

Written Answers to Questions

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Friday 22 February 2013

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 22 February 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Chairman of Ilex URC

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 13877/11-15, to detail the criteria used to determine eligibility for the position of Chairman of Ilex URC; and who decided that the two candidates, who were initially deemed appointable, were unsuitable for the role. **(AQW 16306/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): In the competition to appoint a Chair for the Board of the Ilex Urban Regeneration Company, all candidates had to demonstrate the following eligibility criteria:

- (i) Experience at Board level demonstrating strategic leadership and effectiveness over a significant period.
- (ii) Experience of effective dynamic leadership, including developing, implementing and monitoring corporate business strategies.
- (iii) Experience at a senior level of effective corporate governance.
- (iv) Experience in applying interpersonal, influencing and networking skills to build commitment and consensus within a wide constituency of business community and political stakeholders and to deliver agreed outcomes.
- (v) Experience relevant to the discharge of the functions of a company including evidence of public sector investment leverage.
- (vi) Understanding of the potential contribution of Ilex in implementing the vision set out for the integrated regeneration of the Derry City Council area, including the effective development of the Ebrington and Fort George sites.

Following the interview process, two candidates were deemed by the interview panel to have met the criteria listed above and were put forward for consideration by us for appointment. We decided that this competition failed to provide a sufficiently wide range of candidates for us to select from and it was agreed to run a further competition for the position of Chair. The two candidates from the earlier competition are still eligible for consideration and their names will be included with any additional names from the competition which will be run before the end of the financial year.

Creative Industries Hub

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Creative Industries Hub will be in place at Ebrington by March 2013.

(AQW 17802/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Work is underway to convert former military accommodation, buildings 80/81, to house the Creative Digital Industries Hub on the Ebrington site. In advance of housing the Creative Digital Industries Hub, these buildings will be used to host the internationally

renowned Turner Prize as part of the 2013 UK City of Culture programme. The 2013 Turner Prize will be in place from October 2013 until January 2014.

Unanswered Questions

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why AQW 16306/11-15 remains unanswered.

(AQW 18046/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A response to AQW 16306/11-15 was issued on 20 February 2013.

Sexual Orientation Strategy

Ms McGahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Sexual Orientation strategy.

(AQO 3114/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We remain committed to publishing a Sexual Orientation Strategy. A draft consultation document to inform public consultation on the Strategy is currently under consideration within the Department.

Delay in Answering Questions

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the reasons for the delay in answering AQW 16779/11-15.

(AQO 3118/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer the Member to our answer to AQW 16779/11-15 which issued on 9 January 2013.

Freedom of Information Requests

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action they are taking in response to the Information Commissioner's findings on their Department's delay in responding to Freedom of Information requests.

(AQO 3119/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Officials have recently reviewed current practices for tracking and monitoring the processing of FOI requests, and new guidance has been issued to staff that will assist them in improving effectiveness.

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to publish the business plan for the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze prison site.

(AQW 19040/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Business cases are internal process documents which are neither intended for nor designed for public or external release or publications.

Business cases are not routinely published and we are of the opinion that there is no rationale for releasing this document.

Community Relations Projects

Mr McMullan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the community relations projects that they have funded over the past year, including the total amount paid to each project.

(AQO 3229/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM funding for community relations work has increased by 18% over the last four years to just over £10m per year. This level of funding reflects our commitment to work towards our vision of a shared and united community.

OFMDFM currently supports community relations activity through a number of programmes. In this financial year to date, over £10m has been allocated to community relations projects as follows:

- £594k to the Contested Spaces Programme which focuses on early years and parenting, shared education, youth engagement and shared neighbourhood activities;
- £536k to the Summer Interventions Fund which supports diversionary activities for young people within communities during periods of heightened tension;
- £3.3m to the District Council Good Relations Programme to cover a broad range of good relations activity;
- £472K to Central Good Relations to support projects such as Youth Leadership and Programmes for disengaged young people;
- £770k to the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme which focuses on citizenship, leadership and good relations.
- £4.36m to the Community Relations Council to administer a range of funding programmes on behalf of the department.

