican terrorist to children by the Galbally GAC, and the subsequent concerns that were raised by a parent, whether she plans to suspend her Department's funding to the GAA until such time as the Tyrone County Board addresses this issue in the interests of child protection and good relations.

(AQW 12619/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is responsible for the distribution of funding to sport in the north of Ireland. Decisions relating to funding to any sporting organisation, including the GAA, would therefore be a matter for Sport NI. I understand that Sport NI would only consider suspending funding where there is evidence of a significant risk to public funds and/or where it is clearly demonstrated that specific conditions of award are not being complied with.

Galbally Pearses GAA Club

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the use that Galbally Pearses GAA club made of the £200,565 funding that was awarded by her Department in 2008.

(AQW 12632/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is responsible for the distribution of funding to sport in the north of Ireland. On 9 January 2009, Sport NI awarded Galbally Pearses GAC £200,565 under its Places for Sport Programme to assist with the construction of a full-size Gaelic games grass pitch. I understand that since the pitch was developed, the club has established a number of programmes and activities at their ground, including 'Gaelic for Mothers' and an over 40's team. Furthermore, they have been pro-active in terms of creating links with a number of schools and other organisations who are also benefiting from the investment.

Small Grants Programme: Projects in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list the funding awarded by the Arts Council, under the Small Grants Programme, to projects in North Down, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12816/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A list of the grants awarded in the last 3 years by the Arts Council in North Down, under the Small Grants Programme, is set out in the tables below:

2009/10

Organisation	Project	Amount
Bangor International Choral Festival	Bangor International Choral Festival	2,000
Camerata Ireland	The Clandeboye Festival	10,000
Friends of Portaferry Presbyterian Church	His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts (HMSC): a Concert and Workshop in Portaferry	7,000
Hollywood Music Festival	Hollywood Music Festival	2,350
Seacourt Print Workshop Limited	Defining Original Printmaking in a Digital Age	4,500

2010/2011

Organisation	Project	Amount
Bangor International Choral Festival	Bangor International Choral Festival	2,000
Camerata Ireland	The 2010 Clandeboye Festival	7,500
Parent Teachers' Association for Bangor Central Integrated Primary School	Nautical Imprint	3,650
Rathmore Parent Teacher Association	The Journey	1,550

2011/2012

Organisation	Project	Amount
Bangor International Choral Festival	Bangor International Choral Festival	2,100
Camerata Ireland	The 2011 Clandeboye Festival	7,500
Friends of Portaferry Presbyterian Church	Portaferry Proms 2012	4,485
Friends of Portaferry Presbyterian Church	2011 FPPC Concert Series: The Rietz Ensemble and the Mornington Singers	4,750
Hollywood Music Festival	Hollywood Music Festival 2011	2,200
Seacourt Print Workshop Limited	Conditionally framed and Open Books	9,006

Coaches Operating in Boxing Clubs Without Access NI Checks

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the revelation about coaches operating in boxing clubs without Access NI checks, (i) what action she intends to take; and (ii) for her assessment of the adequacy of the present governance arrangements in amateur boxing.

(AQW 12911/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am aware of reports in the media about a recent Belfast City Council (BCC) questionnaire suggesting a number of boxing coaches have not been subject to AccessNI checks. This is a matter, in the first instance, for the governing body of boxing, the Ulster Provincial Boxing Council (UPBC). However, through SportNI, which is an arms-length body of my Department, I already have, and will continue to have, a policy of requiring robust and effective child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures from all sports clubs, including boxing clubs, seeking funding. SportNI carries out this work in partnership with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and, through this partnership, clarification is currently being sought on the exact nature of the findings in the BCC questionnaire. My officials have also contacted BCC about this issue and I understand, from this, that the Council is currently working with the boxing clubs concerned to ensure all coaches, that may be expected to work with children and vulnerable people, have completed any requisite Access NI checks.

There are, in my view, considerable weaknesses within the present governance arrangements for amateur boxing in the north of Ireland. In particular, in many areas, the sport currently lacks the capacity to enable it to avail of public funding, on a competitive basis, or to administer it effectively. The sport also needs support to help it address barriers to participation so that anyone who wishes to take part in boxing at any level within the north has the opportunity to do so. In recognition of these problems, my Department is currently developing a Boxing Strategy in order to help the sport address these weaknesses.

Community Arts Projects in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much of this year's Arts Council budget has been allocated to Community Arts Projects in North Down.

(AQW 12957/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: This year the Arts Council has allocated £184,284 to community arts projects in North Down.

Libraries

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the total capital spend on libraries in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12996/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The total capital spend on libraries for each of the last five years is as follows:

Year	Total Capital Spend
2007/08*	£3,548,000
2008/09*	£2,917,000
2009/10	£4,065,000
2010/11	£5,519,000
2011/12**	£2,387,000

* Education & Library Boards. LNI Established April 2009.

** Draft LNI Accounts- Not yet agreed.

Female Participation in Sport

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what actions her Department is taking to encourage female participation in sport.

(AQW 12998/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am fully aware of evidence that suggests that females are significantly under-represented in sport in comparison to males. This is an equality issue. To help address this problem,

my Department's strategy for sport, Sport Matters, contains a specific target to deliver a 6% increase in women's participation rates by 2019 from the 2011 baseline. In order to ensure this women's participation target is achieved, a series of actions, embracing a range of organisations across the sport and leisure sector, have been agreed as part of a wider, published Sport Matters Action Plan developed by Sport NI led Sport Matters Implementation Groups. These actions include promoting increased female participation through a range of Sport NI investments, and encouraging other parties (such as district councils, governing bodies and clubs) to do the same.

Furthermore, as part of the delivery of Sport Matters, I have been seeking to promote female participation and success in sport publicly in a number of ways. For example, I organised and hosted a special reception for 'Women in Sport' in Parliament Buildings in December 2011. In addition, the last meeting of my cross-Departmental Sport Matters Monitoring Group, which is responsible for overseeing the delivery of Sport Matters, was deliberately held at a girls' school with quality PE facilities in order to highlight the importance of female participation in sport. This meeting took place in April 2012.

Bangor Carnegie Library

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what criteria is used to assess the importance of individual libraries; and whether Bangor Carnegie Library would rank highly under these criteria, given its central location in a high density residential area.

(AQW 13025/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI inform me that there are no specific criteria to assess the importance of individual libraries.

LNI has undertaken strategic reviews of library provision to assess the viability and sustainability of all of its libraries. Each of the libraries that has been deemed to be viable and sustainable is important to the community that it serves and in that context there is no hierarchy of importance.

Tickets for the Jubilee Garden Party

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many tickets for the Jubilee Garden Party on 27 June 2012 were allocated to (i) the Minister; (ii) her Department; and (iii) its arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 13121/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department, inclusive of its arm's-length bodies, was allocated 150 tickets to the Jubilee Garden Party on 27 June 2012.

Armagh Museum

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 12674/11-15, whether the budget to meet the associated costs will also be devolved to the relevant council.

(AQW 13140/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In reply to your previous question, I have provided financial details pertaining to the Armagh Museum.

With regard to whether the budget to meet the costs associated with the Museum will be devolved, my response follows.

The Executive has agreed two funding principles for RPA implementation namely:

- i that the implementation costs associated with reform will not be met by central government.
- ii that the functions which are to transfer from central to local government should be fit for purpose, sufficiently funded and cost neutral to the ratepayer at the point of transfer.

This will require the transfer of resources from central to local government when the functions transfer. However, the mechanism for transferring funding has not yet been finalised.

Foyle Pride Festival 2012 in Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the level of funding her Department has allocated to the Foyle Pride Festival 2012 in Derry; and (ii) if her Department has not allocated funds to the event, how much it is willing to provide towards the running costs of £15,000.
(AQW 13201/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) My Department's funding for Community Festivals is disbursed through local councils. Foyle Pride Festival 2012 applied to Derry City Council for funding however it was unsuccessful. The total allocation for Derry City Council this year is £60k and the four top scoring applications were each awarded £15k thus exhausting the budget.
- (ii) My Department's funding for the Arts is disbursed through the Arts Council. I would encourage the organisation to contact the Arts Council to explore further funding opportunities.

Department of Education

Translink's School Buses

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has to cut the budget for Translink's school buses.
(AQW 11888/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): In the current financial climate, the Department of Education will be continuing to seek savings from the home to school transport budget in the forthcoming 2012/13 school year. Translink is the main provider of home to school transport, carrying approximately 55% of pupils eligible for transport assistance. I expect the Education and Library Boards to operate the most efficient home to school transport service and within that it is expected that efficiency measures will be reflected in the negotiations for the Translink sessional ticket contract.

Priorities for Youth Strategy

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education to detail when the next Priorities for Youth strategy will be published.
(AQW 12740/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The draft Priorities for Youth policy document is close to completion and will be published for public consultation in early September. The Priorities for Youth will be finalised as soon as possible following the public consultation.

School Buildings at Down High School, Downpatrick

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how much was spent on school buildings at Down High School, Downpatrick, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 12792/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details the spend on school buildings at Down High School, Downpatrick in each of the last five years and has been provided by the South Eastern Education and Library Board.

	Capital £	Maintenance £	Total £
2007/08	450,546.18	39,602.91	490,149.09
2008/09	309,724.54	75,511.34	385,235.88
2009/10	190,715.68	106,783.56	297,499.24

	Capital £	Maintenance £	Total £
2010/11	28,384.88	124,841.19	153,226.07
2011/12	47,468.17	79,451.43	126,919.60
Total over last 5 years	1,026,839.45	426,190.43	1,453,029.88

Use of iPads and Kindles in Schools

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how widespread the use of iPads and Kindles is in schools; and what potential there is for his Department to make significant savings as a result of their use.
(AQW 12890/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not hold figures on the number of schools using such devices. The Department is not aware if schools have purchased kindles, although it is aware of a small number that have invested in iPads for class use. Schools that have purchased iPads or Kindles have done so using their delegated budgets to enhance the C2k core provision.

C2k provides schools with a core provision of PCs. Post primary schools had a PC replacement in the academic year 2009/10 and the C2k managed service provider will support or replace (if necessary) existing core PCs throughout the lifetime of the contract. Primary schools will however receive an upgrade of their core PCs, as a much longer period of time has elapsed since their original installation.

The new C2k service takes account of developments in technology, such as the increasing use of personal smart mobile devices, the need for increased broadband width to accommodate bandwidth-hungry functions and the move to central hosting (the 'cloud'). As a result, major improvements in the use of digital technologies will be delivered to all grant-aided schools. The new C2k service is designed to provide these important infrastructure improvements, it does not include the provision of Kindles or tablet devices, such as iPads.

Schools are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils and it is a matter for schools themselves to reach a judgement on the resources, including books and ICT provision, they wish to use in their delivery of the curriculum. If they wish to enhance their ICT provision by purchasing Kindles and iPads they may do so.

Whether savings are made by a school as a consequence of the introduction of Kindles or iPads, would be a matter for the individual schools that have taken the decision to invest in such equipment which sits outside the core service provided by C2k.

Teacher Redundancies

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the amount spent on teacher redundancies in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) Education and Library Board; and (ii) sector.
(AQW 12892/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is set out in the table below.

Financial Year	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Belfast Board	£354,588.48	£600,849.50	£675,968.52
Western Board	£207,639.23	£368,727.62	£1,194,274.56
North Eastern Board	£446,956.59	£1,717,123.22	£2,027,465.16
South Eastern Board	£300,094.69	£704,413.98	£1,171,507.14
Southern Board	£271,090.68	£562,186.60	£986,573.14

Financial Year	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
CCMS	£1,508,445.82	£2,685,284.38	£4,801,626.58
Grant-Maintained Integrated	£108,282.08	£275,139.80	£269,078.74
Other-Maintained	£30,615.12	£64,390.00	£93,033.90
VGS	£434,520.00	£927,842.00	£2,976,297.00
Total	£3,662,232.69	£7,905,957.10	£14,195,824.74

Autism Support Classes

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Education to detail the nature of the support provided to children who attended autism support classes, compared with that provided in a special school setting.

(AQW 12894/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The statutory responsibility for making provision for children with special educational needs (SEN), including those with autism, rests with schools and the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) which are responsible under special education legislation for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making provision for children with SEN in their areas.

This provision can be made within mainstream schools, special classes attached to mainstream schools or special schools, tailored to the individual needs of the child and where these can be most appropriately met.

Quality of Pre-School Provision

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education, when the quality of pre-school provision is being measured by the Education and Training Inspectorate, whether the ownership of grounds/facilities is considered.

(AQW 12915/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: When the quality of pre-school provision is being measured by the Education and Training Inspectorate, the key emphasis is on the safety and security of the children and the quality of educational provision which they are receiving. The ownership of the grounds/facilities is a matter for others to consider.

Redburn Primary School, Holywood

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what action his Department intends to take to secure the site of Redburn Primary School, Holywood, when it closes.

(AQW 12925/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Responsibility for securing the site of Redburn Primary School, Holywood rests with the South Eastern and Education and Library Board (SEELB). The SEELB is in the process of carrying out a competitive tender competition for the demolition of the school. The indicative programme is that the demolition should be completed by the end of 2012. In the interim period between the end of term and the appointment of the successful contractor, SEELB will engage a private security firm to provide 24 hour security.

Baccalaureate Qualification

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of post-primary pupils who would have achieved a Baccalaureate qualification if a system, similar to the English model, was available in Northern Ireland, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12930/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

I note that the English Baccalaureate is not a formal qualification, but is used purely as a performance measure for schools.

Pupils who do not Speak the Same Language as their Teacher

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many new pupils, who do not speak the same language as with their teacher, have enrolled in schools in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12940/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Information on the number of newcomers enrolled in schools is detailed in the table below. A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school but who does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, and the wider environment, and does not have a language in common with the teacher, whether that is English or Irish.

NEWCOMERS ENROLLED IN SCHOOLS 2007/08 – 2011/12

Year	Newcomers
2007/08	5,665
2008/09	6,995
2009/10	7,754
2010/11	8,094
2011/12	8,418

Source: school census.

Notes:

- 1 Figures relate to pupils recorded as newcomers in nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools.
- 2 Pupils may fall under the newcomer classification for more than one academic year and thus the figures record the total numbers of newcomers in schools in each year. They do not relate to pupils newly enrolled who are recorded as newcomers in each academic year.
- 3 Information on numbers of newcomers in schools is available on the DE website at the following web link.
http://www.deni.gov.uk/newcomer_time_series_-_suppressed_updated_1112.xls

Free School Meals

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education for an estimate of the number of children, entitled to free school meals, who did not claim them in the (i) 2009/10; (ii) 2010/11; and (iii) 2011/12 academic years.

(AQW 12941/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am keen to ensure that the parents/guardians of every child who is entitled to free school meals establishes that entitlement and that every child who is entitled to free school meals has the chance to avail of a nutritionally balanced meal during the school day. We know that free school meals entitlement is a robust indicator of social disadvantage and that children from disadvantaged homes can face barriers to achieving to their full potential. That is why we provide additional resources to schools to support those pupils in their learning and are keen for pupils to avail of the school meal that is provided.

The Department does not hold estimates of the number of children who would be entitled to free school meals and do not claim that entitlement. However, we can estimate the number of those who have done so and who do not avail of a free school meal. We do this based on the uptake of meals by those entitled to free school meals on Census day and the information is set out in the table below.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Pupils who have claimed entitlement to but did not avail of a free school meal on Census day ^{1,2}	12787	13270	15512

Entitlement Source: School Census 2009/10 - 2011/123

Uptake Source: School Meals Census 2009/10 - 2011/12

Notes:

- 1 Includes pupils entitled to free school meals who were absent from school on Census Day (the Friday of the first full week in October); and pupils entitled to free school meals who were not present for the midday meal, i.e. (i) pupils who attend on a part-time basis, and (ii) new pupils enrolled but who were not present for school lunch due to schools' staggered or phased admissions arrangements.
- 2 Excludes special schools, as free school meal entitlement data is not validated.
- 3 Eligibility criteria for free school meals has been extended over this period. Further details can be found at paragraph 6 of the Approved Arrangements for the Provision of Milk, Meals and Related Facilities.
http://www.deni.gov.uk/elb_milk_and_meals_arrangements_-_may_2012.pdf

Board Members of Public Bodies Sponsored by his Department

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education how many former civil and public servants are employed as (i) paid; and (ii) unpaid board members of public bodies which are sponsored by his Department; and what this figure is as a proportion of the total number of board members.

(AQW 12948/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are currently 6 former civil and public servants serving in a paid capacity as members of public bodies sponsored by my Department. This equates to 5% of the total number of board members appointed by my Department.

There are currently 27 former civil and public servants serving in an unpaid capacity as members of public bodies sponsored by my Department. This equates to 23% of the total number of board members appointed by my Department.

Public Private Partnership Projects

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the Public Private Partnership projects which had inflationary uplifts to unitary payments.

(AQW 12949/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A proportion of the unitary charge, for all schools sector PPP projects, is subject to an annual inflationary uplift.

The inflationary uplift is calculated in accordance with the terms set out within the contract.

Early Years Projects: Funding

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the early years projects that have been allocated funding, following his Ministerial Statement on 15 May 2012.

(AQW 12951/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Additional resources have been allocated to the education and library boards to allow the number pre-school places in voluntary/private settings which will be funded in the 2012/13 school year to be increased where required. At the end of the Pre-school Admissions Process on 1 June a total of over 8,000 places in the voluntary/private sector had been allocated to children. It is anticipated that this figure may increase between now and the start of the school year due to late applications. Funding is allocated on a per place basis and the actual number of places funded in individual settings will not be available until the Annual School Census in October.

An additional £150 per place payment will, as in previous years, be based on the average number of funded places for which each group claims in the period between September and December 2012 and therefore information in relation to this will not be available until after that time.

With regard to the expansion of Sure Start, proposals are currently being developed through the Childcare Partnerships in the Health and Social Care Board to extend services to those areas falling within the top 25% most disadvantaged wards that do not currently have access to Sure Start services. The funding will be made available on a phased basis as proposals are approved and progressed.

Investment Delivery Plan

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 12032/11-15, for an update on a new build for Strabane Grammar School.

(AQW 12952/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The work on area planning is being taken forward at this time and will in due course identify priorities for capital investment. In the interim, however, I recognise there is a need to ensure capital funding is utilised to improve the schools estate. I have, therefore, asked officials to consider an interim process for the identification of major school projects, which are consistent with and supportive of the Area Planning work and in which capital investment can be made in the coming period.

I would hope to be in the position to confirm an interim capital investment plan before the summer. Until then I cannot comment on any individual school proposal.

Investment Delivery Plan

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 12032/11-15, why Loreto College, Omagh, was not mentioned in his response.

(AQW 12953/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information previously conveyed in AQW 12032/11-15 clearly stated that the answer related to the Review of Major Capital Projects completed in June 2010 which assessed all capital projects on the IDP against the sustainable schools policy criteria. At that time, there were issues regarding the Economic Appraisal for Loreto College Omagh and therefore it was not one of the projects on the IDP which was deemed to be fully compliant. However, my officials will be meeting with Loreto College shortly to discuss the Economic Appraisal and its status in the current strategic context.

Primary School Inspections

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education to detail the frequency of primary school inspections in each Education and Library Board area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 13002/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

Education & Library Board	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Total
BELB	14	15	9	38
NEELB	32	24	31	87
SEELB	15	18	30	63
SELB	38	25	54	117
WELB	14	27	25	66
Total	113	109	149	371

Diary Commitments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 12365/11-15, (i) whether he visited a school in East Londonderry on 25 May 2012 from which he was called away to deal with urgent business; (ii) whether the visit was of a ministerial or constituency nature; and (iii) to provide details of the urgent business.

(AQW 13004/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I would refer the member to my answer to his earlier question AQW 12365/11-15 which was published in the Official Report on 15 June 2012.

Algamation of Loretto Convent Primary School and St Colmcille's Primary School, Omagh

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Education when the essential minor works will commence to facilitate the amalgamation of Loretto Convent Primary School and St Colmcille's Primary School, Omagh, to the Holy Family Primary School, Omagh; and (ii) whether he is aware of the Health and Safety concerns of the Interim Board of Governors and that the Board may consider deferring the amalgamation if the work is not completed by the end of August 2012.

(AQW 13021/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) has submitted a number of minor works applications to the Department to facilitate the amalgamation of Loreto Girls Primary School and St Colmcille's Boys Primary Schools in Omagh to form Holy Family Primary School. These are currently being considered for funding alongside other competing priorities. In the interim, work to refurbish the toilets in both schools is being progressed. It is anticipated that the contractors will be appointed during the second or third week of August 2012.
- (ii) I am aware that the Interim Board of Governors has written to CCMS expressing concern regarding completion of the works prior to the amalgamation of both schools. Particular concerns have been raised regarding the condition of external walls in the playground which are considered to pose serious health and safety risks. Work to replace a retaining wall on the Loreto site will be undertaken over the summer months. I am advised that CCMS is aware that the Interim Board of Governors may consider deferring the amalgamation and understand that discussions have taken place with the school Principal.

Miscellaneous Educational Services Budget

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the potential areas of expenditure of the Miscellaneous Educational Services budget; and what scrutiny can take place on this expenditure.

(AQW 13023/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Miscellaneous Educational Services is a subhead within Request for Resources A of the Main Estimates. It relates to expenditure for direct payments, grants to other bodies and the associated apportionment of Departmental administrative costs. The total funding for this subhead in 2012-13 is £13.8m, which equates to 0.7% of the total Education Resource Estimate. This is analysed below:

Miscellaneous Educational Services	2012-13 £m
Special Education	0.9
Teacher-related Activities	0.3
Young Enterprise NI & Business/Education Links	1.6
Pupil Support & Counselling	3.9

Miscellaneous Educational Services	2012-13 £m
Educational Research & Publicity	0.5
Access NI	0.2
School Improvement Programme	0.5
School Governor Services	0.5
Education Training Group	0.4
Other minor budgets	1.9
Sports Initiative	1.5
RPA Institutions	0.7
Departmental Administrative and Salaries	0.9
Total	13.8

Budgets are reviewed internally on an ongoing basis. This allows potential internal pressures and easements to be highlighted and considered as part of DFP's monitoring round process.

Early Years (0-6) Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education (i) for an update on the Early Years (0-6) Strategy; (ii) what efforts have been made to ensure that it will be a cross-departmental strategy; and (iii) what involvement he envisages for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

(AQW 13026/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The analysis of the consultation responses is complete. I will be outlining the way forward for the Early Years (0-6) Strategy before the summer recess.

Re-Profiling of the Educational Workforce

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what progress his Department has made on the re-profiling of the educational workforce.

(AQW 13035/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I remain fully committed to undertaking a strategic review of the school workforce. Work on this issue, within my Department, is being led by a dedicated Education Workforce Development Directorate which was created with the task of taking forward the School Workforce Review.

The scope of the review is to identify the steps needed to develop a highly motivated, flexible and effective school workforce.

To facilitate this work a number of key steps have been taken:

A Strategic Forum has been established to provide the recognised trade unions with an opportunity to work with the Department to shape and influence policy development and strategic planning before decisions are made;

Reviews of both the teaching and classroom assistant staffing groups are underway. These reviews are scheduled for completion by the autumn along with a review on nursery assistants; and

A comprehensive school-based workforce database is under development with an initial survey of staff currently being evaluated .

Alongside this work, the Department is in the process of finalising a draft strategy for the way forward for teacher education which will consider how to attract the best staff, how to strengthen

professionalism and how to motivate and manage performance. The actions arising from this strategy will complement the teaching workforce elements of School Workforce Review.

Low Attendance of a Pupil

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11990/11-15, how many fines have been issued to the parents of children who are not attending school regularly, broken down by each Education and Library Board area, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 13042/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education Welfare Service in each Education and Library Board has provided the following information on the number of fines in each of the last five years.

	BELB	SELB	SEELB	WELB	NEELB
2007	2	13	0	8	4
2008	0	4	1	10	1
2009	1	8	4	6	0
2010	1	10	3	6	2
2011	7	23	6	8	2

Primary School Inspections

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how the results of primary school inspections are made available to the public; and whether they are updated after each inspection.

(AQW 13053/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Primary school inspection reports are in the public domain. They are published on the Education and Training Inspectorate website at www.etini.gov.uk

Education and Library Boards' Websites

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education whether he will review the Education and Library Boards' websites to assess how easy it is to locate information, particularly application forms for registering an interest to be a member of a board of governors.

(AQW 13062/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Board (ELB) websites are an important source of information for individuals interested in becoming school governors and it should be a priority to make sure that this information is accessible and designed to encourage a diverse range of people to put themselves forward for consideration as school governors. I understand that the quality of the information available on school governance and the ease with which it can be found on ELB websites varies from board to board. The Department will therefore be writing to the ELBs making clear my expectation that websites should be user friendly and that information on school governor positions, including application forms, is easily accessible.

Irish-Medium Schools

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Education to detail the location of each (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary Irish-medium school.

(AQW 13087/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The location details of each Irish-medium school are detailed in the tables below. Details are also provided for all Irish-medium Units attached to English-medium schools.