Workings of the Executive

Mr Dunne asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action is being taken to improve communications and increase public ownership of the workings of the Executive.

(AQO 3232/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are continually looking at ways to improve public awareness and understanding of the Executive's achievements through the use of a range of media channels.

As well as the use of traditional media, such as media releases, advertising and the branding of major capital projects, it is encouraging to note that the number of visits to the NIDirect website – which explains the range of Government services to the citizen – continues to grow.

Since April of last year, there have been in excess of six million visits to this website and the content is regularly updated.

The number of followers on the Executive's Twitter account continues to grow and many Departmental announcements are also published through our social media channels.

Ebrington Square, Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is the status of Ebrington Square, Londonderry in terms of flags being displayed at events; and whether they will seek discussions with the City Council and the Department for Regional Development to ensure that whatever status applies to Ebrington also applies to Guildhall Square.

(AQW 19053/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM is working closely with Ilex on the development of Ebrington. Events at Ebrington Square are currently governed by the Ilex Policy for Third Party Events at Ebrington (incorporating the Peace Bridge). This is an Ilex policy and not an OFMDFM one.

Events at Guildhall Square are governed through a permit system operated by Derry City Council and are outside the remit of our Department.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what impact the Welfare Reform Bill will have on their Department's (i) Child poverty; and (ii) fuel poverty policies.

(AQW 19118/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Coalition Government's Welfare Reform Act became law on 8 March 2012. The Minister for Social Development brought forward proposals for a Welfare Reform Bill to give effect locally to the proposed changes.

Given that the proposed legislation is still under consideration by the Assembly, it is too early to assess the potential impact on families and children here. We are aware that some have concerns. We will, of course, continue to monitor all the data in respect of poverty and its related issues.

OFMDFM: Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether any of the Special Advisers within their Department have made declarations of interest, pursuant to the obligation on civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19249/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No Special Advisers within OFMDFM have made declarations of interest.

Single Identity Groups

Mr I McCrea asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what funding opportunities are available from their Department for single identity groups.

(AQW 19283/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In relation to Community Relations funding, a project/activity will not be funded if the aims of the project or activity are to promote any one religious or political viewpoint solely to one community or constituency.

With regard to all other forms of funding, single identity groups can apply but the religious identity of the group is not a determining factor in the funding allocation decision.

North West 200

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much their Department has invested in the North West since May 2011.

(AQW 19360/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Since May 2011 we have committed £13.84m capital and £3.8m resource to Ilex for the regeneration of the site and buildings at Ebrington Square.

We have spent £886,000 on maintenance and for some development work at the Shackleton site in Ballykelly which will enable it to be used for a number of community and commercial events.

We also provided funding of £4.27m towards equality, good relations and ethnic minority programmes in the North West.

Victims and Survivors in North Belfast

Mr Humphrey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the grant aid awarded by their Department to groups working with victims and survivors in North Belfast, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19365/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is not possible to identify funding which has been allocated to groups which provide services solely to victims and survivors resident in North Belfast.

Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given that the Delivering Social Change Framework is focusing on signature projects and additional actions, whether Junior Ministers are responsible for delivering on the key priorities within the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People.

(AQW 19433/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Children and Young People's Strategy is being taken forward under the Delivering Social Change Framework.

To this end, the Children and Young Persons Early Action Paper, published in December 2012, takes full account of the principles of the Ten Year Strategy and the six high level outcomes. It identifies the key priorities for children and families to focus efforts and resources on a joined up approach to tackling poverty and improving the lives and experiences of our children and young people.

Actions arising from the Early Actions Paper are assigned to a lead department which is responsible for overseeing delivery as well as evaluating effectiveness. The delivery of the six Signature Programmes, which we announced on 10 October 2012 and which included proposed work around Family Support Hubs, Children's Nurture Units and Parenting Support Programmes, is the first tangible outworking of this approach.

Further actions will be identified taking account of the Early Actions Paper and the detail of the Children and Young People's Ten Year Strategy. The format in which these will be presented is under consideration.

Therefore, while the Junior Ministers have oversight of the Delivering Social Change Framework, much of the delivery on the key priorities of the Ten Year Strategy under the framework is the responsibility of a number of other departments and their respective Ministers.

Peace and Reconciliation Centre at the Maze

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the impact that the Peace and Reconciliation centre at the Maze may have on long established centres like Corrymeela.
(AQW 19463/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre will make facilities and central resources available to help develop the knowledge, learning and practice of local and international organisations working in this important sector.

The Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre will create synergies and co-ordinate, complement and add value to the objectives of many local peace building organisations.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement with local groups will help develop the work of the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre when it becomes operational in 2015.

Ministerial Sub-Committees

Ms Fearon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how many times the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People has met in the last 12 months; (ii) how many times the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Poverty and Social Inclusion has met in the last 12 months; (iii) who sits on both committees; and (iv) how many times the two committees have met on a joint basis within the last 12 months.

(AQW 19497/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ministerial Sub-Committee on Poverty and Social Inclusion and Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People are leading the Executive's Delivering Social Change programme.

Under the Delivering Social Change structure, both Ministerial Sub-Committees meet quarterly on alternate rotation, co-chaired by OFMDFM Junior Ministers. Once a year we co-chair a joint meeting of the two Sub-Committees. Membership of the two Sub-Committees comprises all Executive Ministers.

To date, two meetings of the Delivering Social Change Sub-Committee on Children and Young People have taken place within the last twelve months and one Delivering Social Change Ministerial Sub-Committee on Poverty and Social Inclusion has taken place.

The first joint meeting of the two Delivering Social Change Sub-Committees is scheduled to take place in April this year.

Racial Equality Strategy

Mrs Dobson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Racial Equality Strategy will be finalised, published for consultation and launched.

(AQW 19498/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are fully committed to tackling racial inequalities and promoting good race relations.

The Racial Equality Strategy is key to achieving these twin aims and officials have been working with minority ethnic representatives through the Racial Equality Panel to draft a new strategy that will meet the needs and aspirations of minority ethnic people and wider society.

We want to make sure that the document is fit for purpose and partnership working with representatives of minority ethnic people on the drafting of the Strategy will continue to ensure we achieve this aim.

We envisage that a 12-week public consultation will begin in spring this year.

The Strategy will be launched after this process has been completed and the consultation responses have been considered.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Mrs Dobson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they last met the Joseph Rowntree Foundation; and to outline what they expect to learn from its recent report on poverty and ethnicity.

(AQW 19499/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We sponsored the launch of "Poverty and Ethnicity in Northern Ireland: an evidence review" in Parliament Buildings on 4 February 2013.

The Poverty and Ethnicity review, together with other research, will form the evidence base for the forthcoming Racial Equality Strategy and ensuing actions.

The Department has contacts with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on various issues of mutual interest including racial equality, poverty and Delivering Social Change. A departmental official sat on the Advisory Group for the Poverty and Ethnicity review. We hope to continue this collaboration with the Foundation.

Race Strategy

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Race Strategy will be integrated with the Executive's strategies on the economy, investment, poverty, disability, children's, women's and rural development issues; and whether they have had any recent discussions with the respective Ministers.

(AQW 19522/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The new Racial Equality Strategy will address the complexity of identities, given that an individual's identity may be made up of several factors.

There will be clear linkages between implementation of the new Racial Equality Strategy and other anti-discrimination policies and strategies.

The Strategy will provide a framework for the mainstreaming of racial equality and good race relations in the implementation of all other relevant strategies.

The Racial Equality Strategy will be an Executive strategy and will therefore be discussed by the Executive in due course.

Northern Ireland Memorial Fund

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the current status of the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund; and how funding is allocated.

(AQW 19576/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund (NIMF) will remain in operation until the end of March 2013 at which stage the staff and funding responsibility will transfer to the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS).