(i) Irish-Medium Primary Schools

Ref	School	Board	Address
101-6647	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	Belfast	10A Lancaster Street, BELFAST BT15 1EZ
104-6641	Scoil an Droichid	Belfast	4 Cooke Street Ormeau Road BELFAST, BT7 2EP
104-6672	Gaelscoil an Lonnáin	Belfast	61 Falls Rd BELFAST BT12 4PB
104-6671	Gaelscoil Na Móna	Belfast	1 Monagh Link BELFAST BT11 8EF
104-6593	Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibn	Belfast	15a Ballymurphy Road, Whiterock Road, BELFAST BT12 7RG
104-6596	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	Belfast	Wyndham Drive BELFAST BT14 6HP
104-6501	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	Belfast	11 Rosgoill Park, Shaws Road BELFAST BT11 9QS
104-6571	Gaelscoil Na bhFál	Belfast	34A Iveagh Crescent BELFAST BT12 6AW
304-6653	Bunscoil an Chaistil	North Eastern	5 Kiln Road BALLYCASTLE Co Antrim, BT54 6QQ
304-6678	Gaelscoil Na Speiríní	North Eastern	53 Moneyneeny Road Magherafelt Co Derry BT45 7EN
304-6684	Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach*	North Eastern	The Old St Joseph's School 15 Glenavy Road CRUMLIN BT29 4LA
304-6685	Gaelscoil Eanna	North Eastern	C/O St Enda's GAA, Hightown Road, Glengormley, ANTRIM, NEWTOWNABBIEY, BT36 7AU
304-6691	Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	North Eastern	Killowen Drive, MAGHERAFELT, LONDONDERRY, BT45 7YY
504-6695	Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	Southern	97 Donaghmore Road, DUNGANNON, TYRONE, BT70 1HD
504-6597	Bunscoil an Iúir	Southern	74 Kilmorey Street NEWRY, Co Down BT34 2DH

Ref	School	Board	Address
504-6637	Gaelscoil Uí Néill	Southern	104 Washing Bay Road COALISLAND, Co Tyrone BT71 4DU
404-6648	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	South Eastern	69 Circular Road, Castlewella Co Down, BT31 9ED
404-6600	Scoil Na Fúiseoige	South Eastern	6 Summerhill Road, BELFAST BT17 ORG
204-6669	Bunscoil an Traonaigh	Western	Drumbrughas North Enniskillen Road LISNASKEA Co Fermanagh BT90 2PE
204-6677	Gaelscoil na gCrann	Western	Dun Uladh Cultural Heritage Centre Ballynamullan Rd, Omagh Co. Tyrone, BT79 0GZ
204-6686	Gaelscoil na Daróige	Western	Coshquin Road Ballymagroarty DERRY BT48 OND
204-6689	Gaelscoil Leim an Mhadaidh	Western	57 Church Street, LIMAVADY, LONDONDERRY, BT49 0BX
203-6574	Bunscoil Cholmcille	Western	40A Steelstown Road DERRY BT48 8EX
204-6638	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	Western	Ballycolman Estate Strabane, Co Tyrone BT82 9AQ
204-6646	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	Western	128 Lecky Road DERRY BT48 6NP

(ii) Irish-Medium Post – Primary School

Ref	School	Board	Address
124-0291	Colaiste Feirste	Belfast	7 Beechview Park, BELFAST BT12 7PY

Irish-Medium Units (Primary)

Ref	School	Board	Address
203-2737	St Columbkille's Primary School	Western	Creggan Road, Carrickmore Co.Tyrone BT79 9BD
203-6045	St Canice's Primary School	Western	11 Curragh Road, Dungiven BT47 4SE
303-2018	St Brigid's Primary School Tirkane	North Eastern	130 Tirkane Road, Maghera BT46 5NH

Ref	School	Board	Address
403-6693	Our Lady and St Patrick Primary School	South Eastern	Edward Street, Downpatrick BT30 6JD
503-6173	St John's the Baptist Primary School	Southern	250 Garvaghy Road, Portadown BT62 1EB
503-1110	Christian Brothers Primary School	Southern	Christian Brothers School, Greenpark, Keady Road, Armagh BT60 4AB
503-1148	St Patrick's Primary School	Southern	54 Carran Road, Crossmaglen, Newry BT35 9JL
503-6118	St Mary's Primary School	Southern	5 Cacanakeeran Road, Pomery, Dungannon BT70 2RD
503-6633	St Francis Primary School	Southern	Francis Street, Lurgan BT66 6DL

Irish-Medium Units (Post Primary)

Ref	School	Board	Address
223-0225	St Brigid's College	Western	Glengalliagh Road, Shantallow, Derry BT48 8DU
523-0218	St Catherine's College	Southern	2 Convent Road, Armagh BT60 4BG
423-0211	St Malachy's High School	South Eastern	3 Dublin Road, Castlewellan BT31 9AG
542-0073	St Joseph's Convent Grammar School	Southern	58 Castlecaulfield Road, Donaghmore, Dungannon BT70 3HE

Education Provision in the Traveller Community

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to improve education provision in the traveller community, given that 92 percent of Irish travellers have no GCSEs.

(AQW 13093/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In recognition of the need to improve educational outcomes and ensure that every Traveller child and young person is given the opportunity to fulfil their educational potential, a Taskforce on Traveller Education was established in September 2008 to assist my Department with the development of an action plan to address Traveller education.

In 2011 the Taskforce submitted its report to me with a number of high level recommendations.

In response to these recommendations my Department has developed a draft Traveller Child in Education Action Framework which will be issued for consultation in September 2012.

In addition to this my Department invests £1.6million additional funding each year to support Traveller education.

Gaelscoil na mBeann, Kilkeel

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education, following his recent announcement in relation to Gaelscoil na mBeann, Kilkeel, to detail (i) the anticipated enrolment numbers; (ii) the total cost of the project;

(iii) the projected annual running costs; and (iv) how the existing evidence of a demand from parents to have their children educated through the medium of Irish merited the construction of a new school.

(AQW 13098/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Development Proposal No 269 published in November 2011 for the establishment of a new grant-aided Irish Medium primary school in Kilkeel estimated that the long-term enrolment of the school would be in the range of 116-145 pupils.

The approval to the new school is conditional on the school achieving the minimum viability intake of 12 pupils in year 1, with the required number of pupils to be registered at the school before 30 September 2012. To be eligible for recurrent funding the school must meet this condition.

The projected annual running costs of the school are approximately £105,000 per annum.

Approval to the Development Proposal does not, however, mean that I have approved the construction of a new school. Initially the school plans to place temporary accommodation on its site and will be eligible to recoup rental costs for this until such time as they become eligible for capital grant.

To qualify for capital funding new primary schools in rural areas must meet the medium term targets of an annual intake of 15 pupils over a period of three years.

Empty Places in Schools

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of empty places in schools in the (i) maintained; (b) controlled; and (iii) integrated sectors in the Kilkeel area.

(AQW 13099/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of vacant school places in primary and post-primary schools in the Kilkeel area in the maintained, controlled and integrated sectors (i.e. management type) for the 2011/12 school year is as follows:

Management Type	Number of Vacant Places
Maintained	281
Controlled	374
Integrated	0

Notes:

- 1 The Kilkeel area is taken to be Kilkeel Central Ward and Kilkeel South Ward.
- 2 There are no integrated schools in the Kilkeel area.
- 3 The number of vacant places in schools is derived from the difference between a school's approved enrolment number and the number of pupils enrolled at the school.
- 4 The figures exclude the enrolment pupils in receipt of a statement of special educational needs, and pupils admitted on appeal by the Education and Library Board appeal tribunals or by direction of the independent Exceptional Circumstances Body, as these are admitted over and above a school's approved enrolment number.

Qualification for Careers Teachers

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for an update on the creation of a qualification for Careers teachers.

(AQW 13142/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In line with a commitment in the Preparing for Success careers strategy and in order to ensure that those staff involved in the provision of CEIAG are fully equipped with the knowledge, skills and expertise to lead, manage and deliver appropriate learner centred CEIAG, my Department has

commissioned the writing of four CPD modules to be rolled out to existing and new careers teachers to meet the specific needs of CEIAG staff in post-primary schools within the North of Ireland.

The modules encompass the key knowledge and skills required of school staff to lead and manage CEIAG effectively.

Careers Education

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the Northern Ireland Schools and Colleges Careers Association's analysis that the quality of Careers education, information, advice and guidance provision is widely inconsistent across schools and colleges.

(AQW 13144/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am advised of the nature of schools' careers education, information, advice and guidance in school inspection reports provided to me by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Objectivity and consistency in making these evaluations, honesty in communicating findings and openness in ensuring that evaluations reflect accurately the school's achievements are key in informing ETI's view of a school's provision and rely, in the main, on first-hand evidence based on observation rather than anecdotal evidence.

ETI base their reports on firm and verifiable data, evidence and a systematic exploration of all aspects of the curriculum including careers. They are currently collating evidence of inspection for the period April 2010 to June 2012 in order to prepare for the next Chief Inspector's report. That evidence provisionally indicates that the percentage of schools inspected where careers education, information, advice and guidance was evaluated as good or better has almost doubled from the 37% of schools during the period 2008/10 to 70% of schools inspected for the current period. This improvement is welcome but there is no room for complacency in this important area.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Provision in Schools

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education how his Department governs the quality of Careers education, information, advice and guidance provision in schools.

(AQW 13145/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am fully committed to the continuous improvement of the quality of careers education in schools and my Department is taking this forward through the full and continuing implementation of the joint DE DEL Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) strategy, the aim of which is to develop effective career decision makers, leading to increased and appropriate participation in education, training and employment.

An integrated approach is essential for a learner's career development and Boards of Governors, Principals and Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring the quality of provision and the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of CEIAG provision is sustained. In addition, I am advised of the nature of schools' careers, education, information, advice and guidance in school inspection reports provided to me by the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Public Contract Tenders for Construction

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of (i) his Department's elements criteria used to determine public contract tenders for construction; and (ii) whether the criteria, such as turnover thresholds, might prohibit small-to-medium sized local businesses from making applications,

(AQW 13154/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not procure construction works. When procuring construction works, the Department's Arms Length Bodies are required to comply with all current applicable procurement legislation and Procurement Guidance Notes (PGNs) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Central Procurement Directorate.

The PGNs may be accessed on-line (http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd-policy-and-legislation/content_-_cpd_-_policy_-_procurement_guidance_notes.htm). PGN 01/00, 02/11 and 02/12 are of particular relevance to your query.

- (i) The Arms Length Bodies ensure that opportunities for small to medium companies to tender are permitted. Should a company not meet the relevant financial and notational value requirements to qualify as a lead contractor, they may be able to apply either as part of a consortium or by being included in the supply chain of subcontractors for a lead contractor.
- (ii) The works contract documentation used by the education sectors is designed to maximise opportunities to bid for contracts by setting proportionate minimum standards for experience and financial standing.

First Choice Nursery Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of applicants who failed to obtain their first choice nursery place for the 2012/13 academic year, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 13196/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There were 22,799 applications for final pre-school places considered during Stage 1 of the 2012/13 admissions process. Of these, 15.6% failed to obtain a place in their first preference setting.

Education and Library Boards do not capture applications to pre-school settings broken down into individual constituencies and this information could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Area Planning Co-ordination Group

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the membership of the Area Planning Co-ordination Group.

(AQW 13228/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Area Planning Co-ordination Group is chaired by a Senior Departmental Official who is supported by DE officials with responsibility for area planning.

The group comprises the Chief Executive and the Senior Official responsible for area planning from each of the 5 Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

Policy to Stop a Large School and a Small School Merging

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education whether any policy exists to stop a large school and a small school merging.

(AQW 13239/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There is no policy to stop schools of a different size merging.

The key aim in any amalgamation is to provide high quality education in a school that will be viable and sustainable in the longer term, in line with the Sustainable Schools Policy.

It is the responsibility of the relevant school managing authorities, in the first instance, to ensure that children's educational needs are met. Should this require a significant change to a school, such as amalgamation, then this is subject to the statutory Development Proposal process. This ensures that all interested and affected parties have an opportunity to comment on the proposal. I make my decisions on Development Proposals on a case by case basis, taking account of the policy context and all pertinent information.

Department for Employment and Learning

Enrolments in Programme-Led Apprenticeships

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the (i) target number; and (ii) actual number of enrolments in Programme-Led Apprenticeships, in each year since 2009, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 12826/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Programme Led Apprenticeships were introduced in September 2009 with the aim of assisting young people who were finding it particularly difficult to secure an apprenticeship through employment due to the economic downturn. There is no target tied to enrolments as the programme is demand led.

The number of enrolments in each academic year, by constituency, is shown in the attached Annex.

Constituency	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
	Enrolled	Percent	Enrolled	Percent	Enrolled	Percent
Belfast East	121	4%	112	3%	125	4%
Belfast North	271	8%	260	7%	296	8%
Belfast South	112	3%	106	3%	117	3%
Belfast West	372	11%	333	9%	287	8%
East Antrim	152	4%	189	5%	189	5%
East Londonderry	185	5%	166	5%	142	4%
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	144	4%	190	5%	171	5%
Foyle	292	9%	218	6%	240	7%
Lagan Valley	203	6%	204	6%	183	5%
Mid Ulster	118	3%	157	4%	172	5%
Newry And Armagh	185	5%	189	5%	208	6%
North Antrim	160	5%	210	6%	204	6%
North Down	95	3%	70	2%	109	3%
South Antrim	126	4%	193	5%	166	5%
South Down	234	7%	262	7%	245	7%
Strangford	208	6%	161	5%	193	5%
Upper Bann	156	5%	201	6%	201	6%
West Tyrone	220	6%	238	7%	237	7%
Not Known	43	1%	60	2%	65	2%
Total Starts	3397	100%	3519	100%	3550	100%

St Mary's University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQO 2149/11-15, and given that St Mary's University College, Belfast has identified itself as a specialist institution with

a distinctive mission that seeks to maintain autonomy to protect its ethos and identity, why his Department continues to fund the college which is setting itself apart from integration; and whether he has any plans to legislate to have departmental funding withdrawn.

(AQW 12871/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department funds St. Mary's University College on the basis of the initial teacher education intake numbers as allocated by the Department of Education each year in recognition of a need to train teachers primarily for both maintained and Irish-medium education schools.

I have initiated a two-stage study of the teacher education infrastructure in Northern Ireland. Stage One of the study is an objective analysis of the financial stability and sustainability of the two university colleges. Stage Two will set out options for a more shared and integrated system for the delivery and funding of teacher education.

Management of the South West Regional College

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps are being taken to redress the community imbalance of 11 Roman Catholics to 1 Protestant in the management of the South West Regional College.

(AQW 12887/11-15)

Dr Farry: Under the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, the Governing Body of each Further Education College, in its capacity as the employing authority, is responsible for all employment related matters, including staff recruitment and selection; the Department has no locus in such matters.

The college's most recent Equality Scheme, which was approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 25th January 2012, includes an action by the college to continue to implement and review the college's 'Affirmative Action' plan, aimed at increasing applications to the college from those from a Protestant background.

I have asked the Chair of South West College to write to the member, directly, on this matter.

Kickstart to Work Programme

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he has considered implementing an agreement between his Department, the Social Security Agency, Derry City Council and others in relation to the Kickstart to Work Programme, to allow a quick and clear implementation of pre-employment programmes, to alleviate the onerous and time consuming procedure which is currently in place when processing new clients onto programmes.

(AQW 12918/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is aware of the procedures which the Social Security Agency has put in place which impact on Clients who wish to participate on "Kickstart to Work" and other such pre employment programmes which are available across Northern Ireland. I have asked my officials in the Employment Service to meet with their colleagues in the Social Security Agency and the Department of Social Development to seek agreement, in conjunction with programme providers, to find a way in which the procedures for clients who are participating in pre employment programmes of this type can be streamlined.

Step Ahead Programme

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the future of the Step Ahead Programme, including any plans for its re-introduction.

(AQW 12921/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Step Ahead initiative ceased in April and I currently have no plans to re-introduce this strand of the Steps to Work programme. The Steps to Work programme itself is due to end on 31 March 2013, and my Department is working on the development of a new employment programme to replace it during 2013.

St Mary's University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 11514/11-15, (i) when Stranmillis University College, or Queen's University, Belfast expressed a desire for the proposed merger, and which faculty initiated the first move; (ii) whether representatives of either faculty approached St Mary's University College, Belfast about the merger during the initial stages; and (iii) why St Mary's was permitted to retain its no-merger stance while Stranmillis was not, despite negative responses and Equality Commission concerns.

(AQW 12954/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is my understanding that the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College first proposed the merger with Queen's University in 2008. I further understand that both St. Mary's University College and the University of Ulster were approached by Stranmillis and asked to consider merger with it but both declined. The Governing Body of Stranmillis continues to support the proposed merger with Queen's and has not withdrawn its request to merge. The Equality Commission did highlight some concerns about the impact of the merger on students from a Protestant background but stated that this was not an argument against merger but rather a factor that should be borne in mind.

Statement of Special Educational Needs

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he is taking to ensure that young people, who have had a statement of special educational needs throughout their school life, receive a similar level of support when they transfer to Further and Higher Education.

(AQW 13078/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has a number of initiatives in place to ensure that young people with disabilities and learning difficulties, who have had a statement of special educational needs throughout their school life, receive a similar level of support when they transfer to Further and Higher Education.

Further Education

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005, further education (FE) colleges are required to make reasonable adjustments to allow students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities access to further education; adjustments depend on the nature of the disability, and the course of study.

Colleges receive funding of £3.5m per annum, through the Department's Additional Support Fund (ASF), which is ring-fenced, and additional to the funding generated by students with disabilities within the Recurrent Block Grant. This funding provides £1.5m to cover additional technical and/or personal support, such as note takers or specialist software, and £2m to provide extra support for those students with disabilities, who cannot be accommodated within a college's mainstream provision.

Higher Education

In financial year 2011/12, my Department provided Disabled Student Allowances (DSA) funding of over £3m. DSA provides funding for disability needs assessments to determine the support needs of each student and the level of award. These allowances are available to help pay the extra costs, which students may incur whilst studying, as a direct result of their disability, mental health condition, or specific learning difficulty. The allowances can help with the cost of a non-medical support provider, items of specialist equipment, travel, and other course-related costs. The amount awarded does not depend on a student's (or their family's) income, and does not have to be repaid.

Additionally, DSA also supports the administration and delivery of a Register of Support Providers in each of the two Northern Ireland Universities. Support from a register is available to all students with disabilities and learning difficulties in the universities, and university colleges. Students on affiliated higher education courses in further education colleges can also avail of a range of support, including note taker, proof reader, typist, campus assistant, and library assistant.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the current status of the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme.

(AQW 12919/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) is the independent Utility Regulator's energy efficiency and renewable energy scheme. It is not currently committed to run beyond 31 March 2013. With the agreement of the Utility Regulator, DETI has recently issued a consultation on the Energy Bill which also invites views on whether NISEP should be continued until any new energy efficiency measure is put in place.

Department of the Environment

Existing Memorials to Innocent Victims of the Troubles

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment how many existing memorials to innocent victims of the Troubles have planning permission.

(AQW 8437/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): In general a free standing structure such as a statue is likely to require planning permission. There may be circumstances where a memorial is minor in nature such that it is considered not to be development requiring planning permission, for example, a small roadside cross or a small wall mounted plaque.

DOE Planning has however dealt with approximately 50 planning applications since 1999 for various memorials. A total of 42 of these applications have been approved and 18 enforcement cases have been undertaken in relation to memorials.

I appreciate the issue identified in the AQ in relation to 'innocent victims'. The Planning system records information in relation to 'memorials', independent of their particular backgrounds.

Parkgate Quarry Planning Approval

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what conditions are likely to be attached to the planning approval of Parkgate quarry, should it be granted.

(AQW 8478/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The proposed conditions to be attached to any planning approval of Parkgate quarry would most likely cover areas such as the types of waste permitted on the site; permitted hours of operation; noise restrictions; landscaping and restoration of the site; roads issues including a detailed programme of works and traffic management proposals, visibility splays, haulage routes and wheel wash facilities. Some of these will be in the form of negative conditions which will require works to be carried out prior to the commencement of waste operations.

Parkgate Quarry Planning Approval

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department intends to enforce (i) the route restrictions; and (ii) the vehicle size and weight on the possible Parkgate quarry planning approval.

(AQW 8482/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I apologise to the Member for the delay in answering the question. Officials are currently liaising with Roads Service regarding the control of the issues you have raised. I will write to you personally with an update once the matter has been agreed.

Wind Turbines and Wind Farms

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of (i) wind turbines; and (ii) wind farms in each council area.

(AQW 8648/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Table 1 below sets out the number of approvals for single wind turbines and wind farms for the each of the last 3 business years by Council Area.

TABLE 1: WIND TURBINE AND WIND FARM APPROVALS

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
	Single turbine	Wind farm						
Antrim	7	0	4	1	2	1	14	0
Ards	11	0	5	0	2	0	1	0
Armagh	10	0	5	1	4	0	10	0
Ballymena	9	0	3	1	2	1	22	0
Ballymoney	8	1	6	2	13	0	9	1
Banbridge	20	0	5	0	10	0	9	0
Belfast	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0
Carrickfergus	5	0	2	0	10	0	0	0
Castlereagh	8	0	2	0	0	0	4	1
Coleraine	15	0	4	0	3	0	10	2
Cookstown	1	0	3	0	2	0	11	0
Craigavon	4	0	1	0	0	0	3	0
Derry	3	2	4	0	0	0	2	0
Down	24	0	6	0	5	0	5	0
Dungannon	5	0	3	1	9	1	12	1
Fermanagh	9	2	4	1	8	1	18	0
Larne	5	1	2	0	1	0	7	0
Limavady	3	0	2	1	0	1	0	1
Lisburn	10	1	7	0	3	1	2	0
Magherafelt	2	0	9	0	5	1	9	1
Moyle	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	1
Newry and Mourne	41	0	4	0	5	0	3	0
Newtownabbey	5	0	5	1	3	0	3	0
North Down	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0
Omagh	8	2	5	1	14	3	23	2
Strabane	10	1	7	1	24	3	39	0
Total	227	10	104	11	119	13	220	10

Source: Planning

This information is based on records up to 30 September 2011.

DOE Planning continues to refine and improve the quality of data it holds for renewable energy applications. As such the data contained herein may differ from that previously published and in itself may be subject to revision.

Planning Gain Developer Contribution Mechanism

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment when he plans to introduce a Planning Gain Developer Contribution mechanism.

(AQW 9753/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Developers can already be required to make contributions to mitigate the impact of a proposal and overcome a barrier to development, for example, the funding or provision of road improvement schemes or the inclusion of open space and recreational facilities. All such contributions must be reasonable and related to the development proposal in question.

My Department is also working with the Department for Social Development to investigate how the planning system may contribute to securing contributions to affordable housing from developers of residential proposals. I have to say that it is past time to create certainty on this issue and for developer contributions to be put in place.

The issue of wider contributions to regional infrastructure beyond site-specific mitigation, for example motorways, hospitals and water treatment works, is an issue which would need to be considered at Executive level in line with responsibility for the funding and provision of such infrastructure.

I shall write to relevant Ministers (DRD / DETI / FMdFM) to encourage progress in this regard.

Customers Consuming Alcohol on Private Hire Vehicles

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to his plans to curb illegal drinking, (i) for his assessment of bus operators' concerns that they could be placed in a policing role to control their customers consuming alcohol on private hire vehicles; and (ii) what measures he plans to put in place to ensure that bus operators and drivers are not adversely affected by the actions of their customers.

(AQW 9995/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have discussed the matter with bus operators, and I recognise the difficulty that drivers may face when challenging passengers about consuming alcohol on board their vehicles, and I acknowledge that they can be expected to fulfil only a limited role in policing the activities of their passengers.

The Department's advice is therefore that operators should consider stipulating in advance of any booking that alcohol will not be allowed on board. This control measure should be considered in respect of all high risk journeys, particularly where there has been a history of habitual offending. In the event that passengers become threatening or refuse to comply with the driver's instructions, the PSNI should be contacted.

The Driver & Vehicle Agency recognises that some bus operators may attempt to acquire additional business by permitting passengers to consume alcohol on board their vehicles, and I can confirm that the Agency is stepping up its enforcement activities, in conjunction with the PSNI, in order to target that particular issue.

Private Hire Companies and Coach Operators

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to his plans to curb illegal drinking, what measures he plans to put in place to ensure that (i) private hire companies and coach operators, who are in full compliance with the law, are not adversely affected; and (ii) his plans do not increase the prevalence of unlicensed operators.

(AQW 9997/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Whilst the issue of alcohol consumption on buses is primarily an enforcement responsibility for the police, the Driver & Vehicle Agency will continue to work with the PSNI to target operators who flout the law and at the same time to safeguard the interests of those who are fully compliant.

I am also considering, in consultation as necessary with partner organisations, a range of strengthening measures that would serve to enhance enforcement and reduce the prevalence of unlicensed operators. These include changes to legislation that would enable the confiscation of unlicensed vehicles, tougher licensing conditions, the issuing of fixed penalty notices, stricter compliance requirements in respect of vehicle construction, and measures to promote public and industry awareness of legal requirements.

Staff Numbers at the Driver and Vehicle Agency Office in Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the proposals he submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport to protect staff numbers at the Driver and Vehicle Agency office in Coleraine.

(AQW 10048/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am very concerned about any threat to jobs, either in Coleraine or in local vehicle licensing offices, that may emerge from the ongoing examination by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency of the options for the future delivery of vehicle licensing services following the planned integration of IT systems next year.

In correspondence to, and meetings with Ministers in the Department for Transport, I have made it very clear that there should be no reduction in jobs. Even if the new IT system results in more tax discs being purchased online or through Post Offices, there is still a wide range of vehicle licensing services that could be delivered by staff in DVA, either for Northern Ireland customers or for customers across the UK.

I have emphasised to Ministers in Britain the exceptionally high standards of service delivered by DVA and also the special economic conditions in Northern Ireland, our reliance on public sector jobs and the need for time to rebuild and rebalance the economy. I have made it clear that now is not the time to be cutting jobs.

I have raised the matter with the secretary of State, Owen Patterson who I intend to meet and have provided a detailed submission to Justine Greening, the Secretary of State for Transport, who I have also requested a meeting with. I have advised NIPSA of my efforts which have been ongoing since June 2011.