Although the Fund closed for applications on 7 January 2013, recipients can continue to claim from their Letter of Offer up to 31 March 2013.

From April 2013 the VSS will take on the role of providing practical help and support to individual victims and survivors. To ensure continuity of service the VSS will contact all past recipients of the NIMF directly before 31 March 2013.

The NIMF is responsible for the assessment of applications and the decision to award funding to individuals through its grant schemes. We have no role in these operational decisions.

Economy and Jobs Initiative

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made on the introduction of energy efficiency measures, as set out in the Economy and Jobs Initiative, including the mechanisms for delivery.

(AQW 19593/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Officials from our Department are currently working with colleagues from the Department for Social Development and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to refine delivery and operational proposals, with a view to moving to early implementation of additional activity to supplement the Executive's existing retrofitting of energy efficiency measures in homes.

Minority Development Fund

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the next round of the Ethnic Minority Development Fund; and whether they can give an assurance that successful applicants will be notified before 31 March 2013.

(AQW 19595/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Minority Ethnic Development Fund remains a key element of our work to promote racial equality and good race relations.

Our officials have consulted representatives of the minority ethnic sector in order to produce a revised funding scheme that takes full account of a recent evaluation of the Fund and that reflects our objectives for the Fund, the needs within the sector and the need for good governance.

The Fund will run from the beginning of the new financial year for two years.

Adverts inviting applications are scheduled to appear in the press on 20 February 2013 and it is our intention that successful applicants will be notified before 31 March 2013.

Delivering Social Change Fund

Miss M McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Delivering Social Change Fund.

(AQW 19679/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A consolidated and integrated Delivering Social Change Fund has been established which subsumes the Social Protection Fund and takes forward Childcare, the Social Investment Fund and both current and future Signature Programmes under the Delivering Social Change delivery framework.

This Fund affords us the opportunity to respond quickly, and in a flexible manner, to urgent social needs as they arise and address the specific needs of some of our most in need individuals and families.

The initial allocation of £26 million made in October 2012 to the six Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes demonstrated the benefit of deploying Executive resources flexibly across departments.

Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People Action Plans

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the Early Actions Paper supersedes the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People Action Plans; (ii) when a further action plan for the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People will be developed, given that the last action plan ended in 2011; and (iii) how does the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People relate to the Delivering Social Change agenda.

(AQW 19685/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Children and Young People's Strategy is being taken forward under the Delivering Social Change Framework.

The Delivering Social Change Framework allows us to move away from previous lengthy and disjointed action plans and enables us to identify the most pressing issues and co-ordinate and focus action to maximise impact.

The Children and Young Persons Early Action Paper identifies the key priorities for children and families and focuses efforts and resources on a joined up approach to tackling poverty and improving the lives and experiences of our children and young people.

Actions arising from the Early Actions Paper will be assigned to a lead department which will be responsible for overseeing delivery as well as evaluating effectiveness.

The delivery of the six Signature Programmes, which we announced on 10 October 2012 and which included proposed work around Family Support Hubs, Children's Nurture Units and Parenting Support Programmes, is the first tangible outworking of this approach.

Further actions will be identified taking account of the Early Actions Paper and the detail of the Children and Young People's Ten Year Strategy. The format in which these will be presented is under consideration.

Policy Area Updates

Mr McDevitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress made in each policy area since their joint announcement on 18 July 2012.

(AQO 3351/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In agreeing the policy decisions contained in the 18 July announcement, we gave a strong mandate for action across a range of significant strategic issues.

We are pleased to be able to inform you that this mandate has been built upon with continuing strong progress on these important issues.

The Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation Board was established on 10 September 2012 and will take forward the regeneration of the Maze/Long Kesh site.

Kathryn Stone OBE was appointed to the post of Victim's Commissioner on 24 September 2012.

A competition to appoint a new Chair of ILEX was recently advertised, and applications closed on Friday, 8 February.

The Investment Strategy 2011-2021 was agreed at the Executive meeting held on 3 September 2012 and was published on 8 October 2012.

Work is ongoing on Cohesion, Sharing and Integration and a Strategy will be published on completion of discussions between parties.

The Education Bill was introduced on 2 October and completed Second Stage on 15 October. The Bill is currently in Committee Stage, which is scheduled for completion on 8 April.

Legislation on welfare reform, incorporating important protections secured for vulnerable people here, is being progressed in the Assembly.

Social Investment Fund steering groups comprising voluntary/community and political representatives were established in October 2012 in each social investment zone. We have received draft strategic area plans for all areas. Finalised strategic area plans should be ready by 28 February 2013.

Work on changes to post-2015 structures of Government is being taken forward by the Executive Party Leaders Group. The Reports of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee will contribute to this work.

Royal Ulster Agricultural Society

Mr Craig asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the plans in place to develop the road infrastructure at the Maze site now that the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society is moving to the development.

(AQO 3354/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Road infrastructure plans both on and around the site are currently being developed by the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation (MLK DC) as one part of an integrated transportation strategy for the site. The Corporation has as a high priority the development of improved linkages with the M1 to ensure that investment in essential road infrastructure facilitates the development of the overall Maze/Long Kesh site.

The MLK DC is working closely with the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) to help ensure the Agricultural Show in May is a success. The Corporation is providing a new site entrance and extensive on-site parking in advance of this year's Show, and will have utilities available on site for the RUAS. The RUAS are working closely with government agencies to ensure effective traffic management of the event which includes plans for the provision of traffic flow monitoring cameras.

Peace Projects

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their recent visit to Brussels in relation to Peace projects.

(AQO 3356/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We travelled to Brussels as negotiations to conclude an agreement on the EU budget for 2014-2020 entered a critical stage.

We used the opportunity to raise issues important to us at the highest levels within the European Union.

In Brussels, we met with the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz; the Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Maire

Geoghegan-Quinn; and the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn. We also met with Professor Danuta Hübner MEP, chair of the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development, MEPs Martina Anderson, Diane Dodds and Jim Nicholson, as well as the respective Ambassadors of the UK and Irish Permanent Representations to the European Union.

While in Brussels we also took the opportunity to attend the launch of an exhibition as part of the Connected Health and Prosperity Event held in the European Parliament under the aegis of Diane Dodds MEP and was supported by the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

We were also keynote speakers, along with the Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin, TD at a conference hosted by Commissioner Hahn entitled "Bringing Divided Communities Together - Sharing the Experience of the EU PEACE programme". The centrepiece of the conference was a number of innovative project testimonies from the PEACE Programme giving a detailed insight into the work accomplished and the impact that this work continues to have on people's lives. The Conference also explored whether the PEACE approach is a model that could be used for other regions that are emerging from conflict.

Our visit was timely as the final preparations were being made for the European Council on the 7-8 February where subsequently agreement was reached on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework.

While it is too early to provide a comprehensive analysis of the total budget, we can confirm that a provision of €150m has been included for a further PEACE Programme.

This is not the end of the negotiations as the European Parliament must give its approval. However, it is a significant step towards a further PEACE programme and we will continue to work with our allies in the European Parliament to secure its final agreement.

This is a considerable achievement for our Executive, a clear confirmation of the importance of increased European Engagement by our Executive.

The Executive is committed to continuing this engagement over the coming months as the crucial pieces of sector-specific proposals that decide the detail of future European Funding are finalised.

Early Intervention Approach on Children and Young People's Issues

Mr Beggs asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they are facilitating an early intervention approach on children and young people's issues across Executive Departments.
(AQO 3404/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: One of the key priorities of the Executive is to improve the life chances of our children and young people. We are committed to achieving this through the Delivering Social Change framework, which has placed an initial focus on the needs of children and their families to ensure the most urgent and significant problems in our society are addressed, and at the earliest opportunity.