Republican Monument in Kilcoo, near Castlewellan

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made in taking enforcement action against the republican monument that was erected without planning permission in Kilcoo, near Castlewellan.

(AQW 10467/11-15)

Mr Attwood: This enforcement case remains under investigation and the Member will be informed of the outcome in due course. I have asked for an update on this case, which I need to consider in the context of similar matters.

Should the landowner submit a planning application, Down District Council would be consulted as the relevant Council and in relation to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Devolution of the Crown Estate

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of the potential benefits to the economy if the administration and revenue of the Crown Estate were devolved; and (ii) whether he will consider discussing with the Scottish Government their position on the devolution of the Crown Estate.

(AQW 10544/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am a strong advocate of the devolution to the Executive of powers held by London. I believe, as with Scotland and more than Scotland, this should be a key element in political

developments over the next period. This includes the devolution of the administration and revenue of the Crown Estate.

Inter-Departmental Working Group on Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the membership of the inter-departmental working group on hydraulic fracturing; (ii) when the group has met; (iii) plans for future meetings and any future agendas; (iv) the agenda of all previous meetings; and (iii) to provide the minutes of all of the group's meetings.

(AQW 11110/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) provides the chair and secretariat for this group and the information requested would be sought more appropriately from that Department. I can confirm that officials from the Department in Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Planning and Environmental Policy Division are represented on the group.

Report by Consumer Focus Scotland 'Reaping the Benefits of Renewables'

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the report by Consumer Focus Scotland 'Reaping the Benefits of Renewables - The role of community benefit funds in tackling fuel poverty and energy efficiency' including what lessons his Department might learn from this report.

(AQW 11609/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- 1) I commend the Consumer Focus Scotland report in its assessment of the potential future links between the significant and growing issues of energy costs, fuel poverty in rural areas, the development of renewable energy infrastructure and the resources available through community benefit funds.
- 2) I will also take into account the publication of the Northern Ireland Renewable Industry Group's (NIRIG) protocol on community benefits, which I will discuss with NIRIG at a renewable subgroup of the Planning Forum in late June.
- 3) I recognise fully the view that there should be community benefit / greater community benefit on renewable applications. I have tasked officials to bring forward proposals on how in terms of guidance on / and new policy and /on other means, the requirement for community benefit may be advanced. Clearly, the Scotland report bears on DFP and DSD (energy efficiency / fuel poverty). I will write to the respective Ministers to seek their views.

Wind Farm Developments

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the report, by the Fermanagh Trust, on the level of benefits that communities here derive from wind farm developments; and what changes will be made to PPS 18 as a result.

(AQW 11612/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I recently met with the Fermanagh Trust to discuss its report, and remain wholly supportive of communities deriving meaningful and long term benefits from the windfarms developments.

You will be aware that the Northern Ireland Renewable Industry Group (NIRIG) is at an advanced stage in the development of a community benefit protocol.

I will consider this protocol when published.

However, I would also refer the member to AQW 11609 / 11-15 in this regard.

Clause 20(5) of the Marine Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to clause 20(5) of the Marine Bill which states 'if the authority believes that there is, or may be, a significant risk of the act hindering the achievement of the conservation objectives stated for the MCZ', to detail what circumstances would be considered a significant risk.

(AQW 11896/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Clause 20 places a general duty on public authorities to inform the Department if they intend to undertake an activity or action that they believe will or may cause a significant risk of hindering the achievement of conservation objectives for an MCZ.

What constitutes a significant risk will depend on individual circumstances. It will be considered on a case by case basis, having regard to, the likelihood and an assessment of whether the protected features might potentially be affected by the location, size, timing or other characteristics/consequences of the activity or development concerned.

Under Clause 22 the Department has the power to provide advice and guidance to public authorities on MCZs. Any advice/guidance will be based on the best available evidence.

In legislative terms 'significant' is deemed to be anything more than minor or trivial. To that end, it would depend on the conservation objectives of each individual site to determine if an activity would be considered a significant risk to the MCZ.

Marine Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) why irrationality (unreasonableness) is not included in the Marine Bill as grounds for judicial review, given that this is accepted as grounds for judicial review under common law; (ii) why, under the Marine Bill, an application must be made no later than 6 weeks after the publication of the relevant document, given that applications for judicial reviews are accepted up to 3 months in common law; and (iii) for his assessment of whether the proposals are compatible with the Aarhus Convention which assures 'access to justice' for people in environmental decision making.

(AQW 11897/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Clause 8 of the Marine Bill defines the grounds upon which a person aggrieved by a marine plan may apply to the High Court.

Legal advice has confirmed that clauses 8 and 9 of the Bill provide for a form of statutory judicial review of the marine plan which substitutes for generic judicial review. Given that the specific grounds for judicial review of administrative acts are reflected in provisions such as clause 8, it is not considered necessary to specify irrationality as a particular ground of review.

Due to the inclusive nature of the marine planning process grounds for challenge are likely to become apparent prior to the adoption of the final plan. In addition anyone who wishes to challenge a marine plan will be able to raise their concerns during the marine planning process. Nonetheless, I acknowledge the point and am reviewing the time limit provision.

Clauses 8 and 9 afford recourse to the Courts and are therefore compatible with Aarhus Convention

Clause 2(5) of the Marine Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what constitutes a 'relevant consideration' as stated in clause 2(5) of the Marine Bill.

(AQW 11898/11-15)

Mr Attwood: 'Relevant considerations' for clause 2(5) of the Marine Bill are not defined, as this would be too prescriptive and would not allow for future developments in knowledge, technology and legislation etc. However, relevant considerations could include: the effects of climate change; the

development of new technologies; regional considerations or changes in international or European policies and legislation. They could also include matters not reflected in a Marine Policy Statement (MPS) which was under review or being amended.

Although the Bill enables the marine plan to depart from the policies set out in the MPS if relevant considerations indicate that another course of action is more appropriate, this flexibility is not expected to be used as a matter of course. In fact, frequently needing to depart from the MPS could indicate that it was not working effectively, and could need amending.

Since the marine planning process is designed to be inclusive, all stakeholders and those affected by a plan will be able to provide input to the process and will be able to make representations on any departure from the MPS.

Review of Public Administration

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the cost of implementing the Review of Public Administration in each council area, including the cost of possible staff redundancies. **(AQW 11914/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The economic appraisal of local government service delivery, published by PricewaterhouseCoopers in October 2009, indicated that under the preferred option (i.e. Transformation with Regional Collaboration) implementation of the local government reform programme could involve expenditure of up to £118 million over five years and achieve savings of £438 million over twenty five years. This expenditure included just over £20 million for the redundancy of local government staff, mainly at Chief Executive and Director level. These costs and savings were not, however, broken down on an individual council basis.

I have asked that work is now done to re-examine the cost of reform against the backdrop of the 2015 timescale for reform set out in the Programme for Government 2011-15, the sector's Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency proposals and the changed economic climate in which reform is now being taken forward.

Each of the Voluntary Transition Committees, which I have asked local government to establish, will also be developing supporting economic appraisals embracing the detailed costs and benefits of implementing reform within their constituent councils.

Review of the Use of Agricultural Vehicles

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the review of the use of agricultural vehicles, as discussed at the North South Ministerial Council Transport Sectoral meeting. **(AQW 12042/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The review of the use of agricultural vehicles referred to is planned for the Republic of Ireland and no such review is planned for Northern Ireland.

The use of agricultural vehicles in Northern Ireland will however be impacted by the introduction of the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act (NI) 2010 which will come into operation on 1 July 2012. This legislation requires that all those using goods vehicles over 3500kg to carry goods on the road in the course of a trade or business will need to hold an operator's licence.

Licence holders will be required to carry out regular safety inspections and sign undertakings in respect of maintenance, record keeping and observing traffic and transport laws.

The Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) (Exemption) Regulations (NI) 2012, which are subject to affirmative resolution in the Assembly, exempt agricultural tractors being used solely for agriculture, horticulture or forestry purposes from the need to hold an operator's licence. The regulations in this regard were recently passed by the Assembly.

Compulsory Basic Training Course for Motorcycling

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will offer a concessionary rate for people aged over 65 who are required to complete a Compulsory Basic Training course for motorcycling.

(AQW 12049/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver & Vehicle Agency maintains the register of approved motorcycle instructors (AMIs) under the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 and the Motor Vehicles (Driving Instruction) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

From 21 February 2011 new legislation introduced a requirement for all new moped and motorcycle riders to complete compulsory basic training (CBT) before being permitted to ride unaccompanied on public roads. The training is provided by AMIs.

Course fees for CBT are not currently regulated: they are “market led”. There is no current provision within the existing legislation for them to be determined by the Department, this is the reality of the law.

The scheme, which was developed in conjunction with the motorcycle industry, road safety organisations and the PSNI, is designed with flexibility in mind not only to take account of a trainee’s experience and knowledge but also to accommodate an individual’s ability to learn. Courses may also be delivered and undertaken either in one go or in bite-sized pieces, which means that trainees may learn at their own pace and thereby spread the overall costs.

I am content with the existing arrangements, and have no plans to change them at present.

That said, I recognise the point in the question. I shall write to the AMIs to make the argument for a concessionary rate and update members thereafter.

HMS Caroline

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of the Environment whether he would consider listing HMS Caroline as part of the history of Belfast as a naval city, given that this is one of the very few remaining crafts of this type.

(AQW 12067/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am advised by officials that the special protection afforded by Listing (i.e. to declare it a ‘building of special architectural or historic interest’) under the provisions of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 cannot be extended to a vessel such as the HMS Caroline. I am further advised, however, that the vessel could, potentially, be afforded statutory protection as a Scheduled Historic Monument, under the provisions of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995. There is a process to be observed in bring forward a proposal for such protection, including consultation with the Historic Monuments Council, a Statutory Advisory Council constituted under the provisions of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995.

The HMS Caroline is certainly an important, historic vessel. As you are probably aware, it was one of the oldest commissioned vessels in the Royal Navy, and it is the only known First World War light cruiser that is still afloat. Indeed, it is thought to be, perhaps, the last vessel from any nation in the world that saw active service during the great First World War sea battle known as the Battle of Jutland. HMS Caroline was finally decommissioned in March 2011, after some 97 years of service.

You may also be aware that its future has recently been the subject of three questions in the Houses of Parliament, Westminster (questions 106156, 106157 and 106227 refer). I should make you aware that, should the vessel be selected for scheduling as a historic monument, this does not provide a guarantee of funding from this Department. Although there is provision under the HMAOO for the Department to make a contribution towards the costs of preservation, maintenance and management of monuments, I am sure that you will appreciate, that there are many competing demands upon the resources currently available to my Department.

I have been advised by my Executive colleague Arlene Foster, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment of the following:

"I have been working for some time now to find the best solution for HMS Caroline and have met with various stakeholders who are also keen to have HMS Caroline retained in Belfast.

An economic appraisal which considered the options around retaining the ship has been finalised and discussions with the Royal Navy are ongoing."

I have also been advised by my Executive colleague Carál Ní Chuilín, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, of the following:

"The issue of whether HMS Caroline should be listed is entirely a matter for DOE. To date DCAL has consistently taken a position on HMS Caroline that:

- This project is outside of the Department's statutory remit.
- Capital and/ or revenue funding is not available from DCAL existing budgets to provide any financial support to the project.
- To ensure good continued communications and relations DCAL is actively participating in a number of stakeholder meetings, led by SIB and DETI. These seek to explore opportunities for developing Belfast's maritime assets in the context of the Belfast Titanic and Maritime Asset Strategy developed by DSD, Belfast City Council and NITB and in line with the Department's Museums Policy."

Belfast certainly has a lengthy, internationally-recognised, history as a maritime city and the city's naval past is part of that story. With the ongoing delivery of the Titanic Signature Project, Belfast's maritime history could, potentially, continue to draw significantly more visitors to the city in the years to come. It would certainly be good to see the HMS Caroline as part of Belfast's heritage offering, with the overall contribution that that can bring to our economy etc and I will continue to explore how my Department can best contribute to that in a positive way. In this particular instance officials from my Department will contact their counterparts in DETI to establish with them whether or not statutory protection as a Scheduled Historic Monument would help them to secure a better future for the vessel.

Clause 14(3)(b) of the Marine Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the information that must be included in a published notice of a proposal to make an order designating a marine conservation zone under clause 14(3)(b) of the Marine Bill.

(AQW 12143/11-15)

Mr Attwood: An order made under clause 11 of the Marine Bill will define the overall area and boundaries of an MCZ, its protected features and its conservation objectives. The conservation objectives will describe the purpose and aim of the designation, specific information on the feature(s) designated and the level of protection.

As part of the consultation process, clause 14(3) (b) requires that the proposed designation order includes this information and therefore allows relevant stakeholders the opportunity to participate in the process.

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the percentage of sickness absence in his Department in each of the last three years; and the agreed target rate of sickness as set out in any memoranda of understanding between his Department and the trade unions.

(AQW 12225/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The percentage of sickness absence within the Department of the Environment (DOE) in each of the last three years is set out in the table below.

Ministerial targets were set in 2010 for an overall reduction in sickness absence within the Northern Ireland Civil Service to 8.5 days lost per staff year by the end of the 2014/2015 financial year. This target appears in the Executive's Draft Programme for Government 2011-2015. Individual Departmental targets were also set for the same period and the DOE targets are also set out below. The Department of Finance and Personnel (Corporate HR) advised the Trade Unions of the new targets. This is not reflected in any memorandum of understanding with the Trade Unions.

DOE ABSENCE INFORMATION APRIL 2008 – MARCH 2011

Year	Days lost per staff year/ Whole time equivalent	Rate (% of available days lost)
2008/09	9.6	4.3
2009/10	9.9	4.4
2010/11	9.2	4.2

The sick absence statistics for 2011-12 are not yet published.

DOE SICKNESS ABSENCE TARGETS

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Days lost	9.5	9.0	8.5	8.0	7.5

MOT Test: Vintage Cars

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any plans to introduce legislation, similar to that which was introduced at Westminster, regarding the exemption from the MOT for historic and vintage cars which were manufactured before 1960.

(AQW 12348/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has consulted on possible exemption of certain categories of historic vehicles from MOT testing and the Environment Committee at its meeting on 22 March 2012 considered the synopsis of responses to the Department's consultation. The responses indicated that there is broad support for exemption of pre-1960 vehicles from periodic testing.

The Committee was content with the Department's proposed way forward, which is to develop policy on the basis of the consultation responses that would make use of the exemption in Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC concerning the periodic testing of pre-1960 vehicles. The Department is progressing its detailed consideration of the appropriate way forward, to ensure that the requirements of the Directive are met in the detail of the policy.

Enforcement Cases in Relation to Listed Buildings

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment how many enforcement cases have been opened in relation to listed buildings in the last twelve months, broken down by planning office.

(AQW 12398/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The number of enforcement cases opened in relation to listed buildings in the last twelve months, broken down by planning office is set out in the table below

Planning Office	Listed Building Cases received Apr 11 – Mar 12
Belfast Area Office	1
Northern Area Office	11

Planning Office	Listed Building Cases received Apr 11 – Mar 12
South Antrim Area Office	0
Southern Area Office	10
Downpatrick Office	9
Strategic Planning Division	0
Western Area Office	3

Category One Enforcement Cases

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment how many category one enforcement cases have been opened in the last twelve months.

(AQW 12399/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department will investigate all alleged breaches of planning control. However, when determining what (if any) action is to be taken, priority will be given to those breaches where, in the Department's opinion, the greatest harm is likely to be caused.

The priority given is determined by the guiding principle that any action in response to a breach of planning control should be proportionate to the harm it causes.

Priority 1 cases relate to works resulting in public danger or development which may result in permanent damage to the environment. For example demolition of or works to a listed building, trees protected by a TPO, demolition of a building in a conservation area, and commencement of building operations without planning permission.

In the last twelve months, 78 priority 1 cases have been opened.

Planning Office Staff

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment how many staff are employed in each planning office; and how many are involved in enforcement.

(AQW 12400/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The number of staff employed in each local area planning office (including development management, development plan, administrative and enforcement); and the number of P&T staff involved in enforcement are set out in the table below.

Local Planning Office	Total staff employed in each local area planning office	Number of staff involved in Enforcement
South Antrim Area	53	5
Belfast Area	63	6
Southern Area	77	6
Downpatrick Office	62	11
Northern Area	64	7
Western Area	57	4
Total	367	39

In addition to the 46 staff dealing solely with enforcement cases, there are an additional 10 officers at PPTO (Principal) grade involved in enforcement along with their other development management

responsibilities across the area office network. There is a further dedicated enforcement team of 7 staff in Strategic Planning Division based at Headquarters.

I have made it clear that I take the enforcement of planning powers seriously. Despite pressures associated with redeployment within the Department dedicated enforcement teams have been retained within each area office reflecting the high priority I attach to this area of work.

Enforcement Cases

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment how many enforcement cases have been opened in the last twelve months, broken down by planning office.

(AQW 12402/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department will investigate all alleged breaches of planning control and has a general discretion to take enforcement action when it regards it as expedient to do so, having regard to the provisions of the development plan and any other material considerations.

The number of enforcement cases opened in the last twelve months broken down by planning office is set out in the table below.

Planning Office	Number of Cases opened
Belfast Area Office	473
Northern Area Office	398
South Antrim Area Office	290
Southern Area Office	377
Downpatrick Office	520
Strategic Planning Division	136
Western Area Office	371
Total	2565

Remuneration for Board Members of Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the current total annual cost of remuneration for board members at his Department's arm's-length bodies and quangos.

(AQW 12409/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has five arm's length bodies (ALBs) as follows:

- NI Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC);
- Local Government Staff Commission for NI (LGSC);
- Council for Nature Conservation and Countryside (CNCC);
- Historic Monuments Council (HMC); and
- Historic Buildings Council (HBC).

Board members of NILGOSC, LGSC and CNCC are remunerated while those of HMC and HBC receive expenses only.

The table below details the annual cost of remuneration for board members of the Department's ALBs for 2011/12.

Arm's Length Body	£
NILGOSC	33,277
LGSC	19,276
CNCC	16,417
Total Cost	68,970

QUANGOs

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to reduce (i) the number of QUANGOs; and (ii) the operational cost of QUANGOs.

(AQW 12541/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am proceeding with a Review of the Local Government Staff Commission which has now been in existence for nearly 40 years. The review will be launched before the end of June 2012 and the consultation will remain open for 12 weeks.

There have been no new arms length bodies (QUANGOs) attached to my Department created as a result of legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2007.

Wind Turbines

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment what is the closest distance a wind turbine can be sited to a parachute club.

(AQW 12562/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The main planning policy for the assessment of a planning application for wind energy is contained within Planning Policy Statement 18 'Renewable Energy'. Although this policy document does not refer specifically to the proximity of a proposed turbine to a parachute club, the 'Best Practice Guidance' does make reference to safety; for an individual wind turbine the fall over distance (i.e. the height of the turbine to the tip of the blade) plus 10% is often used as a safe separation distance between the turbine and occupied property.

In addition, as part of its consideration of a planning application the Department checks the planning history of the site and undertakes a site inspection. Planning officers generally have a knowledge of the local area for which they are responsible and the proximity of a parachute club would become evident and would be a material consideration in the decision making process.

In addition, in order to further inform the decision making process, the Department consults with local airports within 30km of the application site, National Air Traffic Services, Belfast International Airport, OFCOM and the Civil Aviation Authority, as required.

I acknowledge the hazard that a wind turbine and other structures such as hangers and masts can present to parachutists and trust that the implementation of this safety zone from occupied property and consultation with aviation bodies alleviates your concerns in terms of the Departments consideration to safety.

Applications to Transfer a Vehicle Registration Mark

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of the Environment how many applications to transfer a vehicle registration mark have been processed by the Driver and Vehicle Agency, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12566/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The numbers of applications processed for the transfer a registration mark in each of the last five financial years are as follows:

Financial Year	Applications Processed
2007/08	33,091
2008/09	28,123
2009/10	26,861
2010/11	28,286
2011/12	27,165

QUANGOs

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment how many QUANGOS, that are attached to his Department, have been created as a result of legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2007.

(AQW 12655/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am proceeding with a Review of the Local Government Staff Commission which has now been in existence for nearly 40 years. The review will be launched before the end of June 2012 and the consultation will remain open for 12 weeks.

There have been no new arms length bodies (QUANGOs) attached to my Department created as a result of legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2007.

Non-Farming Rural Dwellers

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department is giving to a change in policy which would allow non-farming rural dwellers to receive planning approval to remain in rural areas.

(AQW 12730/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Whilst PPS 21 does not include a bespoke policy for non-farming rural dwellers, almost all of its policies are relevant to them. The policy offers considerable opportunities for non-farming rural people wishing to live in the countryside, not just farmers. It does so by providing for replacement dwellings; the conversion and re-use of non-residential buildings as dwellings; opportunities for new dwellings within an existing cluster or ribbon of buildings; social and affordable housing schemes development within Designated Rural Communities; and a dwelling to meet compelling personal or domestic circumstances.

However in recognition of the continued interest in this issue as part of my review I met with 3 members of the Independent Working Group set up by the previous Executive to examine the issue of non-farming rural dwellers. I was interested to hear their expert views first hand and have taken these into account in the review.

The review of the operation of PPS21 is now concluded. I am currently finalising the review report and intend to make a Statement to the Assembly in this regard as soon as practicable.

Review of PPS 21

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the review of PPS 21, including when it will be completed.

(AQW 12731/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The review of the operation of PPS21 is now concluding. I am currently finalising the review report.

Financial Incentives to Encourage People to Return Bottles and Cans for Recycling

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any plans to introduce financial incentives to encourage people to return bottles and cans for recycling.

(AQW 12739/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has already given consideration to introducing a refundable deposit scheme or levy in Northern Ireland in conjunction with England, Scotland and Wales. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in England reviewed proposals put forward by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in relation to the introduction of a beverage container deposit system.

Defra considered representations for and against the proposals and carried out an analysis of the economic model compiled on behalf of CPRE.

Taking into account all the information presented, Defra concluded that it would not be viable to take the option of deposits forward at this time. The Department has considered Defra's findings and conclusions and has decided not to put forward proposals at present to introduce a beverage container deposit scheme.

However, bottles and cans are a significant component in the household and municipal waste streams and many of the measures and initiatives that I am bringing forward impact positively on their recycling.

I have included in the Programme for Government a household waste recycling target of 45% by 2014/15. This challenging target accelerates the current annual increase in the rate of recycling. I have also recently announced my plans to bring forward primary legislation proposals to set a statutory target for 60% of local authority collected municipal waste to be recycled by 2020.

At a practical level, the Department will be continuing to provide support to improve recycling rates. Existing measures such as the Rethink Waste Campaign, Rethink Waste Funds and funding of the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Northern Ireland Delivery Programme will continue during the period up to 2014/15. The current call for applications for the Rethink Waste Funds can be found at www.rethinkwasteni.org.

Planning Process for Alternative Energy

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what action he has taken to speed up the planning process for alternative energy, especially planning applications for single and multiple wind turbines; and what indications he has of the situation improving.

(AQW 12752/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department welcomes the contribution that renewable energy proposals make to the economy and to the reduction of carbon emissions. It also acknowledges the importance of processing these types of applications in a timely manner.

Since becoming Minister I commenced a radical reform of planning in order to reduce delays in processing applications and require active case management and other interventions to improve processing times. Indeed, I have included more challenging targets for processing applications over the next three years. I have also established a Sub Group of the Planning Forum to focus on measures to improve planning performance for renewables and to consider issues such as licensing requirements, resources and structures.

To date this work has resulted in the majority of renewable applications being redirected from Strategic Planning Division to the Area Office network which has increased capacity to speed up the decision making process. Prior to the redistribution of this work training was rolled out across the Area Office network to ensure consistency in decision making.

However, applications for wind turbines differ in complexity and in quality of submission and are attracting increasing levels of local objection. Consultation with a number of statutory and non-statutory

bodies is required to inform the decision-making process and all of these issues may prolong the processing of an application.

To improve the consultation process and ensure substantive responses are received in a timely basis I have instructed my staff to monitor the performance of the statutory bodies for which agreed Service Level Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding are in place. I have also asked Senior officials to meet with all other interested parties to ensure the consultation process is operating effectively and planning staff have been reminded that they should only consult in the correct circumstances to avoid unnecessary consultations.

I would urge applicants to engage with planners and local communities at an early stage in the planning process, and to submit high quality applications accompanied by all of the information and surveys necessary to allow it to be determined as quickly as possible.

I appreciate that the industry needs to see improvement and the Department will continue to monitor performance throughout the year under the new targets set out in the Programme for Government.

Bat Surveys on Wind Turbines

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment how many bat surveys on wind turbines have been requested by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in the past three years, what is the estimated cost of this work and how many sites were found to have bats.

(AQW 12753/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Bats are afforded strict protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). Information regarding the potential impacts of development on a protected species is a material consideration in the planning process and the planning authority must ensure that it has sufficient information prior to the determination of an application. This means that when the Department is exercising its planning functions it must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive as far as those requirements may be affected by the exercise of the planning functions.

The Department (along with other relevant authorities across the UK) considers it is essential that the presence of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted. This is based on the interpretation of legislation and the analysis of relevant case law. NIEA is mindful of the delay and cost that may be involved, and developers are not required to undertake surveys for bats unless there is a reasonable likelihood of bats being present and affected by the development.

If a survey concludes that no bats are present or very low numbers are recorded, NIEA will recommend approval for the proposal but may include as a condition the delivery of a monitoring programme to ensure the proposal does not impact the favourable conservation status of bats.

NIEA does not know for certain how many applicants carry out bat surveys. Officials have, however, reviewed ten randomly selected cases throughout Northern Ireland where a bat survey has been carried out. This has demonstrated that bats were present at all ten sites. NIEA used the survey information to recommend conditions on approvals, where necessary, and did not recommend refusal on any of these cases.

NIEA is unable to estimate the cost of bat surveys due to the variety of quotations available to applicants through many qualified bat surveyors currently offering their services as ecological consultants in Northern Ireland. Each quotation will vary according to the size of the site and complexity of survey methodology required and also the consultant's current fees. This is a private matter between the consultant and the applicant.

Bat Surveys on Wind Turbines

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment to outline any evidence available to suggest that bats use hedges to navigate, which gives grounds to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency requiring bat surveys for all wind turbine installations.

(AQW 12756/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Firstly, I would like to clarify that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency does not request bat surveys for all wind turbine applications.

Bats are afforded strict protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). Information regarding the potential impacts of development on a protected species is a material consideration in the planning process and the planning authority must ensure that it has sufficient information prior to the determination of an application. This means that when the Department is exercising its planning functions it must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive as far as those requirements may be affected by the exercise of the planning functions.

There is ample evidence available to support the use of hedgerows by bats for commuting purposes. This evidence is based upon readings taken from the ultrasonic sounds produced by bats when they are in flight. Using appropriate equipment and computer software it is possible to differentiate between those sounds made during feeding and those which are made when navigating. Many studies have taken place to determine associations between the movement of bats and the presence of landscape features such as hedgerows which have concluded there are strong relationships between the two. This has informed the production of the many guidelines, management practices and plans laid out to protect bats on a regional, national and European level.

MOT Centres

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment if there are any plans to open MOT centres on Sundays.

(AQW 12778/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I can confirm that I have authorised the Driver & Vehicle Agency to avail of the option of opening vehicle testing centres on Sundays.

The demand for vehicle tests has increased almost tenfold since the mid 1980s, and is projected to grow by a further 5% in 2012-13 and on average by 3.5%-4% a year over the next five years. The Agency's 15 test centres are currently open and fully staffed for 12.5 hours a day from Monday to Saturday, and their capacity to cope with demand increasing on this scale is therefore diminishing.

It is envisaged that Sunday opening will be necessary only at peak periods, normally between January and March. Current projections indicate that initially only the Belfast test centre will require Sunday opening during the peak period early next year.

Sunday working will be on a voluntary basis for staff, and customers will still be able to choose, subject to availability, to have their vehicles tested at any of the Agency's test centres from Monday to Saturday between 8.00 am and 8.30 pm.

Paying Vehicle Tax by Direct Debit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to allow people to pay vehicle tax by direct debit.

(AQW 12798/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As announced in the recent 2012 Budget, the UK Government, which has responsibility for the collection of vehicle excise duty, aims to develop a direct debit system to allow motorists to spread their payments. At present, no timetable has been announced for the development of a direct debit scheme.

Paying Vehicle Tax Online

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to allow people to pay vehicle tax online.

(AQW 12799/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in Swansea, which has responsibility for the collection of vehicle excise duty across the UK, on behalf of the Department for Transport, are currently examining how they can deliver a fully integrated IT system that would bring vehicle licensing services in Northern Ireland into line with those in Britain and improve services to customers by facilitating online applications and more services from Post Offices.

A separate study is also examining options for the future delivery of vehicle licensing services following systems integration.

I recently wrote to Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Transport, expressing my support for the delivery of these services to customers in NI but emphasising my opposition to any reduction in jobs in NI as a consequence, and I have been assured that no decisions will be made without further consultation with me.

Independent Committee on Climate Change

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether there are any plans to invite the Independent Committee on Climate Change to conduct a climate audit of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 12817/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Whilst I have not yet requested that the independent Committee on Climate Change carries out an audit of climate change activity in Northern Ireland, I do intend to build in such a role for the Committee in my plans for a Climate Change Bill.

The Committee on Climate Change already provides assistance to Northern Ireland on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and be prepared for the impacts of climate change. I recently sought and was provided with advice by the Committee on the appropriateness of Northern Ireland climate change legislation¹. The Committee is currently dealing with a request by DARD to provide a robust methodology to measure greenhouse gas emissions per unit of commodity output at the farm-gate. It also engages with DOE officials routinely on UK wide matters including progress being made against UK greenhouse gas reduction targets by Northern Ireland Departments.

Listed Buildings

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment, for each of the last 10 years, to detail (i) how many buildings have been (a) newly categorised as listed buildings; and (b) de-listed; and (ii) the number of listed buildings in the North Down area.

(AQW 12832/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The following table provides the information requested on new listings and delistings in Northern Ireland for each of the last 10 years.

Financial year	No of New Listings	No of Delistings
2002/2003	44	89
2003/2004	47	58
2004/2005	62	37
2005/2006	71	102
2006/2007	71	6

¹ <http://www.theccc.org.uk/reports/appropriateness-of-a-northern-ireland-climate-change-act>

Financial year	No of New Listings	No of Delistings
2007/2008	51	7
2008/2009	72	11
2009/2010	79	3
2010/2011	62	31
2011/2012	42	14

In regard to part (ii), I refer you to the answer provided to AQW 9161 11-15 and can advise that since then a further four buildings have been delisted and three buildings added to the list. The three new listed buildings were formerly included as a listed group under a single record.

You should note that North Down Council Area is currently being reviewed under the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Second Survey of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest. This means that the total figure may change again, soon, following the evaluation and processing of these records.

Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association's Report 'Town Centre First'

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association's report 'Town Centre First' which recommended that that his Department should introduce a five-year moratorium on any further out-of-town superstore developments.

(AQW 12834/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It is my ambition to bring forward a new policy for town centres and retailing. I consider that a moratorium on out of town retail development in advance of this would not be appropriate. Rather, it is important that I follow due process, including stakeholder engagement and public consultation in developing the best policy response to the complex town centres and retail development issues facing the north at this time. Planning applications should continue to be assessed on their merits in light of the circumstances pertaining to the case, the existing planning policy framework including the local development plan and all other material considerations.

Clearly, the NIIRTA recommendations need to be taken seriously. I have looked at those which fall to my Department and written to the FM/dFM to request that the proposals are discussed at an executive meeting. I believe there are short term and long term reasons to respond to NIIRTA positively.

Cap on the Size of Class 1 Out-of-Town Retail Stores

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will give urgent consideration to the introduction of a cap on the size of Class 1 out-of-town retail stores, based on the scheme already in place in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 12839/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In bringing forward a new planning policy for town centres and retailing I will keep an open mind and assess all policy options. As part of this process I will to consider the current evidential context, which includes an examination of existing practice in other jurisdictions.

Major Retail Planning Applications

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration he has given to introducing a third party right of appeal, in relation to major retail planning applications, to avoid lengthy and expensive judicial reviews.

(AQW 12840/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A Third Party Right of Appeal may have some impact on the volume of judicial reviews. However, the processes are different. Under Judicial Review a judge reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body. The way in which a decision is made is challenged in a Judicial Review,

whereas the planning merits of a decision to grant an application would be addressed in Third Party Right of Appeal. In that way, there will be people who will avail of the option of judicial reviews.

It is not my intention to introduce a Third Party Right of Appeal at this time. I believe it has great appeal but has to be assessed in the context of the fundamental change to planning that I am developing and as an option within a changed planning system. I will keep the issue under ongoing review in light of the impact of the range of reforms I will be introducing to the planning system.

Illegal Land Filling

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of the Environment whether the illegal land filling associated with the concrete production yard at 91 Glenshane Road, Derry, which slipped into the River Faughan, a Special Area of Conservation, in November 2011, is a breach of the Habitats Directive, given that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has acknowledged that a pollution incident has occurred and that there is a high probability of pollution in the future.

(AQW 12845/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The settlement lagoons at the W.J. Chambers site were in place prior to designation of the River Faughan and Tributaries Special Area of Conservation and its prior designation as an Area of Special Scientific Interest. As the lagoons were in operation before designation of the River and as no permission was granted by any 'competent authority' under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1995, a breach of the Habitats Directive has not occurred in relation to the referred works.

The Department has, however, investigated a number of alleged pollution incidents at this site and is working to resolve the matter in order to fully protect this important river.

Pre-1960 Vehicles: MOT Tests

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the decision of the Department of Transport to remove the need for pre-1960 vehicles to undergo an annual MOT test from 18 November 2012, what steps are being taken to bring Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the United Kingdom by providing a similar exemption for classic and historic vehicles.

(AQW 12849/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has consulted on possible exemption of certain categories of historic vehicles from MOT testing and the Environment Committee at its meeting on 22 March 2012 considered the synopsis of responses to the Department's consultation. The responses indicated that there is broad support for exemption of pre-1960 vehicles from periodic testing.

The Committee was content with the Department's proposed way forward, which is to develop policy on the basis of the consultation responses that would make use of the exemption in Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC concerning the periodic testing of pre-1960 vehicles. The Department is progressing its detailed consideration of the appropriate way forward to ensure that the requirements of the Directive are met in the detail of the policy.

Illegal Land Filling

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Environmental Liability Directive, whether his Department is liable for the environmental damage caused to the River Faughan, a Special Area of Conservation, as a result of illegal land filling, and for any future damage, given that it has not taken enforcement action against the unauthorised development at 91 Glenshane Road, Derry.

(AQW 12855/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has a range of enforcement options open to it in dealing with situations like this. In this particular case I am aware that the problem is the risk posed by settlement lagoons associated with a concrete plant which have the potential to overflow or leak into the River Faughan with attendant negative consequences for the environment.

My officials are considering the appropriate route to resolving this situation and if enforcement action is appropriate it will be carried out. In accordance with the 'polluter pays' principle the Department would regard liability in relation to environmental offending of any kind to rest with the operator of the site whose activities cause damage.

Illegal Land Filling

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the recorded pollution incident at 91 Glenshane Road, Derry, what action his Department is taking to ensure that it is complying fully with the Habitats Directive, given that illegal landfill slipped into the River Faughan, a Special Area of Conservation, in November 2011, and that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency acknowledges that there is a high probability of further land slippage.

(AQW 12856/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Following a report of a pollution incident on the River Faughan, enforcement officers from NIEA investigated the River adjacent to 91 Glenshane Road. There was no visible pollution problem in the River at the time and therefore no enforcement action could be taken, however an advisory letter to W.J. Chambers was issued directing them to take action to ensure there are no further slippages from their site to the River Faughan and Tributaries SAC.

W.J. Chambers have recently submitted a planning application for relocation of the lagoons to a site further from the River. This application is currently under consideration by the Department and will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

I have instructed officials to provide an enforcement/monitoring update to me on this case at the beginning of every month.

Consultation on the Creation of National Parks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of responses to the consultation on the creation of National Parks, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 12870/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The following table details the responses received on taking forward National Park enabling legislation, broken down by parliamentary constituency:

Constituency	Number of responses
North Down	2
Strangford	1
Lagan Valley	3
North Antrim	2
South Antrim	3
East Antrim	2
Upper Bann	0
East Londonderry	2
Belfast North	6
Belfast East	5
Belfast West	0
Belfast South	9
Foyle	0

Constituency	Number of responses
South Down	181
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	3
Mid Ulster	0
West Tyrone	1
Newry & Armagh	0
Total	220

There is insufficient information to identify the constituency of 12 respondents, and a further six responses came from outside Northern Ireland.

Of the 181 responses from the South Down constituency, 164 were identical letters from private individuals objecting to the establishment of a national park.

The three South Antrim responses were identical letters from private individuals supporting a national park.

Exemption of Pre-1960 Classic and Historic Vehicles from MOT Testing

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the potential exemption of pre-1960 classic and historic vehicles from MOT testing.

(AQW 12917/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has consulted on possible exemption of certain categories of historic vehicles from MOT testing and the Environment Committee at its meeting on 22 March 2012 considered the synopsis of responses to the Department's consultation. The responses indicated that there is broad support for exemption of pre-1960 vehicles from periodic testing.

The Committee was content with the Department's proposed way forward, which is to develop policy on the basis of the consultation responses that would make use of the exemption in Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC concerning the periodic testing of pre-1960 vehicles. The Department is progressing its detailed consideration of the appropriate way forward to ensure that the requirements of the Directive are met in the detail of the policy.

Japanese Knotweed

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the protocols for dealing with Japanese knotweed on (i) public; and (ii) private property.

(AQW 12934/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It is widely recognised that invasive alien species, such as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), are the second biggest threat to biodiversity loss worldwide.

The Wildlife Order (NI) 1985 (as amended) Article 15 makes it an offence for any person to plant or otherwise cause Japanese knotweed to grow in the wild. This legislation does not, however, give the Department the power to enforce a landowner to undertake control. Where the growth occurs on either public or private land it is the decision and responsibility of the landowner or manager to undertake control.

The protocols for controlling Japanese knotweed can be variable depending on the site's intended end use, the size and location of the growth and the herbicide selected for use.

For example, where a site has a pressing development requirement, typically more expensive short term solutions, such as deep excavation and deep burial, would be used. For other sites, which do not have such an urgent development requirement, control is typically achieved through the repeated use of a systemic herbicide over a number of years. The location of the growth, such as growth near

water or other mature vegetation, will determine which herbicide can be used and the optimum time of application.

To assist both public and private landowners to undertake control officials in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) have developed a range of best practice management guidance documents which outline the range of control options available for Japanese knotweed. These documents are available online on the Invasive Species Ireland website and the DOE website.

In addition officials in NIEA have provided training on identification and management of Japanese knotweed to District Council staff across Northern Ireland.

Funding Allocated to the National Trust

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the level of funding his Department, and its arm's-length bodies, have allocated to the National Trust, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12946/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below details the funding provided by the Department to the National Trust for the years 2007-08 to 2011-12. No funding was provided by the Department's arm's-length bodies.

£000s

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Natural Heritage Grant	516	676	234	69	107
Listed Building Grant	290	91	128	10	6
Funding for Management of NIEA Nature Reserves	16	16	16	16	16
Management Agreements	62	114	76	10	43
Challenge Fund Grant	0	0	0	0	34
Total	884	897	454	105	206

You will note that funding has decreased dramatically since 2007-08 and 2008-09. This is primarily due to the fact that the Natural Heritage Grant expenditure for 2008-09 contains a one off grant payment of £450k for land acquisition at Runkerry, Giant's Causeway and the 2007-08 expenditure contains a one off grant payment of £250k for land acquisition at Divis. In addition the Listed Building Grant expenditure for 2007-08 contains expenditure of £138k associated with Florencecourt. Also, offers relating to some larger projects covering 3 years ceased at the beginning of 2009-10.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Servants: Relocation Expenses

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) what relocation expenses are available to civil servants who have to relocate or are placed on secondment, within Northern Ireland or elsewhere; (ii) how much can be claimed in expenses; (iii) what the expenses cover; (iv) how many civil servants have claimed expenses when (a) relocating; or (b) on secondment, in each of the last five years; (v) the total cost of relocation expenses in each of the last five years; and (vi) to provide a breakdown of the total expenses, including travel, accommodation and moving costs.

(AQW 10289/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Details of the allowances available to civil servants who are relocated or on secondment including how much can be claimed and what the allowances cover can be found in Section 9 of the NICS HR Handbook, which can be accessed on the

website of the Department of Finance and Personnel as follows: <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/publications-foi/publications-browse/publication-scheme-our-policies-and-procedures/recruiting-and-employing-staff/publication-scheme-hr-policies.htm>. The specific policies are:

9.02 Official Travel

9.03 Concessionary Travel

9.04 General Guidance on Overseas Postings

9.05 Introduction to Overseas Pay and Allowances

9.06 Administrative Arrangements for Overseas Post

9.07 Other Allowances and Grants for Overseas Posts

9.08 Medical Arrangements at Overseas Post

9.09 Overseas Subsistence Allowances

9.10 Overseas Posting and Travel

9.11 Cost of Living Addition for Overseas Postings

9.12 Financial Liabilities of Staff who Leave Post Early

9.13 Subsistence Allowances

9.14 General Removal Expenses

9.15 Refunds of, and Assistance with, Expenditure on Removal

9.16 Assistance with the Cost of Setting up New Home

9.17 Travelling, Subsistence and Lodging Allowance for Removals

The number and cost of civil servants claiming expenses is outlined in the tables below. Information on the types of expenses requested is held across a number of different accounting systems and has proved difficult for some Departments to extract. The data provided is the most reliable information that can be extracted however a number of Departments were unable to supply the specific figures requested.

The number of civil servants who have claimed relocation expenses is as follows:

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
524	1094	1384	1199	1103

There are an additional 223 staff from DOE who have claimed relocation expenses from the period of 2008-2012. This was unable to be broken down further.

The number of civil servants who have claimed expenses on secondment is as follows:

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
10	14	18	25	19

There are an additional 31 staff from DOE who have claimed expenses on secondment from the period of 2008-2012. This was unable to be broken down further.

The total cost of relocation and secondment expenses is as follows:

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
£646,262.82	£704,923.10*	£1,631,415.93	£1,238,552.66	£1,044,888.65

* This includes 7,500 Euro at a conversion rate in May 2008 of 0.81

The breakdown of expenses claimed by category is as follows:

Expense	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Travel	£561,610.89	£624,566.93	£1,570,280.95	£1,187,655.35	£955,061.50
Accommodation	£35,197.88	£32,496.27	£23,998.53	£4,524.41	£20,801.47
Moving Costs	£32,517.80	£7,417.99	£1,987.45	£9,521.00	£17,429.68

The breakdown of the total expenses for a number of Departments could not be broken down into categories. For this reason, the overall totals will differ.

Advertising of Civil Service Jobs

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he will consider extending the advertising of civil service jobs, including jobs in Central Procurement Directorate, and notices of departmental consultation to weekly newspapers that are distributed outside Greater Belfast.

(AQW 12269/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In December 2011 the Northern Ireland Executive decided to introduce tight controls on Departments' advertising expenditure, open classified advertising up to competition and change the legislation to allow greater use of online and other media for classified advertising. Departments are responsible for deciding their requirements for classified advertising.

The NICS uses a range of media to market recruitment opportunities to ensure effective communication and value for money. This may include advertising job opportunities in weekly local newspapers where it is appropriate.

The Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) electronic tendering system, 'eSourcingNI' advertises current tender opportunities and facilitates the issue and receipt of tender documentation and all communications associated with the tender process through its website. CPD places a monthly advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Newsletter to advise suppliers that all tendering opportunities for works, supplies and services can be viewed on the CPD website at www.dfpni.gov.uk/cpd. For highly specialised procurements CPD may occasionally advertise opportunities through other specific trade or professional publications, as appropriate. There are no plans to extend its tender advertising strategy to include weekly local newspapers.

There is no statutory requirement for Departments to advertise departmental consultations. In placing advertisements Departments consider effective communication and value for money and this may include advertising consultations in weekly newspapers, if that is appropriate.

Increase in Rates in Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how his Department plans to offset the likely increase in rates in Fermanagh as a result of the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 12800/11-15)

Mr Wilson: This issue has already been brought to my attention and I am all too aware of the concerns of ratepayers in Fermanagh, indeed I have written to the Environment Minister on the matter.

The Department of the Environment has the lead policy responsibility for the Review of Public Administration and that Department is already setting up the structures to address the consequences of this major change.

My Department (DFP) has responsibility for the rating system.

There are two points I would like to make about rates and the concerns around convergence. First of all, whilst, on the face of it, the impact of joining up some councils might lead to rate increases, these would not be of the scale of 20% that has been suggested for Fermanagh in the media.

This is because over half of a rate bill comprises the regional rate and this is set by the Executive for the whole of NI. The rest is District rate and this is where the disparity lies. As a result, rate bills would not go up by anything like 20% in Fermanagh.

Secondly, and most importantly, the Executive and local government will be examining transitional measures to help mitigate the impact of increases.

The figures that have been quoted in relation to Fermanagh are based on combining the different rates and then dividing by the number of old councils in the new areas.

The new councils will have a different cost base (presumably a more efficient one) which will also be a factor in setting new rates, rather than simply adding and dividing

These issues and others are presently being considered by the Finance Working Group, set up to consider these issues.

Increase in Rates in Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how his Department intends to ensure that an increase in rates in Fermanagh will not increase levels of poverty in the county.

(AQW 12801/11-15)

Mr Wilson: This issue has already been brought to my attention and I am all too aware of the concerns of ratepayers in Fermanagh, indeed I have written to the Environment Minister on the matter.

The Department of the Environment has the lead policy responsibility for the Review of Public Administration and that Department is already setting up the structures to address the consequences of this major change.

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These issues and others are presently being considered by the Finance Working Group, set up to consider these issues.

Cross-Border Provision of Education

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 11281/11-15, why in relation to cross-border provision of education, no funding is provided or sought from the respective Education Departments; and what is the resulting cost of providing education to over 400 Republic of Ireland pupils.

(AQW 12848/11-15)

Mr Wilson: This is a matter for the Minister for Education. Lone Pensioner Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) how many pensioners, in the North Down, area have benefited from the Lone Pensioner Allowance, in each of the last three years; and (ii) the total value of the savings made by pensioners.

(AQW 12873/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Land & Property Services records information by local government district and not parliamentary constituency. The number of pensioners in the North Down and Ards Borough Council Areas, (i) who have benefited from the Lone Pensioner Allowance, in each of the last three years; and (ii) the total value of the savings made by pensioners are given in the tables overleaf.

These figures do not include awards of the allowance made by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA

Year	Number who Benefited from LPA Award	Amount
2009/10	1,726	£341,095
2010/11	1,802	£357,624
2011/12	1,880	£387,798

ARDS BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA

Year	Number who Benefited from LPA Award	Amount
2009/10	1,072	£192,666
2010/11	1,137	£204,041
2011/12	1,213	£222,595

For future reference, LPS publishes up-to-date statistics on a variety of benefits, including Lone Pensioner Allowance awards, on its Agency website – Reference ‘Latest News’ section at www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps

Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme, whether there is a conflict of interest in an individual being appointed to the Utility Regulator Board as well as holding a Director position at Carillion Energy Services.

(AQW 12920/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Given its role as the economic regulator for energy and water, it is essential that individuals appointed to the board of the Utility Regulator have appropriate skills, experience, consumer perspective and knowledge of the industries which the organisation regulates. It is not therefore unusual that the board contains individuals that work, or have worked, in the energy and/or water industries.

The Utility Regulator has processes in place to identify and manage any potential conflicts of interest. In relation to the Utility Regulator Board member in question, he registered an interest in the Northern

Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) following his appointment to the Board. His interest was also declared at all meetings where there was any NISEP related discussion that could have led to any decision or change to the programme, and he absented himself from any such discussions. In these circumstances, no conflict of interest could have arisen.

Liquidity and Funding for New Bank Lending

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action his Department intends to take with Treasury following the announcement that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England will take action on liquidity and funding for new bank lending, which will include measures to ensure increased lending to business by banks.

(AQW 12970/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Chancellor and the Governor of the Bank of England announced that they were working together on a “funding for lending” scheme that would provide funding to banks, at rates below current market rates, linked to the performance of banks in sustaining or expanding their lending. They said they hoped it could be in place “within a few weeks” but I have yet to see further details. As Finance Minister I clearly welcome any initiatives by the Government that will help stimulate bank lending and improve access to finance. However, I have been concerned for some time now that our unique banking structure (where three out of our four main banks are foreign owned) has limited our ability to benefit from previous national initiatives.

Northern Ireland should therefore have the same opportunities as other regions around the UK and I will be asking Mark Hoban, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, to ensure that this is the case when I meet him at the beginning of July.

Comprehensive Spending Review

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what further proposals, for raising finance or creating additional efficiencies, he intends to bring in advance of the Assembly before the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

(AQW 12989/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Executive’s 2010 Budget covered a 4 year period and included a wide range of revenue raising and efficiency measures. The Executive’s main priority in this respect now is to ensure that these measures are delivered within this Budget period. The Ministerial Budget Review Group also continues to monitor delivery of these measures and consider on an ongoing basis any further initiatives that may be introduced.

Any changes to the existing revenue raising and efficiency plans are reflected in my monitoring round Statements and announced in the Assembly. For example, as part of my 2012-13 June Monitoring Statement to the Assembly, I recently announced a £30 million “Invest to Save” Scheme which will reduce costs in future years.

UK-Wide Comprehensive Spending Review

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the potential outcome from the next UK-wide Comprehensive Spending Review, given the ongoing stagnation of the UK economy overall.

(AQW 12990/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The UK Government has not revised its economic forecasts since the Chancellor’s Budget in March 2012, when the latest Office of Budget Responsibility forecasts were published.

At that time the forecast was that Total Managed Expenditure (TME) would fall in real terms across the forecast period (2011-12 to 2016-17). From 2014-15 onwards, the forecasts indicate that capital spending will be held constant in real terms. As a result, the real terms reduction in current spending is expected to be higher than experienced over the Spending Review 2010 period. Resource AME

is projected to grow in real terms over the next Spending Review period. As a result, under current forecasts, Resource DEL is projected to bear the full impact of the real terms reduction in TME.

However, these forecasts are based on the overall UK position. The settlement for Northern Ireland will be dependent upon the Barnett consequential arisings from changes in the budgets of Whitehall departments. Therefore, any decisions to protect particular spending areas in England will have an impact on the overall outcome for Northern Ireland.

Aggregates Levy

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps he is taking to prevent the avoidance of the Aggregates Levy through declarations that quarry products produced in Northern Ireland originated in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 12997/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As I am sure you are aware, taxation is a Reserved Matter for Treasury to determine and one over which the Executive has no control. This would include all undertakings to address tax avoidance/ evasion. However, my officials and I have discussed the issue in your question with Treasury Officials on a number of occasions to ensure all measures are taken to prevent inaccurate declarations.

HMRC have indicated that their major tax Compliance and Enforcement Programme, made up of over 40 individual projects, delivered £4.32 billion of additional tax yield between 2006 and 2011. It is estimated this programme will generate an additional £8.87 billion of yield between 2011-12 and 2014-15.