The Delivering Social Change Framework is about creating a new culture and focus on cross-cutting work to achieve social benefits. In practical terms, this means focusing at a strategic level on early intervention both to tackle issues before they develop into problems and to give children a good start in life.

In support of this, on 10 October last year, we announced the allocation of £26 million of central funds for the delivery of six new signature programmes under the Delivering Social Change framework.

Significantly, these will improve numeracy and literacy levels, offer increased family support by way of additional family support hubs, nurture units and positive parenting programmes and assist those young people who are not currently in education, employed, or undertaking training.

These Signature Programmes complement the larger social and economic policies and programmes being carried out across departments to tackle poverty impacting on the lives of children and young

people. They also deliver on the priorities identified in the Children and Young Persons Early Action Document and take full account of the principles of the ten year Children and Young People's Strategy, including its six high level outcomes identified for children and their families.

The Children and Young People's Strategy specially commits the Executive to 'promote a move to preventative and early intervention practice without taking attention away from our children and young people currently most in need of more targeted services'.

The Executive is determined to see delivery and is confident that the Delivering Social Change framework provides the streamlined governance and accountability necessary to see real change that we all want for our children and young people, and society as a whole.

Numeracy and Literacy

Mr Storey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the signature projects intended to improve numeracy and literacy.

(AQO 3412/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department of Education is presently taking forward the Literacy and Numeracy Signature Programme under the Delivering Social Change framework. The programme seeks to support improvements in the literacy and numeracy levels within our schools.

Eighty recently graduated teachers will be appointed to ensure extra support for children in primary schools to achieve the expected levels in Reading and Maths, and 150 recently graduated teachers will be appointed to provide additional support to pupils in post-primary schools who are not predicted to get at least a 'C' grade in GCSE English and/or Maths.

The Western Education and Library Board, which has been appointed as the lead board to help deliver the project, has set up a Strategic Oversight Group with responsibility for developing regional criteria for the recruitment of teachers and the identification of eligible schools. This work is currently underway.

It is intended that the additional teachers will be appointed prior to the beginning of the 2013/14 academic year.

Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels

Mr Humphrey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress and role of the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels.

(AQO 3413/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The role of our Brussels office remains the same as when it was established in 2001 which is to serve as the focal point for liaison with the Institutions of the European Union in promoting the Executive's interests in areas of policy, legislation and funding.

The office aims:

- To assist the Executive further the aims of its Programme for Government through engagement with the European Institutions in Brussels.
- To assist departments contribute to EU policy development and implementation in relation to their core business and increase departmental engagement with elective European funding programmes.
- To maintain and increase contacts with the EU institutions and EU regional representations in Brussels, particularly using the leverage of the Barroso Taskforce.
- To facilitate contact with the EU institutions, Regional Offices and other relevant Brussels based organisations by our non-governmental and local government sectors.
- To raise the positive profile of the region in Brussels.

These were reaffirmed by the Executive when it approved the review of the European Division.

We officially opened new premises for our offices in December 2010 in the presence of European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso, as part of our commitment to improve the Executive's European engagement. These new premises have enabled our office to considerably increase the services it provides.

Since moving to new premises, up to the end of January 2013, 5,500 visitors have passed through our offices in Brussels, attending hundreds of policy seminars, meetings, cultural events and receptions. During this time, the office has facilitated 30 Ministerial programmes with Ministers increasingly attending the Council of the European Union. The office has also facilitated 8 visits by Assembly Committees and 4 by the Northern Ireland Assembly and Business Trust.

In September 2011, our Brussels office, in co-operation with the NI Arts Council, launched "The Brussels Platform". This cultural programme provides an opportunity to promote the diversity of cultural talent that we have to offer.

Other significant events held in our offices during this time include hosting seminars for Open Days, the European week of Regions organised by DG Regional Policy and the Committee of the Regions. In 2011, and again in 2012, the office hosted official Open Days seminars with over 120 attendees.