Rating of Vacant Properties

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an estimate of the level of rates revenue that will be raised by the rating of vacant (i) domestic properties; and (ii) non-domestic properties.

(AQW 13006/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The level of gross rates revenue estimated to be raised during the 2012-13 financial year by the rating of vacant domestic and non-domestic properties, based on 30th April 2012 assessments is £29 million and £68.3 million respectively. Following the implementation of Rating of Empty Homes last year, vacant domestic properties now attract 100% rating liability, with the exception of a number of prescribed exclusions. Non-domestic vacant properties attract 50% rating liability, with the exception of an initial 3 month free period, and application based exclusions.

Individuals who are Registered as Disabled and in Full-Time Education or Employment

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of working-age individuals, registered as disabled, who are in (i) full-time education; and (ii) employment.

(AQW 13034/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is not possible to detail the number of working-age individuals who are registered as disabled in the categories requested. However, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) provides information on those individuals who identify themselves as having a current long-term disability.

For the period January – March 2012, there were 5,000 working-age individuals who had a current long-term disability and who were in full-time education, and 79,000 working-age individuals who had a current long-term disability who were in employment, as estimated by the Labour Force Survey.

Please note as the LFS is a sample survey there is an associated degree of sampling error around the estimates provided. They are as follows:

- full-time education (+/- 3,000) and
- in employment (+/- 11,000).
- Working-age is defined as all those aged 16 - 64

Deaths Caused by Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of deaths caused by Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in each of the last three years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 13083/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The attached table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland between 2009 and 2011^P, where 'Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease'¹ was mentioned on the death certificate.

¹ International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code A.81.0

^P 2011 data is provisional until publication of the Annual Report of the Registrar General

TABLE: NUMBER OF REGISTERED DEATHS DUE TO 'CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE', 2009-2011P

Health & Social Care Trust	Registration Year		
	2009	2010	2011P
Belfast	-	-	1
Northern	-	1	-
South Eastern	1	1	-
Southern	1	-	1
Western	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	2	2	2

Black and Minority Ethnic Network 'BME Link'

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the Black and Minority Ethnic Network 'BME Link' set up by the Department of Justice, what consideration he has given to introducing a similar network within his Department.

(AQW 13095/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are no current plans to introduce a BME network within my Department.

There is already a network of Equality contacts throughout the Department who promulgate the Equality Agenda and who are available to discuss issues of concern with any member of staff.

Peace III Projects Funded Through the Special EU Programmes Body

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the proportion of cross-community engagement that is required by Peace III projects funded through the Special EU Programmes Body, under measures 1 and 2; (ii) if it is determined on a case by case basis, what is the average cross-community engagement required to be undertaken by the projects; and (iii) whether there is a provision for exceptional circumstances where cross-community engagement is not required.

(AQW 13101/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Projects funded under the PEACE III Programme are generally expected to be cross community in nature and to promote reconciliation. While projects are generally required to demonstrate that they are cross community, there is no requirement that they try to quantify their level of cross community engagement.

Single identity projects are eligible where there is a rationale (typically that the project is a step towards cross community engagement). All projects, including single identity projects, are required to demonstrate how they will address sectarian and / or racist behaviour to enable communities to work more effectively together and achieve outcomes in terms of good relations and understanding.

Civil Service Pay Scales

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what percentage of staff at Executive Officer II grade in the Civil Service receive a lower salary than staff at Administrative Officer grade.

(AQW 13126/11-15)

Mr Wilson: 46% of staff in the Executive Officer II grade are paid less than the highest paid staff in the Administrative Officer grade.

Civil Service Staff

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether any Civil Service staff are paid less than the staff they manage.

(AQW 13127/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are Civil Service staff who are paid less than the staff they manage due to overlap between some pay scales. I am however currently considering proposals which will look to address this issue.

Civil Servants Salaries

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when Civil Servants who earn less than £21,000 per annum will receive their annual salary uplift of £250.

(AQW 13138/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There is no automatic entitlement for Civil Servants who earn less than £21,000 per annum to receive an annual salary uplift of £250 which formed part of the 2010/11 pay awards. I am currently considering proposals related to pay as part of the pay and grading review.

Civil Service Pay Scales

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) what percentage of Civil Service staff at Executive Officer II grade are paid less per annum than the highest paid staff at Administrative Officer grade; and (ii) to detail the reasons why.

(AQW 13157/11-15)

Mr Wilson: 46% of staff in the Executive Officer II grade are paid less than the highest paid staff in the Administrative Officer grade. This is caused by overlapping payscales at those grades.

Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Homes Schemes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, given that funding for the Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Homes Schemes was originally reallocated to the Green New Deal, to detail (i) to where the funding has been reallocated; and (ii) whether he intends to reopen the schemes.

(AQW 13161/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The funding realised will provide funding towards the Green New Deal programme.

As determined by the business case, the option selected for the Green New Deal programme is the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Boiler Replacement Scheme, which is scheduled to run for the next three years.

The fine detail of the funding transfer is still being looked at by my Department.

I have no intention to reopen either the Energy Efficiency or the Low Carbon Homes Schemes.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Paediatric Physiotherapists

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 12202/11-15, to detail the number of (i) Band 6; and (ii) Band 7 paediatric physiotherapists, in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 12889/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Information on the number of Band 6 and Band 7 Paediatric Physiotherapists employed within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care is provided by Trust in the table below.

Band 6 and Band 7 Paediatric Physiotherapists employed within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care by Trust as at June 2012

HSC Trust	Band 6 Paediatric Physiotherapists		Band 7 Paediatric Physiotherapists	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	27	18.73	15	10.15
Northern	8	5.30	16	10.98
South Eastern	6	4.62	5	2.80
Southern	1	0.80	15	10.37
Western	7	5.78	1	1.00

Source: Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 1 WTE = Whole-time equivalent.
- 2 In the Belfast Trust, one (0.50 WTE) Band 6 post has been included although the postholder is currently on secondment as the hours are covered by other staff.
- 3 In the Northern Trust, one (0.42 WTE) Band 7 post is vacant.
- 4 A full job evaluation of a number of Paediatric Physiotherapy posts within the Western Trust is ongoing.
- 5 The above staffing information has not been validated by the DHSSPS.

Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the treatment available for patients with postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome.

(AQW 12944/11-15)

Mr Poots: Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) is an abnormal increase in heart rate on becoming upright. There are many causes, and in some cases no cause is found.

The main aim of treatment is to maintain blood supply to the heart and brain.

Treatment can include stopping medication and avoiding heat and alcohol that may be aggravating the condition. Self help treatments include improving fitness to help pump blood round the body, avoiding prolonged standing and monitoring fluid and salt intake.

Medication may also be used to alter blood volume, blood vessel dilatation and heart rate, although few scientific studies have been performed to evaluate which treatment is best for which patient.

No single treatment has been found to be effective for all sufferers. It is for clinicians working with the patient to determine the most appropriate treatment.

Recruitment of a Northern Ireland Care Advisor for Muscular Dystrophy

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the recruitment of a Northern Ireland Care Advisor for Muscular Dystrophy by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. **(AQW 12947/11-15)**

Mr Poots: This post, which was funded by the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign until the end of June 2010, was transferred into the staffing complement of the Belfast HSC Trust in February 2011. Unfortunately, the post holder left the position at short notice in November 2011 after an acute serious illness.

Following discussion with the clinicians involved with this service, the Belfast Trust decided that this post should be a Neuromuscular Nurse Specialist Post. This new post, which will cover both adults and children, will have a greater clinical focus with a nurse led service that has the potential to review patients in their own home as well as in a hospital environment.

The new post was advertised on 26 June 2012 and the Trust anticipates that, depending on applications, the post will be filled by the beginning of October 2012.

Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 5978/11-15, for an update on when the Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy will be published. **(AQW 12968/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The revised guidance is currently under consideration. I am unable to provide a date for publication at this time.

Residents of Nursing and Residential Homes

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total financial support given to residents of nursing and residential homes, in each of the last three years. **(AQW 12979/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The total cost to my Department of providing statutory and independent sector nursing home and residential accommodation for adults, children and the elderly (net of client contributions) is summarised in the following table. It covers the Family and Child Care, Elderly Care, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Physical and Sensory Disability and Primary Health and Adult Community programmes of care.

2010/11 £m	2009/10 £m	2008/09 £m
£352	£346	£340

3fivetwo Healthcare

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of (i) the amount of money that is paid to external contractors by his Department and its arm's-length bodies; and (ii) the value for money of 3fivetwo Healthcare. **(AQW 13009/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Supplementing healthcare capacity through the use of the external contractors from the independent sector is typically used on a time-limited basis to assist in delivering improvements in waiting times for access to elective care services. Contracts for the procurement of services from the independent sector are secured through a competitive tendering process aimed at ensuring best value for money.

The Health and Social Care Board negotiates and manages contracts with the Independent Sector, including 3fivetwo Healthcare, on behalf of the HSC Trusts. These contracts, which provide for pre-

contract quality assurance checks and post-contract performance review, require external providers to deliver minimum quality outcomes.

3fivetwo Healthcare

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the amount of money being paid to 3fivetwo Healthcare will increase or decrease in each of the next three years.

(AQW 13010/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC seeks additional capacity from independent sector providers on a time-limited basis to assist in delivering improvements in waiting times for access to elective care services. Contracts for the procurement of services from the independent sector are secured through a competitive tendering process aimed at ensuring best value for money.

It is not possible to predict how much additional service capacity will be required from the independent sector in each of the next three years or the outcome of any competitive tendering exercises/contract awards.

In this context, it is not possible to state whether the amount of money paid to 3fivetwo Healthcare will increase or decrease in each of the next three years.

Health Service Constitution

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce a Health Service constitution, as exists in Great Britain.

(AQW 13037/11-15)

Mr Poots: As a Devolved Administration we have no plans to introduce a Health Service Constitution in Northern Ireland.

Parity of Access to Cancer Drugs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken to provide parity of access to cancer drugs for patients similar to arrangements in the rest of the United Kingdom.

(AQW 13038/11-15)

Mr Poots: In Northern Ireland approximately £100m is spent per annum on specialist medicines in hospitals of which the health services spends approximately £23.2 million recurrently on cancer medicines. The Health and Social Care Board has invested an additional £2m in 2012/13 to expand the range of cancer drugs available here.

I am aware that a Cancer Drugs Fund was established in England in 2011. However, I understand that this does not mean that all cancer drugs are uniformly available for patients. Access is determined by local Strategic Health Authorities who set local criteria.

Where there is evidence of effectiveness, access to cancer drugs and other specialist medicines is important for the population of Northern Ireland. I am determined to explore every available avenue open to me to deliver increased access to specialist medicines and other interventions, including those for cancer.

Microbiological Standards

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 8805/11-15, given that the independent review has been published, to detail the microbiological standards for (i) water; and (ii) fixtures and fittings in each hospital's neonatal unit (a) prior to the pseudomonas outbreak; and (b) subsequent to the pseudomonas outbreak.

(AQW 13039/11-15)

Mr Poots: The acceptable levels of microbiological contamination for water in each hospital neonatal unit prior to and subsequent to the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak are contained in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) for water intended for domestic purposes such as drinking, washing or cooking and the Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice L8 together with Health Technical Memorandum 04-01 in respect to legionella.

Prior to the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak, there were no established national acceptable levels of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in water sources in neonatal units. Subsequent to the outbreak, local interim standards were developed together with experts in this field and these have now been developed into national standards. These standards are contained in DHSSPS circular HSS (MD) 16/2012 issued on 30th April 2012.

For environmental surfaces such as fixtures and fittings in neonatal units, prior to and subsequent to the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak, qualitative sampling of surfaces would indicate either the presence or absence of a pathogen rather than an acceptable level of microbiological contamination.

Water Microbiological Testing Regime

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 8803/11-15, given that the independent review has been published, to detail the bacteria which the environmental microbiological testing regime routinely tested for in each hospital's neonatal unit (i) prior to the *pseudomonas* outbreak; and (ii) subsequent to the *pseudomonas* outbreak.

(AQW 13041/11-15)

Mr Poots: Prior to and subsequent to the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak, each HSC Trust tests water sources in neonatal units for legionella in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice L8 and Health Technical Memorandum 04-01.

Subsequent to the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak, HSC Trust test water sources in neonatal units for *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in accordance with the guidance contained in DHSSPS circular HSS (MD) 16/2012 issued on 30th April 2012.

Prior to and subsequent to the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak, environmental microbiological testing in neonatal units if undertaken would involve qualitative sampling of surfaces to indicate either the presence or absence of particular pathogens in order to identify an environmental source of infection/contamination or should there be an increase in incidents of infection. Further guidance to HSC Trusts in undertaking appropriate risk assessment to identify actions to mitigate risks and ensure appropriate sampling, monitoring and clinical surveillance arrangements are being implemented and adhered to in augmented care units including neonatal units caring for babies at levels 1, 2 and 3 is contained in DHSSPS circular HSS (MD) 16/2012 issued on 30th April 2012.

Water Microbiological Testing Regime

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 8807/11-15, given that the independent review has been published, to detail how many microbiological results for (i) water testing; and (ii) environmental swabs in each hospital's neonatal unit were (a) a matter of concern; or (b) failed against prescribed standards, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 13051/11-15)

Mr Poots: The answer to this question is outlined in the attached table.

HSC Trust	(1) water testing ¹		(ii) environmental swabs ⁴	
	(a) matter of concern ²	(b) failed ³	(a) matter of concern	(a) failed
South Eastern	0	8	0	0
Southern	0	7	0	0

HSC Trust	(1) water testing ¹		(ii) environmental swabs ⁴	
	(a) matter of concern ²	(b) failed ³	(a) matter of concern	(a) failed
Belfast	0	6	0	0
Western	0	5	1	0
Northern	0	4	0	0

Notes:

- 1 Water testing for legionella in neonatal units in each of the last three years gave no matter for concern or failed acceptable microbiological standards in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice L8 and Health Technical Memorandum 04-01.
- 2 Prior to the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak, there were no established national acceptable levels of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in water sources in neonatal units that would have provided a guide to an appropriate level of concern.
- 3 Subsequent to the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak, DHSSPS guidance HSS(MD)4/2012 issued on 28th January 2012 established levels of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in pre and post flush water samples which would indicate that remedial action was required and the data provided relates to the number of taps tested in the Trust neonatal units in which the water sample test results proved positive. Although 30 taps were initially identified with high counts and are indicated as “failed” in the table for the purposes of this answer, HSC Trusts replaced 137 taps in total in the 7 neonatal units as a further precautionary measure. Once replaced, each tap was tested on a daily basis until 7 consecutive tests proved negative, moving to weekly testing for 4 weeks and then monthly testing (further guidance on this subsequent testing was provided in HSS (MD) 6/2012 issued on 9th February). This testing protocol has since been superseded by HSS(MD)16/2012. Given the scale of tap replacement, the testing regime has been extensive with pre and post flush samples required for both hot and cold tap supplies. HSC Trusts are currently
- 4 The data for the Western Trust indicates the single positive environmental sample taken from the tap at the neonatal unit following the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak. Testing environmental surfaces in neonatal units involves qualitative sampling of surfaces to indicate either the presence or absence of a pathogen rather than an acceptable level of microbiological contamination therefore detection of a pathogen may “give concern” rather be designated as “fail”, depending on the pathogen under consideration. The other four HSC Trusts have indicated that when environmental samples have been taken for *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* following the outbreak, they have returned negative results.

Water Filters to Protect Against Waterborne Micro-Organisms

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 11371/11-15, given that the independent review has been published, to detail (i) what consideration the Health and Social Care Trusts gave to the fitting of water filters to protect against waterborne micro-organisms (a) prior to; and (b) after the pseudomonas outbreak in December 2011; and (ii) if this action was not pursued, to detail the reasons why.

(AQW 13052/11-15)

Mr Poots: DHSSPS guidance in relation to *Pseudomonas* was provided to HSC Trusts in September 2010 (HSS(MD)34/2010) and December 2011 (HSS(MD)31/2011) which alerted Trusts to the importance of where contamination of taps exists in augmented care units, further precautions to protect the patient may be necessary, such as the installation of point of use filters.

During the incidents of *Pseudomonas* infection in neonatal units, further guidance was issued in January 2012 (HSS(MD) 4/2012 which included water testing protocols and recommended actions to take depending on results. Recommended actions include the use of point of use filters should testing suggest a systematic problem with water distribution systems and it was not possible to stop use of the outlet however point of use filters were not seen as a permanent solution.

Current guidance issued on 30th April 2012 (HSS (MD) 16/2012) includes the use of point of use filters however their use should primarily be regarded as a temporary measure until a permanent safe

engineering solution is developed, although it does acknowledge in some circumstances that the long term use of such filters may be required in some cases.

HSC Trusts have indicated that assessment of their precautions following the issue of HSS(MD)34/2010 and HSS(MD)31/2011 did not identify that the installation of point of use filters was necessary.

Subsequent to the outbreaks, the Belfast, Northern and Western Trusts procured filters in case of need but did not fit any and the South Eastern Trust fitted a number of filters for a short period as an interim measure prior to remedial work.

The Southern Trust however fitted filters across an extensive range of taps in their neonatal units prior to any testing and tap replacement as an additional safeguard to actions outlined in the interim regional guidance issued on 28th January 2012. The Trust continues to use a number of filters due to ongoing investigations of water distribution systems in other augmented care areas.

Death in Custody of a Prisoner

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the death in custody of a prisoner from a mixture of prescribed drugs and illegal substances, which it is believed he obtained by trading his prescription drugs, whether he will instruct prison pharmacists and medical staff to revert from the current practice of allowing most prisoners to self medicate and instead have medication dispensed per dose, and introduce checks to ensure that the medication has been taken.
(AQW 13059/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is responsible for the delivery of prison healthcare services. The Trust has no plans to alter the current approach of carrying out comprehensive risk assessments to determine whether prisoners are suitable to be in possession of medication. This is in line with national guidelines on pharmacy services for prisoners.

The SE HSC Trust is continuously reviewing its policies, procedures and guidelines in order to reflect patient need and to promote the delivery of evidence based care. Its "In-Possession Medication Policy" was reviewed in September 2011 and this revised policy was referenced in the Prison Ombudsman's report. The SE HSC Trust is also developing a "Medicines Management Strategy for Prison Healthcare" to ensure safe, effective and efficient use of medicines and to formulate and review policy on the prescribing, supply, storage and administration of medicines with prison healthcare.

There is no evidence base or current guidelines to recommend the practice of administering all medications on a 'supervised swallow' basis. This would be contrary to all recommendations made by a number of bodies in relation to medicines management within the prison environment including the Department of Health, Her Majesty's Prison Service, Royal College of General Practitioners, Offender Health and the Secure Environment Pharmacists Group.

Antrim Area Hospital: Bank and Agency Staff

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 12658/11-15, to provide the information, that is readily available, on the number of hours worked by bank and agency staff at the Antrim Area Hospital in each of the last three years.
(AQW 13060/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Health & Social Care Trust advised that it was not possible to provide information on the number of hours that bank and agency staff have worked at the Antrim Area Hospital in the last three years as this information is not readily available. It would require an extensive manual exercise to produce the information required which would incur disproportionate costs.

Defibrillators Available to Support Clubs

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many defibrillators are available to support clubs in the North Down area.
(AQW 13075/11-15)

Mr Poots: Any organisation or individual may purchase a defibrillator. There is no requirement to register the purchase, possession or location of a defibrillator. It is therefore not known how many defibrillators are available to support clubs in the North Down area.

A pilot programme to train people to use defibrillators, set up by my Department, has had the additional benefit of raising awareness, in some sporting organisations and District Councils, of the location and accessibility of defibrillators purchased by their organisation and also the need for maintenance of the defibrillator and maintaining the training of staff in their use.

Deaths Caused by Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many deaths caused by Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease to date were as a result of (i) the consumption of infected beef products; and (ii) transfusions of infected blood.

(AQW 13086/11-15)

Mr Poots: There have been 176 deaths in the United Kingdom from variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) since 1995. Three of these deaths were in Northern Ireland.

None of the three deaths in Northern Ireland was associated with blood transfusions. While there is good, although indirect, evidence that variant CJD originated from transmission of infection from Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy in cattle to humans via infectivity in food, the source of infection in three cases in Northern Ireland is not known.

Suicide Amongst the Traveller Community

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to reduce suicide amongst the traveller community, given that suicide rates are six times higher amongst travellers than the rest of the population, and eleven percent of traveller deaths are due to suicide.

(AQW 13092/11-15)

Mr Poots: The All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS 2010) states that males had a suicide rate which is 6.6 times that of men in the general population when measured over a twelve month period (2008). My Department estimates that this equated to 4 deaths in that year amongst the Traveller population in Northern Ireland.

In response to the study, and other evidence relating to the health needs of Travellers, the Public Health Agency facilitated the establishment of a regional Traveller Health and Wellbeing Forum in October 2010. Initiatives targeted at the Traveller community include; health improvement programmes; emotional health and wellbeing training; and parent and child support programmes. A wider review of service uptake by Travellers is due to commence in September 2012.

These initiatives are partly funded under the Protect Life strategy which contains actions to ensure support services are available for marginalised and disadvantaged groups such as Travellers.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether winter fuel payments will be made available next year to patients with cancer.

(AQW 13107/11-15)

Mr Poots: During winter 2011/12, DHSSPS was designated by OFMDFM under the NI Executive's Social Protection Fund legislation to make a one-off fuel payment to cancer patients who met separate eligibility criteria. The Social Protection Fund is the responsibility of OFMDFM.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail the criteria used to determine which patients with cancer are entitled to winter fuel payments; and (ii) whether they will consider widening the criteria in the future.

(AQW 13108/11-15)

Mr Poots: During winter 2011/12, DHSSPS was designated by OFMDFM under the NI Executive's Social Protection Fund legislation to make a one-off fuel payment to cancer patients who met separate eligibility criteria. The criteria for cancer patients were those who have received surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, or palliative care within six months prior to and including the qualifying period, and included those patients where a decision is made during the qualifying week to provide surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, or palliative care. The qualifying week was 12th to 18th December 2011. The scheme was a one-off payment for winter 2011/12 under the Social Protection Fund which is the responsibility of OFMDFM.

Abiraterone for the Treatment of Prostate Cancer

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) his Department's position on the use of Abiraterone for the treatment of prostate cancer as a way of prolonging life, relieving pain and other symptoms; and (ii) whether he intends to follow the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence recommendation, in England and Wales, that the drug should be made available via the Health Service.

(AQW 13109/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has formal links with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the NICE guidance on Abiraterone for the treatment of prostate cancer like all the Institute's Technology Appraisals will be reviewed locally for its applicability to Northern Ireland (NI). The local review does not challenge the robustness of the NICE guidance but rather its applicability in the legal and policy context of NI.

The guidance was published on Wednesday 27 June 2012 and my Department is currently completing its local review as described in circular HSC (SQSD) 04/11. Once a commissioning plan has been agreed with the HSC Board, it will represent my Department's formal policy position on implementation.

Nurses Employed on Temporary Contracts

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many nurses have been employed on temporary contracts in each Health and Social Care Trust area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 13116/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information below was provided by HSC Trusts and relates to qualified nursing staff band 5 and above who are on temporary contracts, over the last three years:

HSC Trust	April 09-March 10	April 10- March 11	April 11-March 12
Northern	64	72	94
Belfast	64	72	65
South Eastern	41	47	40
Southern	231	154	92
Western	251	204	232
NIAS	nil	nil	nil
Total	651	549	523

Temporary headcount figures above include staff on maternity leave, secondments, long term sickness and vacancies.

Multi-Agency Sexual Health Promotion Network

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 12486/11-15, (i) when the Sexual Health Improvement Network last met; and (ii) the date of the next meeting.

(AQW 13162/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Sexual Health Improvement Network last met on 17th April 2012. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 25th September 2012.

Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy Treatment Equipment

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 12842/11-15, to provide a breakdown by hospital for patients referred for Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy Treatment, for each year since 2009.

(AQW 13163/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Board that all patients referred to Great Britain for stereotactic body radiotherapy were referred by the Belfast HSC Trust.

Information on the hospitals in Great Britain where patients have been referred for stereotactic body radiotherapy, in each of the calendar years since 2009, is detailed in the table below:

Year	Hospital of Treatment						Total Referred
	Sheffield Teaching	Leeds	Queens	National Centre for Stereotactic Radio-surgery	Great Ormond Street	Birmingham Children's Hospital	
2009/10	10	1	0	3	7	0	21
2010/11	25	2	0	0	2	1	30
2011/12	24	31	1	0	0	0	56

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Public Contract Tenders for Construction

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of (i) his Department's elements criteria used to determine public contract tenders for construction; and (ii) whether the criteria, such as turnover thresholds, might prohibit small-to-medium sized local businesses from making applications,

(AQW 13166/11-15)

Mr Poots: A pre-qualification process is used in connection with all new construction contracts within the health estate in order to allow the client to select a limited number of firms (usually six firms) which are best suited to deliver the particular project in an efficient and effective manner.

This pre-qualification process has been developed by DFP's Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) as part of Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy (NIPPP).

When setting the criteria used for selection, there is a requirement on the part of Contracting Authorities (such as DHSSPS arm's length bodies) to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations (2006) as amended, NIPPP and best practice guidance.

The pre-qualification process assesses the firms' suitability to deliver the particular project using the following criteria: -

- General information as to the organisational structure and proposed administrative arrangements of consortia;
- Information as to economic and financial standing and compliance with EU/UK procurement legislation;
- Health and safety;
- Technical ability;

With respect to the information requested as to economic and financial standing, firms who wish to apply must meet the Constructionline work categories and financial notation required for a particular project. These criteria will be set to reflect the scope and nature of the works. (Constructionline is the UK's register of pre-qualified local and national construction and construction-related suppliers and its use in pre-qualification processes for public sector contracts in Northern Ireland is embedded in NIPPP).

With respect to the information requested as to technical ability, firms who wish to apply must either: -

- obtain registration on the DHSSPS Register of Contractors with facility and work categories that match the firms' experience for contracts of value below the EU threshold (£4,348,350.00) or;
- score sufficiently in project-specific selection criteria by demonstrating their suitability to deliver the particular project/previous experience/methodology for contracts of value above the EU threshold.

Accordingly, pre-qualification processes are open to any local small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which meet the project-specific requirements of each particular project.

In addition, CPD have published guidance assist SMEs in their knowledge and understanding of public sector procurement. (<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/pgn-02-12-sme-guide.pdf> http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd-policy-and-legislation/content_-_cpd_-_policy_-_procurement_guidance_notes/guidance-note-02-11/pgn-02-11-helping-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-access-public~revised-august-2011.pdf)

Cardiac Cath Laboratory at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made by his Department in relation to the provision of a cardiac cath laboratory at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald. **(AQW 13176/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board in conjunction with Trusts, is currently reviewing regional requirements for cardiac catheterisation services across Northern Ireland.

The South Eastern Trust has submitted a Strategic Outline Business Case to the HSC Board for an interim cardiac catheterisation service based at the Ulster Hospital. However this will not be progressed until the outcome of the HSC Board's review is known.

Health Service Bedsare for Drug and Alcohol Detoxification Services

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many beds in the Health Service are available for drug and alcohol detoxification services, broken down by constituency. **(AQW 13182/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The number of beds in the Health Service available for drug and alcohol detoxification services broken down by hospital at 1st June 2012, are given in the table below. The information requested is not available by constituency.

Hospital	Total number of available beds for drug and alcohol detoxification services at 1st June 2012
Downshire	14
Holywell	10
St Luke's*	10

* Beds in St.Luke's are open Monday – Friday only.

Patients with complex medical needs who require access to a range of hospital services or those requiring care and treatment for only acute detoxification will be admitted to acute inpatient medical beds.

Patients requiring care and treatment for mental health issues and substance misuse may be admitted to Mental Health Facilities.

Prescription Drugs

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what action he is taking to ensure that prescription drugs are not prescribed to known or convicted drug dealers; and (ii) what information sharing provisions exist between the Health Service and the PSNI to stop prescription drugs being sold on our streets.

(AQW 13184/11-15)

Mr Poots: The decision as to whether or not a patient should be prescribed medication is a purely clinical one made by the prescriber who has assessed their medical needs.

The Medicines Regulatory Group have agreed information sharing protocols with regulatory and enforcement agencies locally, nationally and internationally for the receipt and sharing of information regarding regulatory and enforcement matters as they relate to medicines.

Prescription Drugs Bought Online and Sold on the Streets

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to stem the flow of prescription drugs being bought online and sold on the streets.

(AQW 13185/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department, through its Medicines Regulatory Group (MRG), has a statutory responsibility to ensure compliance with national and international legislative requirements regarding sales of medicines. It works very closely with other regulatory agencies including the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the United Kingdom Border Agency and the Police Service of Northern Ireland to tackle the increase in the use of the internet to source unlicensed and illegal medicines from abroad.

We continue to undertake local, national and international collaborative enforcement and regulation work, an example of which was the seizure of 30,000 prescription only sleeping tablets at Belfast International Airport recently.

We also act to raise public awareness of the dangers of purchasing medicines from unregulated sources and recommending that patients obtain medicines from a legitimate source and will be conducting a further awareness campaign later this year.

Notably, we participate annually in Operation Pangea which specifically targets the on-line sales of illegal medicines destined for Northern Ireland and in 2011 this resulted in more than 12,000 illegal

websites being closed down in the UK and over one million doses of unlicensed medicinal products being destroyed.

Podiatry Treatment at the Shantallow Health Centre, Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why podiatry treatment is no longer being offered at the Shantallow Health Centre, Derry.

(AQW 13192/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Trust currently offers the following podiatry treatment clinics in Shantallow Health Centre:

- Every Monday, Thursday and Friday
- Every second Wednesday in the afternoon
- Week beginning 25th June, the Trust will offer an additional Tuesday morning session in Shantallow Health Centre

Foyle Pride Festival 2012 in Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the level of funding his Department has allocated to the Foyle Pride Festival 2012 in Derry; and (ii) if his Department has not allocated funds to the event, how much it is willing to provide towards the running costs of £15,000.

(AQW 13203/11-15)

Mr Poots: No funding has been allocated by my Department to the Foyle Pride Festival 2012 and no funding will be provided by my Department towards the running costs of £15,000.

Doctors: Industrial Action on 21 June

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether doctors who took industrial action on 21 June 2012 will receive pay for the period on strike.

(AQW 13206/11-15)

Mr Poots: The form of industrial action the British Medical Association (the Trade Union and Professional Association for doctors throughout the UK) agreed fell short of strike action and involved doctors reporting for duty but providing emergency and urgent care only to maintain patient safety with routine clinical care being postponed. This encompassed a greater range than purely emergency work and included any treatment that could not be safely postponed to another day. Emergency Departments and most inpatient work were delivered as normal and all urgent and red flag appointments to outpatient clinics were also unaffected.

Locally, the British Medical Association refused to discuss a regional arrangement regarding pay for those doctors employed by Health and Social Care organisations. It was made clear that doctors who took part in the industrial action should have no expectation of being paid. Health and Social Care organisations are currently collating information and making the necessary arrangements to ensure only appropriate amounts are paid.

Minor Injuries Unit at South Tyrone Hospital

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the rationale behind transferring staff from an increasingly busy Minor Injuries Unit at South Tyrone Hospital when a period of review is currently underway.

(AQW 13235/11-15)

Mr Poots: I gave an undertaking on 15 May 2012 that I would ask the Southern Health and Social Care Trust to defer implementing any change to the opening hours of the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) at South Tyrone Hospital until the Population Plans have been completed. I am advised by the Trust that there

has been no staff transfers out of the Minor Injuries Unit since that date. The Trust has also advised that there will be no change to the opening hours of the MIU until after the Local Commissioning Group completes its Population Plan.

Ambulance and Emergency Day Crew Staff in the Western Health and Social Care Trust

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of ambulance and emergency day crew staff in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 13262/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) has advised that the number of A&E ambulance staff in its Western Division, which is broadly coterminous with the Western Health and Social Care Trust area, is as follows.

WESTERN DIVISION A&E DAY SHIFT STAFF NUMBERS

Station	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Weekly Total
Altnagelvin	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	42
Limavady	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14
Strabane	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14
Castledearg	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14
Enniskillen	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	42
Omagh	8	8	6	8	8	8	6	52
Overall Total	26	26	24	26	26	26	24	178

Source: NIAS

New Enhanced Local Hospital in Omagh

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the commencement date for the construction of the new enhanced local hospital in Omagh; and (ii) the profile of services which will be delivered at the hospital.

(AQW 13264/11-15)

Mr Poots: Phase one of the business case for the new enhanced local hospital in Omagh has been approved and is expected to cost an estimated £80 million. Enabling works have already commenced at the site and construction of the main works for the new hospital is expected to begin in Summer 2013.

As advised in my response to your previous oral question (AQO 1466/11-1515), the facility will provide for the following services:

intermediate care ward and palliative care; urgent care and treatment centre; cardiac assessment; day surgery unit; imaging and diagnostics; outpatient services; clinical investigations; children's centre; women's health unit; renal services; allied health professionals (in a range of disciplines); GP practice accommodation; GP out of hours; a health and care centre and a range of support services such as medical records, pharmacy and pathology.

Road Traffic Accidents at The Gap on the Drumnakilly Road, Carrickmore, Co Tyrone

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of road traffic accidents that the Ambulance Service has been called to at a location known locally as 'The Gap' on the Drumnakilly Road, Carrickmore, Co Tyrone, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 13265/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of emergency responses made by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to road traffic collisions on the Drumnakilly Road, Carrickmore, in each of the last 3 years, is detailed in the table below:

Year	No. of Emergency Responses
2009/10	5
2010/11	4
2011/12	2

Source: Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS)

Haemophilia as a Result of Receiving Donated Blood

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for the Health Service's assessment of whether it is possible to contract haemophilia as a result of receiving donated blood. **(AQW 13268/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Haemophilia is a group of hereditary genetic disorders. It cannot be acquired. There exists a condition called 'acquired haemophilia', affecting one person per million, which has some similarities with congenital haemophilia but is a separate condition. It is not associated with donated blood.

Haemophilia as a Result of Receiving Donated Blood

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any individual has ever contracted haemophilia as a result of receiving donated blood. **(AQW 13269/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Haemophilia is a group of hereditary genetic disorders. It cannot be acquired. There exists a condition called 'acquired haemophilia', affecting one person per million, which has some similarities with congenital haemophilia but is a separate condition. It is not associated with donated blood.

Haemophilia as a Result of Receiving Donated Blood

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people who have contracted haemophilia as a result of receiving donated blood in each of the last ten years. **(AQW 13271/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Haemophilia is a group of hereditary genetic disorders. It cannot be acquired. There exists a condition called 'acquired haemophilia', affecting one person per million, which has some similarities with congenital haemophilia but is a separate condition. It is not associated with donated blood.

Department of Justice

Police Part -Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether all claims made to the Police Part -Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme have been paid; (ii) whether all funding has been awarded or whether there is an outstanding balance; (iii) what discussions he has had with the RUC GC Association Part Time Officers Welfare Group in relation to any outstanding balance; and (iv) whether all the relevant P60s have been issued.

(AQW 11854/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): All applications to the Gratuity Scheme received before the deadline have been processed, including the consideration of any appeals, and payments made.

Of the £20m budget set aside for the scheme over £19.6m was drawn down by the Scheme administrators for payment and the cost of administration.

Options in respect of the outstanding balance are under consideration within the Department. No discussion has yet taken place with external stakeholders. Any final view will be taken once the Department has confidence that all costs associated with the Scheme have been paid.

HMRC has advised that as applicants to the PTR Gratuity Scheme were not employees of the Scheme at the end of the Financial Year it would not be necessary to issue P60s.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Disciplinary Proceedings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many disciplinary proceedings have been conducted by the Northern Ireland Prison Service, in each year since 1995, in the absence of the formerly missing Code of Conduct and Discipline, or the signed version by, or on behalf of, the Secretary of State.

(AQW 12780/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible to provide details of the number of disciplinary proceedings conducted since 1995. This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

However, no disciplinary proceedings have ever been conducted in the absence of the current Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Furthermore, I would refer the member to my replies to AQW's 11188/11-15 and 12644/11-15 when I provided a copy of the current Code of Conduct and Discipline (COCD) and the redacted formal authorisation minute from the Secretary of State's Office.

Prison Governors' Association

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) to detail the role of the Prison Governors' Association (PGA) in cases where members of staff are recommended for dismissal in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Discipline; (ii) the number of cases, in the last five years, in which the PGA has had an input; and (iii) to provide a copy of the relevant legislation.

(AQW 12782/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PGA have no formal role in the decision making process when a member of staff is recommended for dismissal. However they may represent individual PGA members for whom a recommendation for dismissal has been made. During the last five years there have been no dismissal cases that have required input from the PGA.

There is no relevant legislation as the Code of Conduct and Discipline (COCD) governs disciplinary processes for operational staff in NIPS. I would also refer the member to the reply I provided to AQW 12648/11-15.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice who is responsible for hiring and dismissing Northern Ireland Prison Service staff; and whether any new statutes or measures, in relation to this, have been introduced since May 2010.

(AQW 12821/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is delegated authority from the Department of Justice to the Northern Ireland Prison Service to recruit all permanent and period-appointed staff below Senior Civil Service level through existing Northern Ireland Civil Service arrangement. In addition the delegated authority relates to discipline and inefficiency, including dismissal procedures.

Republican Separated Prisoners on Protest

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the 29 republican separated prisoners who are on protest, or their representatives, have given a commitment that they will end their protest when the new searching mechanisms, over which they are in dispute, are implemented.

(AQW 12860/11-15)

Mr Ford: Republican separated prisoners who are currently participating in protest action in Roe House have not given any commitment that they will end their protest if the new searching mechanisms are implemented.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the (i) number of Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) staff, in each prison, young offenders or youth justice facility, who are currently being investigated by NIPS or an outside agency; (ii) rank of each person under investigation; and (iii) number of staff under investigation who have been suspended whilst being investigated.

(AQW 12863/11-15)

Mr Ford: Three members of staff are currently being investigated under disciplinary procedures and are suspended from duty.

Whilst other investigations may be initiated by outside agencies, NIPS does not hold centralised records relating to these investigations unless the appropriate agency recommends disciplinary action.

Report into the Prisoner Assessment Unit Closure

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 12157/11-15, why the report into the closure of the Prisoner Assessment Unit was shown to the Criminal Justice Inspection prior to its official publication; and what other individuals or bodies were afforded this opportunity.

(AQW 12878/11-15)

Mr Ford: As stated in my answer to AQW/12157/11-15, a copy of the report of the investigation into the Prisoner Assessment Unit was shared with Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) for information purposes in relation to the ongoing CJINI thematic inspection into the management of life sentence prisoners. The report has not been shown to any other individuals or bodies outside of senior managers within the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Construction of the Desertcreat Training College

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice what plans there are to provide advice and information, for local contractors and suppliers, on the opportunities for contracts and sub-contracts for the construction of the Desertcreat Training College.

(AQW 12896/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Desertcreat Programme Team will provide advice and information on the opportunities for contracts for the construction of the Desertcreat Training College by publishing all procurement opportunities via the website www.desertcreatcollege.org. and its facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/desertcreatcollege> as well as the normal statutory channels, such as the ISNI portal on www.isni.gov.uk/contracts.

Any enquiring contractor or supplier can obtain up to date information on any aspect of the new college's development, by contacting the Programme Team on info@desertcreatcollege.org or through the website www.desertcreatcollege.org.

Case Involving Caroline Barnes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost of the case involving Caroline Barnes and her pit bull-terrier type dog, Lennox, broken down by (i) the Public Prosecution Service; (ii) the PSNI; (iii) expert witnesses; (iv) Legal Aid and expenses.

(AQW 12905/11-15)

Mr Ford: To date, a total of £4,572.47 for criminal legal aid (including VAT and disbursements) has been paid to solicitors and one counsel who represented the defendant in the Magistrates' Court and on appeal against conviction to the County Court. The disbursements paid (£2054.61) were in relation to fees for a veterinary expert.

Miss Barnes also had the benefit of civil legal aid to make an application to the Court of Appeal although the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has not received a claim for payment in relation to this application.

As this prosecution was taken forward by Belfast City Council there are no Public Prosecution Service or PSNI costs in relation to this case.

Karen Walsh: Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what steps have been taken to recoup from convicted murderer Karen Walsh a percentage of the Legal Aid that was paid.

(AQW 12913/11-15)

Mr Ford: I will be making new Rules, the Criminal Legal Aid (Recovery of Defence Costs Orders) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2012, to enable the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission to recover some or all of the costs of legal aid from convicted defendants in the Crown Court, where it appears that defendants have the means to pay for these costs. The Rules will be laid before the Summer recess and will come into force after the start of the new legal term in September.

This legislation will not apply retrospectively and cannot be used in the case of Karen Walsh.

Release of Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11674/11-15, whether the relevant suspended sentence was activated following the conviction in 2011.

(AQW 12955/11-15)

Mr Ford: Thomas Ward was convicted of common assault in February 2011 for an offence which took place in November 2009. The suspended sentence imposed for breaching his Sexual Offences Prevention Order in May 2010 was therefore not activated as the offence pre-dated the imposition of the suspended sentence in November 2010.

Cost of Transporting Defendants to Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) who requested that the defendants in cases (a) 12/039039; (b) 11/130871, 11/130870, 11/131371 and 12/019153; (c) 12/024907; and (d) 12/040581 be presented at Dungannon Magistrates' Court on 13 June 2012; (ii) the reasons for the requests; and (iii) what was the cost of transporting each defendant to court.

(AQW 12956/11-15)

Mr Ford: The decision to have a defendant produced in court or to appear via video link is a matter for the individual District Judge (Magistrates' Court).

The defendants in cases (a) and (b) had been remanded on bail to attend Dungannon Magistrates' Court on 13 June 2012. However both defendants subsequently had their bail revoked and were remanded in custody.

The defendant in case (c) was produced on the direction of the District Judge (Magistrates' Court).

The defendant in case (d) had been remanded on bail to attend court on 13 June but was subsequently imprisoned on a separate charge.

Defendants in custody are normally brought to court where bail issues or arrangements need to be considered by the court.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service incurred costs of £156.64 transporting all these defendants to and from court.

Police Community Safety Partnerships

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice which Police Community Safety Partnerships have had to re-advertise for members because of a lack of suitable applicants.

(AQW 12977/11-15)

Mr Ford: The process of appointing independent members to Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) and District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs) is a restricted function of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

However, the Board has confirmed that in the case of four Council areas – Castlereagh, Coleraine, Dungannon and South Tyrone, and North Down it was unable to complete the appointment process. In the case of Castlereagh Council area this was due to a lack of suitable applicants. In the case of the other Council areas the Policing Board came to the decision that it was not possible to ensure appointments were compatible with the Policing Board's statutory duty to ensure the PCSP is representative of the community in the Council area.

The Policing Board has now re-advertised for PCSP members in the four Council areas and hopes to make the final appointments in the coming weeks.

Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme in England and Wales

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 12208/11-15, when he will put this matter out for consultation.

(AQW 13091/11-15)

Mr Ford: I intend to consult as soon as possible after the summer recess.

2008 Inspection of HMP Magilligan by the Inspector of Prisons

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Justice whether the 2008 inspection of HMP Magilligan by the Inspector of Prisons resulted in the prison scoring higher than some private prisons with Grade 3 Ratings.

(AQW 13273/11-15)

Mr Ford: When carrying out the inspection in 2008, HM Inspector of Prisons assessed the prison against four benchmark tests of a healthy prison. These are Safety, Respect, Purposeful Activity and Resettlement.

I can confirm that Magilligan Prison attained a three (out of four) in all four areas. A three rating is defined as: The outcomes for prisoners are reasonably good against this test.

To attempt to compare two prisons on the basis of having attained a 'three' rating would not necessarily be meaningful. There are a significant number of contributing factors within each test which would make it difficult to compare Magilligan Prison's performance against a privately run prison.

Counterfeit Tobacco

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Justice what steps his Department is taking, in conjunction with the PSNI and HMRC, to tackle the issue of counterfeit tobacco.

(AQO 2233/11-15)

Mr Ford: Tackling the issue of counterfeit tobacco is primarily a matter for HMRC and UK Border Force. In 2011/12 reporting year 23 million counterfeit and smuggled cigarettes were seized in Northern Ireland. HMRC officers seized 2 million counterfeit and smuggled cigarettes and 350 kg of hand rolling tobacco with a value of £828,000, and UK Border Agency officers seized 21 million cigarettes and 500 kg of hand rolling tobacco.

Intellectual Property Crime, including the sale of counterfeit tobacco has been identified by the Organised Crime Taskforce (OCTF) as a key threat. The Organised Crime Task Force has a dedicated Intellectual Property Crime Subgroup which acts as a forum for law enforcement agencies and a number of business partners to develop strategies to deal with a range of issues associated with intellectual property crime including the sale of counterfeit tobacco.

The OCTF is also tackling the demand side in terms of the support given by the public, knowingly or otherwise, that allows tobacco fraudsters to operate. The OCTF is embarking on a new communications initiative entitled "Changing the Mindset" which will seek to engage better with the public to inform individuals about the impact of all types of organised crime, including counterfeiting and seek their support to reduce the demand for the products and services provided by organised crime.

PSNI: Managed Services

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice why he has not met NIPSA, the trade union representing police support staff, to discuss his Department's role in the development of a business case for PSNI managed services.

(AQO 2234/11-15)

Mr Ford: The awarding and management of contracts by the Police Service is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, for which he is accountable to the Policing Board. The Department has had no role in respect of developing the business case for PSNI managed services.

My officials approved the PSNI business case in February 2012, as it met the value for money criteria and other requirements, not least because a new contract was needed to replace existing outsourced arrangements.

On 20 April 2012 a NIPSA trade union representative for PSNI civilian staff requested a meeting with me to discuss PSNI Managed Services. I set out the position in respect of the Department's role.

As there was nothing further to add, I declined the trade union request for a meeting.

PSNI: Managed Services

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister of Justice when his Department first began discussions with the PSNI on the development of a business case for the tendering of a new PSNI contract for managed services.

(AQO 2235/11-15)

Mr Ford: The awarding and management of contracts by the Police Service is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, for which he is accountable to the Policing Board. The Department has had no role in the development of the PSNI business case for contracting out of managed services.

PSNI submitted a business case for the supply of support services to my Department for approval in December 2011.

My officials reviewed the business case and granted initial approval for PSNI to advertise in OJEU on 2 February, whilst finalising conditions of approval.

Business case approval was granted on 24 February 2012, subject to certain conditions, linking this project to the PSNI's efficiency saving programme.

The Department approved the business case as it met the value for money criteria and other requirements, not least because a new contract was needed to replace existing outsourced arrangements.

Criminal Justice: Witness Care Unit

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice what consideration his Department has given to the future of the Witness Care Unit, particularly with regard to outreach and accessibility for victims living in rural or more remote areas.

(AQO 2236/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am pleased to confirm that plans are in place to introduce a Witness Care Unit in Northern Ireland, and that this work is being taken forward by the Public Prosecution Service and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The purpose of the Unit will be to manage the care of victims and witnesses from the date the defendant is charged or reported to PPS, and it will encompass both the Crown and Magistrates' Courts.

It is anticipated that the service will include:

- a single point of contact for victims and witnesses, communicating by their preferred means where possible;
- a full needs assessment for all victims and witnesses in cases where defendants have pleaded not guilty - for example, to identify specific support requirements;
- dedicated witness care officers to guide and support individuals through the criminal justice process and to co-ordinate support and services;
- continuous review of victim and witness needs throughout the case; and
- greater communication and contact with witnesses about their cases throughout the prosecution process.

The Witness Care Unit will include both PPS and police staff and it will improve access to information for all victims and witnesses, including those living in rural or more remote areas.

Coroners Service: Weekends and Bank Holidays

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Justice whether he will review the current access arrangements to the Coroner's Office, at weekends and bank holidays, to ensure that bodies of deceased persons are released to families as soon as possible.

(AQO 2237/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am satisfied that the current access arrangements for the Coroners Service at weekends and bank holidays provide an appropriate level of service to the public and I have no plans to review them.

The Coroners Service is open from 9.30am to 12.30pm on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays (save for Christmas Day). At all other times a telephone answering service is provided. A duty Coroner can also be contacted by telephone outside normal office hours.

The Coroner's decision to release bodies to families requires communication with a number of agencies and individuals – not all of whom are available at weekends or bank holidays.

In particular, general practitioners and paediatric pathology services are not available on Friday evenings, weekends and public holidays. In a small number of cases this may cause delay but these cases are given priority once services are available. The working patterns associated with general practitioners and paediatric pathology services are not something I am responsible for and are instead matters for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Minister of Health.

Criminal Assets

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Justice for an update on his Department's scheme for distributing assets recovered from criminals.

(AQO 2238/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department had access to the Assets Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) monies for the first time last year. Previously all the recovered funds were collected centrally by Treasury. Last year was run as a pilot exercise and provided us with an opportunity to gain a great deal of insight into the potential benefits as well as the challenges in accessing this funding.

I have just approved proposals to launch a call in the coming weeks, seeking bids from projects wishing to access funding from this fund. Bids will be considered against a list of identified Departmental priorities. The aim is to include a mix of internally identified projects along with a list of those from external community group bids.

It is worth noting that the receipts surrendered are highly unpredictable from month to month. In the first 2 months the amount available to my Department is approximately £35K and there are residual commitments from last year where projects were awarded money over a 2 year period.

I am delighted to have seen the success at first hand of some of the community projects such as cage soccer and the e-Hoops programmes have provided a diversion for young people at risk.

I am aware of some restrictions which exist and my officials are currently engaged in considering these to see how the scheme could be further enhanced for the future. I am also considering speaking with the Home Office in due course regarding the possible devolution of recovered civil assets.

Department for Regional Development

Funding Allocated to Minor Road Surface Repairs

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 12103/11-15, why the Northern Division of Roads Service is the only division which is spending less on minor road surface repairs than it was spending under Direct Rule; and what steps are proposed to redress the imbalance. **(AQW 12838/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department's Roads Service has advised that, in distributing the resources available for minor road surface repairs, allocations are made to the four Roads Service Divisions on the basis of need, as the demand for this work is dependent on the number of defects that appear in each area.

As this approach ensures an equitable distribution of funds across the whole of Northern Ireland, there are no plans at present to revise the method by which this maintenance funding is distributed.

Road Works in West Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to list the works his Department is due to carry out in West Belfast in 2012/13. **(AQW 12884/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that scheme preparation is carried out on a council area basis not by parliamentary constituency. Roads Service attends each local council twice yearly to present programmes of work and provide progress updates on those programmes.

I am further advised that the Belfast City Council Report containing the 2012/13 programmes of works, which was published following the council meeting of 28 May 2012, can be accessed at the following web address:

<http://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s63569/Belfast%20Spring%202012.pdf>

I understand that work is ongoing on the preparation of the Lisburn City Council Spring Report in advance of the council meeting on 2 July 2012, and it will be published shortly after the meeting.