In February 2012, the office hosted an event to celebrate the awarding of the first Protected Geographical Indicator (PGI) to Lough Neagh Eels. The reception which featured some of our best local food products served to showcase the highest quality of our agri-food industry.

More recently, the office facilitated a Gala Dinner for over 60 people, hosted by Minister Poots, as part of a Connected Health and Prosperity Event held in the European Parliament.

The number of people based in our Brussels office has increased to 13. There are currently 3 OFMDFM staff working in Brussels, and they, along with 3 locally recruited support staff, comprise the Brussels element of OFMDFM's European Division. One Department of Agriculture and Rural Development officer and 2 InvestNI staff are co-located with the OFMDFM team. The 4 Barroso Task Force Desk Officers are also based in the office.

The running costs of the office are borne by OFMDFM. DARD and InvestNI contribute towards the costs of the office space and support services from OFMDFM.

During our most recent visit to Brussels on 29-31 January, our offices hosted, in co-operation with the SEUPB, an exhibition of PEACE III projects and a reception to coincide with the PEACE conference organised by the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn. The timing of these events was significant as negotiations to conclude an agreement on the EU budget for 2014-2020 entered a critical stage.

The Multi-Annual Financial Framework recently agreed by European Heads of State included a provision for 150 million euros for a PEACE IV Programme. While this is not the end of the process as the European Parliament must give its approval, it is a significant step forward and a clear confirmation of the importance of increased European Engagement by our Executive.

We are committed to continuing this engagement over the coming months and beyond as the crucial pieces of sector-specific proposals that decide the detail of future European Funding are finalised, such as the Common Agriculture Policy, Research and Development funding and Structural Funds, including the PEACE Programme. Our Brussels office will continue to be at the forefront of this work.

Unanswered Questions

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why AQWs 17802/11-15, 16306/11-15 and 18046/11-15 remain unanswered.

(AQW 20073/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A response to AQWs 17802/11-15, 16306/11-15 and 18046/11-15 was issued on 20 February 2013.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Contaminated Meat

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to ensure that Northern Ireland is not used as a transit point for contaminated meat.

(AQW 18577/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Meat or meat products entering the EU through the Border Inspection Post in the north of Ireland from Third Countries are subjected to full import checks as required by EU Directive 97/78.

Checks will also be carried out by my officials at the ports of entry to the north of Ireland on meat or meat products originating from within the EU, if a consignment is the subject of a notification through the Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food of the Commission (RASSF) or an EU safeguard Decision imposed by an EU country.

I have asked the FSA to urgently begin an enhanced programme of inspections across the north of Ireland. This enhanced regime commenced on 5th February and will sit alongside a Britain and the north of Ireland-wide sampling survey in which the two selected local district councils are already participating.

The purpose of this enhanced programme is to establish the sources of incoming meat ingredients to each establishment and assure that consumers' interests are being protected in relation to the declaration of the meat species in the establishments' products, and the precautions adopted by manufacturers to reduce or eliminate unintended inclusion of low levels of species that are not declared.

Northern Ireland Railways Halt at Ballykelly

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has had, or plans to have, any meetings with the Minister for Regional Development regarding the provision of a Northern Ireland Railways halt at Ballykelly and the funding issues surrounding such a provision.

(AQW 18704/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Any decision on where railway halts should be sited, their funding and approvals, falls within the remit of the Department for Regional Development. I wrote to the DRD Minister on 16th October 2012 inviting him to give serious consideration to establishing a rail halt at Ballykelly. At present there is no financial provision for such a halt.

My officials are currently liaising with colleagues in DRD to consider the transport implications for relocating my Department to Ballykelly including the potential for a railway halt. When I receive the initial options from officials I intend to seek a meeting with Minister Kennedy to discuss the way forward including funding implications.

Rural Development Programme Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the total amount of Rural Development Programme funding allocated to sports clubs, other than football or GAA clubs, broken down by sport.

(AQW 18864/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Rural Development Programme does not provide funding to sports clubs for direct sporting activities. However, where such an organisation wishes to promote a project that benefits the wider rural community and which is separate from their primary activity, this may be considered for funding.