Northern Ireland Water advises that, during 2012/13, it proposes to carry out the following work in West Belfast:

Location	Project
Glenmachan Street Wastewater Pumping Station.	Strategic Investigations & Interim Improvements.
Ladybrook Estate.	Foul and Storm Sewer Structural Investigation.
St. James Road, Falls Road, Ardmonagh Gardens.	Sewer Improvements.
Andersonstown Road / Stockmans Way.	M1 Crossing Water Main Replacement.
Devonshire Street.	Storm Sewer Extension.
Beechmount Avenue, Gortfin Street.	Foul Sewer Upgrade.
Distillery Street Storm Pumping Station.	Preparation for Disposal.

In addition, Translink has also advised that it has planned two specific pieces of work at the Falls Depot during 2012/13, namely:

- Bus Underseal Facility; and
- Water Main Renewal.

Traffic Calming Measures in the North Down Area

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on traffic calming measures in the North Down area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12904/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of expenditure by my Department's Roads Service on traffic calming measures in the North Down constituency area, in each of the last three financial years, are provided in the table below:

Year	Spend on traffic calming in the North Down Constituency area
2009/10	£4,000
2010/11	£106,000
2011/12	£122,000

Overpayments for Car Parking

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the legal rights of a motorist who overpays for car parking, for a desired period time at a pay and display machine, to claim back the amount of overpayment.

(AQW 12932/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a motorist, who does not use the full amount of time for which they have paid to park at a pay and display machine, has no right to claim back part of the payment.

Officials further advise that all pay and display tariffs are scheduled in the on-street and off-street parking orders and the tariff appropriate to any particular area, is clearly listed on every pay and display machine in that area. These tariffs list the amounts payable for a specific maximum time period; e.g., up to 15 mins, up to 30 mins, up to 1 hour and so on. Therefore, the motorist should only pay for the maximum time that they intend to park.

I can advise the Member that one development that will greatly benefit drivers is the introduction of electronic parking payment across the whole of Northern Ireland. This service will mean that drivers do not need to have the correct change. They can start and stop their parking using a mobile phone and

only pay for the time used. This will mean that parking penalties will not be issued for overstaying the Pay and Display time, as long as time restrictions are adhered to. This facility currently exists in Belfast and Londonderry as well as Lisburn, Newry and Omagh, and I hope to extend this scheme to other towns across Northern Ireland over the coming months.

Translink: 60+ SmartPass

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department paid Translink for the 2.5 million passenger trips on buses and the 0.5 million on trains undertaken by holders of a 60+ SmartPass.

(AQW 12933/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The relevant figures for 2011/12 are £4.093m for bus and £2.654m for rail.

Daily Traffic Volume on the Upper Lisburn Road, Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the daily traffic volume on the Upper Lisburn Road, Belfast, over the last twelve months.

(AQW 12975/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it collects data from approx 300 automatic traffic census sites located throughout Northern Ireland's road network. The most recent Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flow information for the Upper Lisburn Road is set out in the table below:

Location	AADT 7 Day (year)
Lisburn Road at Kings Hall (two way flow)	20,647 (2011)

Flooding Problems at Sicily Park

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the measures his Department intends to take to resolve the flooding problems at Sicily Park and in the wider Finaghy area of Belfast.

(AQW 12976/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is responsible for the maintenance of the storm water gullies within the public road network and aims to clean all gullies in urban areas twice a year. This policy ensures that a reasonable level of maintenance is carried out to the drainage system, whilst taking account of the Department's finite funding and staff resource levels.

The most recent scheduled cleaning of the gullies in Sicily Park was carried out in December 2011. The next scheduled cleaning operation is due to be completed by mid-July 2012.

In response to the heavy rainfall on 8 June 2012, Roads Service staff attended and carried out gully emptying operations in Sicily Park. A subsequent inspection of the gullies was carried out on 11 June 2012 and all were found to be operating normally.

Following further heavy rainfall on 11 June 2012, Roads Service staff returned to the vicinity to deliver sandbags in Sicily Park and the wider Finaghy area.

I have also been advised by Northern Ireland Water that Sicily Park and the wider Finaghy area are included as part of a proposed sewer upgrade project which will cover a large drainage catchment area extending from Broadway to Finaghy and Balmoral as well as a small area on the North side of the M1. The project, known as the Glenmachan Sewer Project, aims to upgrade the network to improve the drainage in the area and to reduce the risk of out of sewer flooding and pollution to existing waterways. This is a substantial project with significant costs. As the project is currently at Feasibility Study stage and is not scheduled to commence before 2015, NIW is investigating the possibility of undertaking work in advance of the main project relating to specific recommendations from the Study for the Sicily Park and wider Finaghy area. This project, estimated to cost around £3 million, could commence in 2014 subject to statutory approvals and the availability of funding.

Decisions on what investments will be made in 2013/14 and 2014/15 will be taken as part of the Utility Regulator's Price Control 2013 process. Decisions on what investments will be made from 2015/16 to 2020/21 will be taken as part of the Utility Regulator's Price Control 2015 process. The total level of investment in water and sewerage services is, of course, currently set by the Executive through the Budget.

Car Park Ticket Vending Machines

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 12403/11-15, whether he can confirm that Pay and Display car park ticket machines that dispense change are available in other parts of the UK; and if so, why this information was not included in his answer.

(AQW 12985/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is not aware of the use of Pay and Display machines that offer change in other regions of the UK. In the event that such machines were available, it is likely their cost would be much greater than those currently used by Roads Service, and the potential benefits of purchasing such machines would need to be carefully assessed, especially at a time when the Department is striving to identify further efficiencies in the provision of its parking enforcement and car park management services.

I can advise the Member that one development that will greatly benefit drivers is the introduction of electronic parking payment across the whole of Northern Ireland. This service will mean that drivers do not need to have the correct change. They can start and stop their parking using a mobile phone and only pay for the time used. This will mean that parking penalties will not be issued for overstaying the Pay and Display time, as long as time restrictions are adhered to. This facility currently exists in Belfast and Londonderry as well as Lisburn, Newry and Omagh, and I hope to extend this scheme to other towns across Northern Ireland over the coming months.

Works Planned for the Junction of Carney Hill and the A2 Road in Holywood

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what works, aimed at increasing road safety, are planned for the junction of Carney Hill and the A2 road in Holywood.

(AQW 13000/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member may be aware, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) proposed a route management study to identify individual schemes to improve road safety along all key routes into Belfast and increase the capacity of existing junctions, where localised widening would be feasible.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has completed a route management study for A2 Belfast to Bangor Road which looked in detail at all of the junctions along the A2, taking account of the collision history, traffic volumes and speed.

Officials further advise that the study identified a proposal for the provision of a right turn pocket from the Belfast direction. However, this is considered to be a lower priority for Roads Service compared to other potential junction improvements on this route.

I would advise the Member that due to funding constraints, Roads Service currently has no plans to make improvements to this junction in the foreseeable future.

NI Water Sewage and Water Schemes

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the current NI Water sewage and water schemes which have had work stopped or remain incomplete due to the lack of continuing finance.

(AQW 13014/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that no water or sewerage schemes have had work stopped or remain incomplete due to lack of continuing finance and all schemes currently at construction stage will be completed within planned funding levels.

As a result of revised Public Expenditure (PE) funding a number of schemes that were planned for delivery during the three year Price Control period ending March 2013 have been deferred to the following Price Control period which covers the two years ending March 2015. However, NIW has not altered the funding level allocated to water infrastructure as a result of the revised PE funding.

Daily Traffic Volume on the A7, A2/A24, and A25

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the daily traffic volume on the (i) A7 Downpatrick to Belfast road; (ii) A2/A24 Newcastle to Belfast road; and (iii) A25 Downpatrick to Newry road, over the last twelve months.

(AQW 13017/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that traffic volumes are recorded at a number of permanent sites located throughout the Northern Ireland road network.

The most recent Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) traffic flow information, recorded on the A7, A24 and A25 roads is provided in the table below:

Route	Location	AADT
A7 Downpatrick – Belfast	Belfast Road at Quoile	11,214
A24 Newcastle - Belfast	Belfast Road, Ballynahinch	8,698

Route	Location	AADT
A25 Downpatrick - Newry	Castlewellan Road, at Aughlisnafin junction	6,319

Roads Infrastructure in South Down

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has carried out an assessment of the roads infrastructure in South Down or whether it has any plans to carry out such an assessment.

(AQW 13018/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's current plans for further improving the inter-urban and local road networks, based on the funding envisaged under the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) 2008-2018, are described in the Investment Delivery Plan for Roads (IDP for Roads), which was published in 2008.

This plan reflects the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP), the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMP) and the Sub Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) which are informed by both the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012 and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) – 2025.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that several of the Strategic Road Improvements listed in the IDP for Roads extend into the South Down constituency area. These include:

- the northern section of A1 Beech Hill to Cloghogue dual carriageway scheme on the outskirts of Newry, completed in 2010;
- the proposal for further junction improvements on the A1 dual carriageway, including the provision of a continuous central safety barrier between Hillsborough and Loughbrickland (in particular, the proposal for a flyover type junction at Waringsford Road on the outskirts of Banbridge); and
- the southern section of the proposed A24 Ballynahinch Bypass.

Officials further advise that they are continuing to investigate the feasibility of a Southern Relief Road for Newry, which would link from the A1 dual carriageway onto the A2 Warrenpoint dual carriageway.

The IDP for Roads also indicated significant resources for the completion of Non Strategic Major Improvements, incorporating the schemes identified in the SRTP, and for Local Transport and Safety Measures (LTSM). Officials continue to progress programmes of LTSM schemes in each District Council area, including Newry and Mourne, Down, and Banbridge, in addition to undertaking a range of assessments and inspections, to prioritise the structural and maintenance work Roads Service carries out on the road network.

However, the Member will understand that future expenditure on road improvement and maintenance will be subject to the funding provided following the outcome of the current review of the ISNI and future budget settlements. The ISNI document is produced by the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and, while a draft ISNI document was published in November 2011, the final ISNI 2011-2021 has yet to be approved by the Executive.

I should add that when my Department was provided with an indicative allocation for the period 2015-2021, as set out in the draft ISNI, I highlighted a number of concerns, such as the level of funding proposed for roads. Once projected allocations are finalised, I will review the roads programme against the level of funding that is approved.

Ballynahinch Bypass Project

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps his Department is taking to progress the Ballynahinch Bypass project so that it is deemed 'shovel ready'.

(AQW 13019/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that following completion of the necessary range of assessments required for a project of this nature and scale, it confirmed a Preferred Line for the A24 Ballynahinch Bypass proposal in January 2012. Roads Service is currently continuing with the range of more detailed environmental, engineering and economic assessments that are now required to progress this scheme through the statutory procedures. These procedures require the publication of an Environmental Statement, along with a Notice of Intention to Make a Direction Order and a Notice of Intention to Make a Vesting Order. Depending on the response to the publication of these documents, it may then be necessary to hold a Public Inquiry to determine if the scheme should proceed as planned.

Water Order Enforcement Notice

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 11760/11-15, what steps his Department is currently taking to comply with the forthcoming Water Order Enforcement Notice.

(AQW 13020/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency issued an Enforcement Notice on 21 May 2012 requiring it to provide a discharge consisting only of fine screened wastewater at Ballyhornan by 31 March 2013. In order to achieve this, NIW is in the process of purchasing a plot of land to house new screening facilities and is continuing to negotiate on the access permissions to the site across a private road. NIW is confident that, provided the road negotiations are successful, the target date of 31 March 2013 will be met.

NIW will continue to manage the existing system pending completion of the upgrade.

Company Cars Available for Use by Translink Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many company cars are available for use by Translink staff.

(AQW 13040/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink's have advised that there are a total of 52 company cars available to their staff. These are made up as follows:

- 36 leased company cars (for use by each of the 36 essential car users within Translink Operational Management Group);
- 7 company 'pool' cars owned by Translink which are primarily used by operational staff to move between various depots/locations; and
- 9 cars used primarily by the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company Property Management Section and some of the Senior Executive Team.

Road Infrastructure for the Relocation of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society to the Maze Site

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to introduce new road infrastructure for the relocation of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society to the Maze site.

(AQW 13044/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has no plans to introduce new road infrastructure for the relocation of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) to the Maze site. I understand that this proposal is linked to the development of the Maze site and may be delivered and funded by the new Development Corporation being established by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The RUAS has arranged a workshop for 5 July 2012, which Roads Service and DOE Planning officials are to attend to discuss the details of the Society's proposed move from King's Hall. Any measures to upgrade the existing road network will be dependent on the information provided by the RUAS. Roads Service is not aware when a planning application will be submitted.

Green Box Markings for Cyclists at Road Junctions

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the cost associated with the introduction of green box markings for cyclists at road junctions; and (ii) from where the funding originated.

(AQW 13045/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has confirmed that it recently provided some 380 Advanced Stop Lines within the greater Belfast area, at a cost of approximately £232,000, as part of an established programme of measures aimed at promoting and encouraging cycling.

The work was funded from the budget for its Local Transport and Safety Projects programme which seeks to improve road safety and help 'local' transport. This programme includes network development, traffic management, traffic calming, bus priority measures, provision of park and share facilities, travel information schemes and schemes to encourage people to walk and cycle more frequently.

Street Lighting in Alleyways

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's policy on street lighting in alleyways that have been considered for alley-gating.

(AQW 13046/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service does not generally provide street lighting on footpaths or back entries which only give rear access to properties, or are alternative routes to already lighted roads or footpaths. Exceptions to this general rule include, locations where a footpath or back entry serves as a through link to another street, or services a significant local amenity, such as, a community hall or school.

Translink Bus Services: WiFi Connectivity

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development what percentage of Translink bus services offer WiFi connectivity for passengers.

(AQW 13049/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Currently WiFi is only available on Translink's Cross Channel services. However from October 2012 WiFi will be operational on all Goldline Services within Northern Ireland and also Cross Border services. This will represent approximately 21% of Ulsterbus scheduled services.

Publically Funded Trips by Translink Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the cost of publically funded trips by Translink staff, in each of the last five years; (ii) the destinations; and (iii) the purpose of the trips.

(AQW 13058/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As a Public Corporation established under statute the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company receives substantial public funding, as evidenced by the annual accounts, but is also charged to act commercially and to generate revenue. Trips for commercial purposes are therefore an integral component of the organisation's business requirements. For that reason it is difficult to definitively assess the cost of trips by Translink staff from exclusively public sources.

Translink has confirmed that it has in place a Travel Policy which covers work related trips such as the routine business requirements to meet with suppliers as those necessitated by the purchase of new trains and buses etc; the need to attend trade/industry bodies with whom Translink are members/associated i.e. Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC), Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), the International Association of Public Transport (UITP), the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB).

In addition, many of their Managers are required to attend or make presentations at conferences and events as part of their wider stakeholder engagement and or continuous professional development.

The meetings and destinations vary given the broad spectrum of business from trips to the Republic of Ireland in connection with Cross Border services which Translink operate in conjunction with other Partners to meetings with suppliers in Europe in connection with new the New Trains Two contract. The table below sets out the number of trips undertaken at a senior management level for the last five years. This information has been collated from the diaries of senior management.

Actual number of trips by Translink senior management

Year	Number of trips	Number of days
2007/08	479	678
2008/09	358	569
2009/10	432	693
2010/11	443	965
2011/12	469	1278

The incremental yearly increase is attributable to the New Trains Two Contract.

Translink has advised it is not in a position to provide costs for these trips without incurring disproportionate cost.

Changes to Flight Schedules at Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any assessment has been made of the changes to flight schedules at both Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport, and the relevance of the roads infrastructure leading to and from each airport, in any of these decisions.

(AQW 13076/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that an assessment of the changes to flight schedules at both Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport has not been made, as it has not been advised of any request to have the overall approved capacity of both airports increased.

Tickets for the Jubilee Garden Party

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many tickets for the Jubilee Garden Party on 27 June 2012 were allocated to (i) the Minister; (ii) his Department; and (iii) its arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 13090/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) I was allocated four tickets for the Jubilee Garden Party on 27 June 2012.
- (ii) My Department was allocated 150 tickets by the Northern Ireland Office for use by staff and their families.
- (iii) No tickets were allocated to the Department's arm's length bodies.

Applicants for the Rural Borewells Scheme

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration was given to people on means-tested benefits, when deciding upon the criteria used to assess applicants for the Rural Borewells Scheme.

(AQW 13150/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The principle aim of the Rural Borewells Scheme is to provide a wholesome water supply for existing properties that, on a longstanding basis, have never been served by a public water main.

The scheme is an extension of the DRD's policy of providing a Reasonable Cost Allowance (RCA) of up to £10,000 per property towards the costs of obtaining a water main. Householders only become eligible for consideration for a borewell grant if the requisition route has proved uneconomical. Following extensive consultation with the public and elected representatives, the scheme criteria was developed with a view to maintaining parity with RCA policy.

All aspects of the scheme including eligibility criteria will be reviewed at the end of the first year.

Sewerage Assets Owned by NI Water in the Islandmagee Electoral Ward

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development to list all sewerage assets owned by NI Water in the Islandmagee electoral ward, including details on the extent of the main sewerage system.

(AQW 13205/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the sewerage assets in the Islandmagee electoral ward are as detailed below. These sewerage assets serve communities at Ferris Bay, Ballylumford Cottages, Millbay, Mullaghboy, and Ballystrudder.

20 kilometres of public sewers

Ferris Bay Septic Tank,

Ballylumford Cottages Septic Tank,

Ballystrudder Wastewater Treatment Works,

Mullaghboy Wastewater Treatment Works including pumped flows from the Millbay Wastewater Pumping Station.

A2: Greenisland

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the A2 road widening scheme at Greenisland.

(AQO 2247/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member will be aware, following a series of meetings with Executive colleagues and a review of spending priorities across my Department for the budget period, I issued a statement on 14 February 2012, announcing that funding had been secured for delivery of this scheme within the 2011-15 budget period.

Following my announcement, my Department's Roads Service commenced the procurement process for the scheme which included a pre-qualification competition to select suitable tenderers followed by the tendering procedure for the Design and Build contract. This process is ongoing.

Subject to successful completion of the procurement process, it is anticipated that the construction stage will commence in early 2013 and will take approximately 2 years to complete.

Legal Fees Incurred by Northern Ireland Water

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development for a breakdown of the legal fees incurred by Northern Ireland Water over the last five years.

(AQW 13309/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that a breakdown of its legal fees for the last five years is as shown out in the table below. The figures are exclusive of VAT. The breakdown includes legal fees incurred by NIW in dealing with a range of issues and acting under Limited Company status, such as regulation and compliance, procurement, capital investment and litigation. It also

details legal fees for public liability claims which include third party fees for which NIW has accepted liability.

	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s	2010/11 £000s	2011/12 £000s
Legal Fees incurred by NIW	600	718	1,295	1,778	561
Legal Fees for Public Liability Claims	255	521	609	296	254

Killyhevlin Water Treatment Works

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Regional Development what infractions have been incurred at Killyhevlin Water Treatment Works due to the water quality levels not reaching European standards.

(AQO 2243/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: No EU infractions have occurred to date due to water quality levels at Killyhevlin or any of NI Water's water treatment works. There have, however, been occasions over the last two years where routine monitoring of Killyhevlin has detected that full compliance with the drinking water quality standards has not been met. An increased number of customer complaints regarding the taste and odour of water supplied by Killyhevlin occurred on two occasions. This was partly due to natural seasonal changes in the quality of untreated water taken from Upper Lough Erne. In addition, low levels of pesticide above the regulatory standard were also detected. On all these occasions, there was no significant health risk. As part of the routine regulatory process, the Drinking Water Inspectorate was notified and appropriate corrective action was taken.

Part of the regulatory process involved a Consideration of Provisional Enforcement Order being issued to NI Water on 28 October 2011. This required NI Water to put in place a number of corrective actions including the enhancement of the treatment processes to address these issues. Compliance with the actions to be taken is monitored by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. NI Water is cooperating fully in addressing this issue and all actions are on target to be delivered.

NI Water achieved its highest compliance figure for water quality at customers' taps in 2010. This is on a par with the rest of the UK. NI Water continues to make use of the investment provided by the Executive to maintain overall compliance and address localised issues.

A5: Public Inquiry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development when he will publish the findings of the Public Inquiry into the A5.

(AQO 2246/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service received the Inspector's Report on the A5 Western Transport Corridor Public Inquiry on 24 February 2012 and officials are currently reviewing the issues arising out of this Report.

It is anticipated that the Departmental Statement, which is the Department's response to the Inspector's Report, will be published in July. The Inspector's Report will also be made available to the public at that time.

M1: Maze Site

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what budgetary commitment exists to construct access from the M1 motorway to the Maze site.

(AQO 2248/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that my Department currently has no budgetary commitment to construct an access road from the M1 motorway to the Maze site. I understand that this proposal is

linked to the development of the Maze site and may be delivered and funded by the new Development Corporation being established by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

Officials in my Department's Roads Service have been involved in early advisory meetings with OFMDFM and DFP officials. At this stage, Roads Service has not received any firm proposals in relation to any infrastructure for the Maze site.

Roads Service, as a consultee to DOE Planning, is required to consider the design of any infrastructure that is to be formally adopted by it.

Translink: Contractual Arrangements

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what contractual arrangements exist between his Department and Translink in exchange for the support that Translink receives from public funding.

(AQO 2249/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Current oversight of Translink by the Department is through the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, which includes a Corporate Planning Process. Translink receive a range of grants and subsidies for delivering public transport services including:

- Public Service Obligation (or subsidy) for NI Railways;
- Concessionary Fares Schemes (reimbursed); and
- Fuel Duty Rebate (or subsidy).

In return the Department requires Translink (or any other operator in receipt of the particular scheme) to meet the terms and conditions of the scheme and to prove that the service has been delivered in line with the specified requirements. Primarily this involves independent audit assurance but the specific controls will vary depending on the individual grant or subsidy.

All other grants to Translink including capital funding are also subject to independent audit assurance.

I would also advise that the Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which has not yet been fully commenced, requires that the Department secures the provision of most public passenger transport services from the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (Translink). In order to comply with this legislation and EU Regulation 1370/2007, the Department is currently preparing for the development of a contract for the delivery of public transport services for both bus and rail, which will be directly awarded to Translink by April 2014. These new arrangements include the development of a permit system, which will sit alongside the contracting arrangements and will allow private operators to run public passenger transport services which are complimentary to the contracted network.

Trans-European Transport Network

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of suitable projects under the Ten-T European funding round, particularly in relation to road, rail and ferry infrastructure.

(AQO 2250/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The TEN-T Executive Agency announced an Annual Call for funding applications in January 2011 and my Department submitted applications for funding for the following projects:

- (i) Coleraine to Londonderry Track Relay - funding support of approximately £4 million; and
- (ii) Study on developing the design of the York Street Inter-change - funding support of approximately £1 million.

In addition, I can advise that my Department has also submitted a joint bid for funding within the current Annual Call with the Republic of Ireland's Electricity Supply Board. The bid is for funding for the installation of rapid charge points for electric vehicles, and a supporting IT system, on the TEN-T road network in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The TEN-T Executive Agency is currently considering the above applications.

During the current EU Programme Period (2007-13) my Department has secured funding from the Easyway TEN-T funded European project for the installation of traffic control and traffic information measures. Going forward, my Department will continue to take every opportunity to secure funding from the Easyway project and to identify opportunities within future TEN-T funding calls.

Water Supply: Fluoridation

Mrs Overend asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has been consulted by the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to the fluoridation of water.

(AQO 2251/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The decision to require NI Water to add fluoride to the drinking water supply is a decision for the Minister of Health. As I understand it, before the Health Minister could ask NI Water to introduce fluoridation, it would be necessary for him to bring forward regulations to the Assembly and consult with NI Water and the Utility Regulator. I have not been consulted by the Minister of Health in regard to this matter.

Road Safety: Cyclists

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to work with the Department of the Environment to improve road safety for cyclists.

(AQO 2252/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the member that we already work closely with the Department of the Environment in seeking to ensure that safety on our roads is a priority for cyclists. This includes road safety education and engineering, traffic calming and enhancement of the pedestrian and cycling network.

The member will be aware that I have actively participated in a range of cycle events hosted by my Department during Bike Week 2012 which runs between 16 and 24 June. These events were supported by all parties at the Assembly and included the Assembly Cycle race as well as Bike To Work Day.

Roads: Housing Development Bonds

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the review of bonds on unfinished housing schemes and roads.

(AQO 2253/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would advise the Member that my Department is not undertaking a review of the bonds on unfinished housing schemes and roads.

However, the Member may be referring to the Committee for Regional Development Inquiry into unadopted roads in Northern Ireland, to which my Department has provided a considerable amount of written and verbal evidence.

Department for Social Development

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the measures in the proposed Welfare Reform Bill which are (i) part of the Coalition Government's drive to control public finance; and (ii) policy based and intended to reduce benefit dependency and worklessness.

(AQW 12245/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development):

- (i) The proposed Welfare Reform Bill contains measures which will reform the system to make it fair, affordable and sustainable for the taxpayer, targeting support at those who need it most, promoting work as the clearest way out of poverty. I am convinced that this is as crucial in Northern Ireland as any other region within the United Kingdom.

The Chancellor's March 2012 budget confirmed that the Coalition Government is committed to restoring the United Kingdom's public finances and are managing these on a total basis including spending on social security benefits and spending on other public services such as health and education.

Social security benefit spending for Northern Ireland is funded directly from Her Majesty's Treasury in line with actual demand outside of the funding controlled and managed by the Northern Ireland Executive, as long as Northern Ireland maintains parity with Great Britain. However, social security is still a devolved matter, and therefore it is incumbent on me to ensure that the reform proposals are appropriate for the people of Northern Ireland.

Early work to understand the impact of welfare reform on benefit related spending on Northern Ireland indicates that it will continue to increase above 2010-11 levels, with welfare reform measures reducing and controlling the level of the increase. Universal credit is expected to increase benefit related spending as it seeks to ensure that for customers capable of work, work is more financially advantageous than benefits

- (ii) There can be little doubt that much of the current system is geared towards maintaining people on benefits rather than helping them into work, consequently, the creation of universal credit will simplify the system of benefit payments and tax credits into a single payment for those who are out of work or on low pay. A key aim of the reform is to bridge the gap that has opened up between unemployment and work by improving support and incentives so that anyone on benefits who starts work will be better off as a result, with financial support focused on making work pay. It is anticipated that the combined effect of the proposed measures in the Welfare Reform Bill will help to reduce benefit dependency and worklessness. I am on record as stating that while I have concerns about the need to protect and support the vulnerable in our society, I am equally convinced of the need to tackle inter-generational benefit dependency and worklessness.

Internships

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many internships are available in his Department; and if none, what plans he has to introduce an internship scheme.

(AQW 12553/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department participates in the internship scheme run by the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy at Queens University Belfast. Northern Ireland Civil Service participation in this scheme is coordinated centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel. Business areas in my department are currently considering opportunities which might be appropriate for this scheme in the 2012/13 academic year and so the number of internships available through this scheme in the coming year is not yet available. In the 2011/12 academic year my Department was not allocated an intern through the scheme, though in each of the previous two years DSD supported a posting.

My department also supports a range of other work experience placements and schemes.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Welfare Reform Bill will be introduced to the Assembly in June 2012

(AQW 12668/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At this stage no date has been arranged for introduction of the Welfare Reform Bill to the Assembly as I am awaiting the Executive's consideration of the final policy proposals of the Bill and for its agreement to the introduction of the Bill to the Assembly.

Refurbishment of the Social Security Agency Offices in Strabane

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the purpose of the recently completed refurbishment of the Social Security Agency offices in Strabane, given that it has been earmarked as a front-office only service from September 2012, and to detail the total costs involved in the refurbishment.

(AQW 12713/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A survey completed of the Social Security Agency offices in Strabane by the Department of Finance and Personnel in 2010/ 11 identified a number of health and safety, Disability Discrimination Act and maintenance requirements that required urgent attention.

The total costs involved to address these issues were £220,000

Social Security Agency Office in Foyle

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to provide an estimate of the cost of bringing the Social Security Agency Office in Foyle up to a 'fit for purpose' standard, to accommodate the planned centralisation of Customer First functions within the Western District.

(AQW 12714/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department of Finance and Personnel routinely survey the Northern Ireland Civil Service office estate to ensure that the buildings are maintained to a 'fit for purpose' standard.

The Social Security Agency Office in Foyle is deemed 'fit for purpose' to accommodate the planned centralisation of Customer First and consequently there are no anticipated additional costs.

Long-Term Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector for Full Duty Applicants

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development what steps the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has taken to identify and secure long-term accommodation in the private rented sector for full duty applicants, under homelessness legislation.

(AQW 12755/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised me that it discharges its homelessness duty through offers of accommodation in the social rented sector and, in conjunction with my Department, they are currently developing a specification for the introduction of a rent deposit guarantee scheme for Northern Ireland, which will aim to provide a viable alternative to the social rented sector for both homeless and waiting list applicants.

I am disappointed with the Housing Executive's lack of action in relation to ensuring that private rented sector accommodation is utilised to lessen the dependency on the social rented sector and ultimately ensure alternative ranges of accommodation are available to benefit those most in need.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what measures he will put in place to help promote the Warm Homes Scheme during this financial year.

(AQW 12827/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The two Warm Homes Managers are contractually responsible for the marketing of the Warm Homes Scheme. They work together to:

- prepare annual marketing plans for the approval of the Contract Administrator(Housing Executive);
- target eligible households in the private sector and in rural areas; and
- market the scheme to local politicians, community groups, employers, local councils, citizens' advice bureaux and any other groups who might be able to introduce eligible applicants.

The Scheme Managers also market the scheme in many local facilities such as Doctors' surgeries and church halls. The success of the Warm Homes Scheme Managers' marketing activities can be gauged from the fact that they achieve their annual intervention targets and they also achieve the annual target to find 40% of their interventions in rural areas.

Relocating Staff from Jobs and Benefits Offices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what plans his Department has to relocate staff from any Jobs and Benefits offices.

(AQW 12831/11-15)

Mr McCausland: On the 1 June, the Social Security Agency announced the continued roll-out of the Customer First initiative across the rest of the Social Security Working Age Network.

Customer First has previously been rolled-out in what was formerly North District and Belfast West and Lisburn and has proven to deliver significant service improvements. The continued roll-out of Customer First will ensure that all customers of the Agency can benefit from these service improvements.

Customer First will see the establishment of further Benefit Processing Centres at Royston House and the Jobs and Benefits Offices in Falls Road, Foyle, Knockbreda, Hollywood Road, Armagh, Enniskillen, Lurgan and Newry. The detailed planning to support this has commenced, with the first offices due to go-live in Mid September 2012.

Whilst officials are continuing to finalise the staffing numbers for each of the Benefit Processing Centres and support functions, the recently announced plans propose organisational arrangements that provide a viable and sustainable service delivery for customers. To ensure the continuation of services whilst implementing Customer First, staff will be relocated with their discipline to the relevant Benefit Processing Centre.

There will be no loss of jobs for staff as a result of Customer First. No offices will be closing and customers who prefer to see staff face-to-face will continue to do so. As I have said on previous occasions I am committed to maintaining a robust front-line service for our benefit customers.

Officials will continue to work with staff and Trade Union side to consider measures which may militate against any adverse impact such as reasonable daily travelling distances. Agency officials will continue to work with local representatives to ensure they are kept informed as Customer First is rolled out.

Employment and Support Allowance Appeals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how much Employment and Support Allowance appeals have costs since the introduction of the new welfare reforms, broken down by (a) panel members fees and expenses; and (b) all other associated costs; and (ii) for an estimate of the total cost once the current list of appeals have been heard.

(AQW 12908/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Appeals Services does not distinguish administration costs between individual benefits, so it is not possible to provide the average cost of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) appeal hearings.

However, the annual expenditure of TAS, including expenses, room hire, payment of panel members and other associated costs for each financial year up to and including 2011/12, is provided.

An ESA tribunal panel consists of a legally qualified chairperson and a registered medical practitioner who may be a general practitioner. The attached table sets out:

- fees for each member per session (a session contains 3 appeal hearings);
- the number of hearings listed; and
- the proportion of ESA hearings listed

for each year from April 2009 to 31 March 2012.

The table also provides the projected hearings, proportion of ESA appeal hearings and planned expenditure for 12/13.

Financial Year	Number of appeal hearings listed	Number of ESA appeal hearings listed	Legally Qualified Member Session Fee	Medically Qualified Member Session Fee	Enhanced Medically Qualified Member Session Fee	Total Spend for The Appeal Service
2009/10	18,181	2,256	£206.00	£151.00	N/A	£5.2m
2010/11	20,787	7,859	£212.00	£155.00	£185.50	£5.1m
2011/12	22,108	10,299	£218.00	£155.00	£185.50	£5.9m ¹
2012/13	24,804 ²	12,996 ³	£224.00	£155.00	£185.50	£5.7m ⁴

Notes

No ESA appeals were determined until the 2009/10 financial year therefore there is no data relating to 2008/09.

The fee for a medical member increases when the member has attended over 40 sessions in the year.

- 1 Provisional at 18 June 2012
- 2 Estimated number of hearings to be listed in 2012/13 (projections based on actuals for April and May 2012)
- 3 Estimated number of ESA hearings to be listed in 2012/13 (projections based on actuals for April and May 2012)
- 3 Represents initial budget allocation from DSD for 2012/13 that is subject to in-year re-profiling.

Coleraine Social Security Office

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has to make the Coleraine Social Security Office a Universal Credit Centre.

(AQW 12914/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The introduction of Universal Credit will replace existing in and out of work benefits including social security benefits, housing benefits and tax credits from October 2013 onwards.

The Social Security Agency recently announced that the Castle Court complex in Belfast has been selected as the launch site for Universal Credit in Northern Ireland. At this stage there remains a significant amount of work to be done to better understand the organisational and staffing impacts associated with the introduction of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland. My officials are working closely with their counterparts in the Department for Work and Pensions in Great Britain, as well as the other impacted organisations in Northern Ireland to prepare for the implementation of and subsequent migration of existing social security benefits and tax credits claims to Universal Credit.

Until this work has been completed no decisions can be taken as to the location of further Universal Credit service centres.

Children who are in Absolute Poverty

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his Department's strategy to reduce further the proportion of children who are in absolute poverty.

(AQW 12939/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The latest figures show a slight decrease in absolute child poverty figures however there is still much work to be done if we are to meet our targets within the Child Poverty Act and

help those in the most need. My Department will therefore continue to focus its resources on those who are most socially disadvantaged through delivering initiatives which target both the causes and consequences of poverty. This includes the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, urban regeneration in towns and cities across Northern Ireland, decent and affordable housing, action to address fuel poverty, improved child maintenance arrangements and the delivery of the comprehensive social security provisions together with major welfare reform agenda.

However, in recognition of our changed and difficult times and to ensure that all my policies are complementary and results orientated, I have also established four policy principles to underpin my Department's anti poverty agenda. These principles require that our social policies must complement the Executive's economic policies, they must recognise the responsibilities of government, communities, families and individuals, they must tackle intergenerational problems and they must make the best possible use of increasingly limited resources and be focused on outcomes that are shared across Government. These principles also form the basis of the work that my Department is taking forward with the Office of the First and deputy First Minister and other executive departments to put in place a cross cutting policy approach supported by effective interventions to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty across all ages and produce improvements in the life chances of children and young people.

I consider that this collaborative and outcomes focused approach provides my Department and the wider Executive with the most realistic prospect of further reducing absolute child poverty rates over the coming years.

Housing Waiting List in the Strathfoyle Area of Derry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of applicants on the housing waiting list in the Strathfoyle area of Derry; (ii) the number of these applicants who are deemed to be homeless or in housing stress; and (iii) whether the Housing Executive has considered any proposals to build new social houses in the Strathfoyle area.

(AQW 12960/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to (i) there are 67 applicants on the waiting list for the Strathfoyle Common Landlord Area of Londonderry; (ii) of which there are 29 registered as homeless, Full Duty Applicant Status and 37 in Housing Stress. In relation to (iii) the Housing Executive has advised that the most recent housing need assessment projected a need for five units over the five year period to 2016. At present there are no schemes listed on the Social Housing Development Programme for this area. Strathfoyle is listed on the Housing Executive's unmet need prospectus with an unmet need of five units. This prospectus is published to assist Housing Associations concentrate their search for sites in areas where housing need remains unmet.

Social Housing in the Strathfoyle Area of Derry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development how many properties were allocated for social housing in the Strathfoyle area of Derry in (i) 2009; (ii) 2010; (iii) 2011; and (iv) 2012 to date.

(AQW 12961/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the number of social housing allocations in the Strathfoyle area of Londonderry from April 2008 to June 2012.

	Total
April 2008 – March 2009	29
April 2009 – March 2010	27
April 2010 – March 2011	43
April 2011 – March 2012	15

	Total
April 2012 – June 2012	10

The Information provided is an Official Statistic. The Production and dissemination of all such Statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

New Social Houses in the Strathfoyle Area of Derry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of new social houses built in the Strathfoyle area of Derry in (i) 2009; (ii) 2010; (iii) 2011; and (iv) 2012 to date.

(AQW 12962/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information can not be provided in the format requested as the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) is managed on a financial year basis and schemes delivered are recorded by Council Area, Parliamentary Constituency, Housing Executive Area and Housing Executive District Office. Strathfoyle falls within the Housing Executive's Waterside District Office area. The table below details the new social housing starts for the financial years 2009/10, 2010/11, and 2011/12 for the Waterside District Office area. As yet no new social housing units have gone on site in the Waterside District Office area in 2012/13.

Year	Housing Association	Scheme/Location	Units
2009/10	Apex Housing	Derry Acquisitions Phase 1	1
			1
2010/11	Apex Housing	Apex Housing Rural Cottages Phase 8	1
	Apex Housing	Derry Acquisitions	3
	Apex Housing	Derry Acquisitions Phase 2	1
	Apex Housing	Derry Acquisitions	5
	Apex Housing	Ballycanice Close, Eglinton	4
	Apex Housing	Ashleywood House	9
			23
2011/12	Fold	Carnmoney Court, Eglinton	6
			6

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New Social Houses in the Strathfoyle Area of Derry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development what plans there are for new build social housing in the Strathfoyle area of Derry.

(AQW 12963/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised me that the current Social Housing Development Programme has been approved for 2012/13 to 2014/15. Strathfoyle falls within the Housing Executive's Waterside District Office area. The table below details the planned new social housing for the financial years 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15 for the Waterside District Office area.

Year	Housing Association	Scheme/Location	Units
2012/13	Apex Housing	Ashleywood House Phase 2	3
	Apex Housing	Ashleywood House Phase 3	3
	Apex Housing	Bonds Hill	6
	Trinity	Nelson Drive Phase 1	13
	TBC	Cedar Villa Replacement	14
2013/14	Clanmil	Foxhill Phase 1	7
2014/15	Clanmil	Foxhill Phase 2	9
	To be confirmed	Nelson Drive Phase 2 (T)	13
Total			68

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Action Plans on Town Centre Regeneration

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the timescale for the implementation of the action plans on town centre regeneration, which will include input from Mary Portas.

(AQW 12973/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The action plans, including input from Mary Portas, are being implemented in England under an initiative launched by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The taskforce which I established to review my Department's provision for town centres in Northern Ireland will report to me shortly and I intend to make a statement on the outcome of the review once I have considered the report.

Additional Resource Excess of £10.2 million

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to provide a breakdown of the expenditure of the additional resource excess of £10.2 million that was awarded to his Department.

(AQW 13016/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Executive gave its approval to an increase in expenditure of up to £11.15 million for the Housing Programme in the 2010/11 year following the February Monitoring Round.

The breakdown of the additional £11.15 million was:

£5 million for Northern Ireland Housing Executive maintenance grant

£3 million for Co-ownership (NICHA)

£3.15 million for Social Housing Development Programme (New Build)

However underspends on other programmes at year end reduced the resource excess to £10.2 million.

Houses in Multiple Occupation Registration: South Belfast

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the progress of Houses in Multiple Occupation registration in the South Belfast area.

(AQW 13030/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the progress to date on HMO registrations in the South Belfast area.

HMO ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTH BELFAST CONSTITUENCY FROM 1 APRIL 2004 TO DATE

Number of confirmed HMOs	3356
Total registrations	2247 (67% of confirmed HMOs)
Registration renewals	198
Management inspections	2519
Initial full inspections	3915
Notices issued	4212

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Young People aged 16-25 who are Currently Unemployed

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of young people, aged 16-25, who are currently unemployed (i) in total; and (ii) in the Foyle area.

(AQW 13031/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At April 2012 (latest available figures), there were 20,0462 people aged 16 to 25 claiming Jobseekers Allowance³. Of these 20,046, there were 1,849 in the Foyle assembly area.

Homeless People in the Foyle Area

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people in the Foyle area who are (i) in housing stress; and (ii) registered as homeless.

(AQW 13033/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive collates social housing waiting list information by district office area. Therefore, the table below gives details of the number of people in housing stress and those registered as homeless for their Waterside, Waterloo and Collon Terrace district offices which cover the areas contained within the Derry City Council boundary.

District Office	Housing Stress	Registered as Homeless (Full Duty Applicant Status)
Waterside	503	322
Waterloo	742	398
Collon Terrace	778	482

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- 2 The information provided is an Official Statistic. The Production and dissemination of all such Statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.
- 3 Unemployed has been interpreted as a person actively engaged in seeking work, therefore the figures supplied relate to 16 to 25 year olds who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. (Persons who are not currently working because they are unfit for work due to incapacity or unavailable because of caring responsibilities are not generally referred to as unemployed as they are not part of the labour market.)

Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Double-Glazing Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) when the review of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's double-glazing scheme will be completed; and (ii) when work will recommence. **(AQW 13130/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: I have been informed by the Housing Executive that the review has been completed. However, I want to consider this and have asked Professional staff in the Department to look at these revised specifications to ensure that value for money is achieved without compromising tenant safety. Work did not stop on all double glazing schemes. As part of the review I agreed what category groups and schemes could proceed and a number of double glazing schemes are in progress.

Public Contract Tenders for Construction

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of (i) his Department's elements criteria used to determine public contract tenders for construction; and (ii) whether the criteria, such as turnover thresholds, might prohibit small-to-medium sized local businesses from making applications, **(AQW 13165/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: All of my Department's construction contracts are awarded through the Department of Finance and Personnel's Central Procurement Directorate. We rely on their advice to ensure that appropriate criteria and financial thresholds are adopted and that small and medium sized businesses are not disadvantaged.

Foyle Pride Festival 2012 in Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the level of funding his Department has allocated to the Foyle Pride Festival 2012 in Derry; and (ii) if his Department has not allocated funds to the event, how much it is willing to provide towards the running costs of £15,000. **(AQW 13200/11-15)**

Mr McCausland:

- (i) The Department, through its North West Development Office, has not allocated any Neighbourhood Renewal funding to the Foyle Pride Festival 2012 in Londonderry. The Department has not received a request to fund this event.
- (ii) Where priority needs are identified by Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships in local action plans the Department will consider, where resources allow, funding for interventions through the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment fund to address the underlying causes of deprivation.

Social Housing: Glen Court and Cedar Court, Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed housing schemes for Glen Court and Cedar Court, in the Foyle constituency. **(AQO 2259/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The proposed scheme at Glen Court and Cedar Court is included in the Social Housing Development Programme for an onsite start in 2013/14. The Housing Executive is currently working towards the appointment of a housing association to progress the development of this site.

There is funding available to deliver this scheme, however, in common with all schemes in the programme, deliverability is dependent upon a number of factors including land acquisition and achieving scheme approval from the Housing Executive.

I understand that there is already outline planning permission for 59 units on this site; but, this figure may change when a detailed planning application is worked up. However, I understand it would be necessary to re locate a community centre in order to fully build out this scheme, so clearly both the

community and the City Council of Londonderry, who own most of the land, will have to be actively involved in the planning and feasibility of this scheme before any work can be started on site.

Housing Executive: Community Cohesion Unit

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the work of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Community Cohesion Unit.

(AQO 2260/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There is no doubt that community division exerts a high price which, in terms of housing, can prevent the best use being made of existing housing and land.

There is good work being taken forward at community level by the Housing Executive's Community Cohesion Unit and through the Department's regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives. However, I believe that increased value could be added by adopting a more joined-up approach to ensure that the benefits derived from such community interventions are maximised.

As part of the fundamental review of the Housing Executive, I have asked officials to review the remit of the Community Cohesion Unit to ensure that it concentrates its efforts within its landlord areas and to ensure there is no duplication of effort with the work of my Department's Voluntary & Community and Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives which are more appropriately delivered at a strategic level within central government.

The promotion of equality and good relations is a consideration in the development of all my Department's policies and spending decisions and, going forward, I wish to ensure that community development initiatives are delivered in a more joined-up way by those with the statutory responsibility to do so.

Town Centre Regeneration: Councils

Mr I McCreagh asked the Minister for Social Development what resources and support his Department offers to Councils to enable them to progress development opportunity sites in town centres, as outlined in town centre master plans.

(AQO 2261/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department aims to work in full partnership with District Councils to deliver the recommendations in town centre masterplans. As part of our contribution to progressing development opportunity sites, my Department can provide practical support from the Town Centre Regeneration teams based in Ballymena, Omagh, Portadown and Newry and financial support to commission consultants to assist with the preparation of development briefs and selection of preferred developers for development opportunity sites. My Department can also engage the Central Procurement Directorate, Land and Property Services and Departmental Solicitor's Office to provide professional advice on technical aspects of development proposals.

Licensing: Pavement Cafes

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed licensing scheme for the regulation of pavement cafés.

(AQO 2262/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A Bill to licence pavement cafes is currently in the process of being drafted. Subject to Executive agreement, I plan to introduce the Bill into the Assembly during autumn 2012.

The proposed Bill will enable district councils to licence suitable premises - such as cafes, restaurants, bars etc - to place tables, chairs and other apparatus in a public place. Powers will be included for councils to impose conditions, vary, suspend or revoke a licence and charge a reasonable fee. To ensure compliance with the new law, Councils will be given powers of enforcement and may remove pavement café facilities in certain circumstances.

Housing Executive: Double Glazing

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the basis on which he decided that windows being installed, as part of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's double-glazing scheme, did not represent value for money.

(AQO 2263/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Since coming into office, I quickly recognised the need for Housing Executive maintenance work to be carried out. I was astounded to learn that some 48,000 of the Housing Executive's dwellings required double glazing and even more concerned about the apparent lack of haste in dealing with this, as the Housing Executive planned to have this work completed by 2021.

That's why I ensured that in the Programme for Government the Northern Ireland Executive gave a commitment that the thermal efficiency of all Housing Executive properties would be improved by 2014/15 through the provision of double glazing.

I was also shocked when the Housing Executive originally advised that the costs of the double glazing programme for 48,000 homes would be around £120m. Though it is now estimated that 30,000 homes requires this work at an estimated cost of £69m, this is still a significant amount of tax payers' money. I therefore needed to ensure that this programme delivers best value for money and the work is in line with industry standards. I believed that there were further significant savings to be made around the Housing Executive's specification and bespoke procurement process.

I therefore asked my officials to research the specifications used as I have been concerned for some time that the Housing Executive's specification for the supply and fitting of double glazing did not offer best value for money. I was particularly concerned about the requirement to remove and replaster around frames, which destroys the decoration in a tenants home necessitating the payment of redecoration grants and causing inconvenience to tenants and also the specification for hinges and handles, as these are much higher than industry standards for domestic properties. As I was advised that there is potential for significant savings to be made I therefore wrote to the Housing Executive's Chief Executive asking him to rigorously and urgently review this specification. I said at the time the review would not have an impact on the target date of 2015, and although there may be slight delays while it was carried out, all homes would remain in the programme and no tenant who was promised double glazing will lose out. The review has now been completed and a number of revisions considered and approved by the Housing Executive Board including the removal of a payment for redecoration grants in the majority of cases.

Queen's Quay, Belfast: Regeneration

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the regeneration plan for Queen's Quay, Belfast.

(AQO 2264/11-15)

Mr McCausland: the proposals in the Queen's Quay draft masterplan will enhance cross-river links from the north side of the city centre through to Titanic Quarter creating an attractive route for those living, working and visiting the area. My department is considering the representations from the public consultation on the draft masterplan and carrying out an equality impact assessment. We intend to publish the final masterplan by September 2012.

Housing Associations

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development what further consideration he has given to the future role of housing associations.

(AQO 2265/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As landlords of around 30,000 homes and developers of all new social homes, housing associations make a significant contribution here in Northern Ireland. Following decisions on the fundamental review of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, I will consider if the present

Housing Association structures are fit for purpose. It is likely that I will make an announcement in the Autumn. The current regulation and inspection regime will continue to provide assurance to me and the Department until the review is complete. My Department's Inspection Team has highlighted a number of underperforming Housing Associations and these are being managed through a range of measures. These range from the development of comprehensive action plans to address the shortcomings, to Associations being required to enter into full merger/group structures.

Town Centre Regeneration: Ballymena

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the implementation of the revitalisation programme for Ballymena town centre, including the involvement of his departmental officials.

(AQO 2266/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The current position is that my Department has made good progress with the revitalisation programme for Ballymena town centre. The Church Street area in the town centre has been identified for assistance from the programme. An action plan has been agreed with the local traders to help improve the external appearance of properties to the front and gable ends of buildings, dressing of derelict sites and to assist in marketing and promoting the area.

The programme is worth £150,000 is being administered through Ballymena Town Centre Development Ltd which is a public-private partnership involving Ballymena Borough Council and representatives from local independent traders, national retailers and other private sector businesses. My Department is represented on the Board of the company and attends project management meetings to help deliver the revitalisation programme in the town.

Work on property improvements is due to commence in early summer and the programme is expected to be completed by March 2013.

Housing: Single People under 35

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, following the changes to Housing Benefit, how the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the housing associations are addressing the accommodation needs of single people who are under 35 years of age.

(AQO 2267/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the private rented sector it is expected that changes will result in a rental shortfall for around 5,000 people aged under 35. Many of these people have already availed of Discretionary Housing Payments to help in the short term. However, the budget for this is limited. Up until now the needs of singles have not been adequately addressed by the Housing Executive. The last Social Housing Development Programme was inadequate in this respect and I rejected it. The social housing waiting list could well face additional challenges from the effects of welfare reform.

I have therefore made it clear to the Housing Executive that future programmes coming forward for my approval must take account of and be more responsive to the needs of this specific group.

St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the sale of assets at the St Patrick's Barracks site, Ballymena, to his Department.

(AQO 2268/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Legal processes for the conveyance of the former military housing at St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena from OFMDFM to my Department are underway. This will be completed as soon as possible taking account of the normal conveyance period. In the meantime Fold Housing Association is being facilitated with access to the site for planning purposes.

The remainder of the site is owned by OFMDFM. My Department has been engaged since the site was declared surplus in 2008 with other public sector stakeholders who are interested in acquiring portions

of the sites for new facilities. There has been no decision by OFMDFM on the next steps in releasing this part of the site.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Childcare Voucher Scheme

Mr Beggs asked the Assembly Commission when the payroll system, through which Members are obliged to pay their staff, will be able to facilitate those Members who wish to enable their staff to avail of the tax efficient Childcare Voucher Scheme.

(AQW 12670/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Unfortunately, the current payroll system used to process salary payments for Members and their staff does not support the operation of a fully integrated Childcare Voucher Scheme. An exercise to procure a new payroll system, which will facilitate the administration of such a scheme, is at an advanced stage and it is anticipated that this system will be fully tested and operational before the end of this financial year.

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