Following open competition and robust assessment, funding has been awarded to clubs not associated with Soccer or GAA as follows:

Sailing - £75k to provide a stop off point on the North Coast canoeing trail.

Golf - £169k to provide better access to tourists visiting the area and provide additional community facilities.

In both cases these clubs were funded under measure 3.3 in support of actions to increase tourism in their respective local areas.

Profit Margins for Farmers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she can take to increase profit margins for farmers.

(AQW 19308/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: It is important to start by recognising that there are a range of factors which farmers and governments simply cannot control, such as international commodity markets, exchange rates and the weather. These can have a major impact on profitability, as the 2012 farm incomes estimates have illustrated. Therefore, when it comes to increasing profit margins, the focus must be on those issues that fall within the control of individual farmers, such as technical efficiency, management skills or the adoption of new technologies. These considerations will influence, for example, the development of the next Rural Development Programme and the type of research commissioned by DARD under the Evidence and Innovation Strategy. They also influence current Departmental efforts.

My Department has a number of ongoing initiatives aimed at helping farmers improve their competitiveness and profitability. Under the competitiveness strand of the current Rural Development Programme, my Department has provided £45 million funding for a number of schemes, including:-

- Farm Family Options, which includes both skills training and business mentoring;
- the Focus Farm Programme, which looks at promoting best practice, modern technology and innovative farm methods;
- Benchmarking, which is an important tool in monitoring and improving input costs and livestock production efficiency as well as assessing overall performance;
- The Supply Chain Development Programme, which supports farmers working together and with others to improve the rewards from their supply chain; and,
- The Farm Modernisation Programme, which provides support for farmers to modernise their holdings and improve production techniques.

Going forward, we need to build an industry that is not only competitive, but also resilient in the face of market volatility and other income shocks. I am hoping that the work of the industry-led Agri-Food Strategy Board will help set a growth agenda and contribute to the building of an industry that is robust, outward looking, self-reliant and profitable.

In the meantime, I am very aware of the current cash-flow difficulties many farmers are facing and I have taken a number of steps to help alleviate these problems. Recently, I announced my intention to bring forward the payment of the 2013 LFACA Scheme some three weeks earlier than planned. I have also asked for payments under the Countryside Management Scheme to begin in May 2013, some four months earlier than they began last year. My decision not to apply a further year's voluntary modulation will also help alleviate some of the financial pressure on farmers. In addition, my officials are providing practical information and advice to farmers through a series of on-going workshops to help mitigate the on-going impact of last year's poor weather conditions during the growing season.

Unmanned Aerial System

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 18113/11-15, whether the unmanned aerial system will be utilised for additional purposes in 2013.

(AQW 19329/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has no current plans to deploy unmanned aerial systems in new areas of work in 2013.

Aerial Surveillance Equipment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 18113/11-15, to detail her Department's definition of Commons; and what areas of Northern Ireland are classified as Commons.

(AQW 19332/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The term "Commons" is generic and is used to refer to areas of mountain or uplands that are used (shared) by several farmers. There is no single definition of a "Common". My Department records over 300 areas covering in excess of 36,000 hectares as "Commons".

In some cases these "Commons" are managed by Trustees and were established under the 1903 Irish Land Act, others are managed by Trustees and were set up under various pieces of legislation. Some areas are owned by individuals where several farmers have a right to graze the area and others are areas where there is no discernable ownership of the area and a number of farmers share the area by agreement.

Under the CAP Regulations my Department is required to notionally allocate an area used in common between individual farmers in proportion to their use or right of use of the area.

My Department provides notional areas to farmers who have shown they have a right to use or are using a "Common". The farmers use the allocated areas to support claims for subsidy.

In compliance with its obligations under EU law my Department must map such areas which are often large inaccessible areas that are difficult to map because of their remoteness and terrain.

The areas treated as "common land" by my Department are spread throughout the north and are mainly confined to mountains or upland areas. The majority of these areas can be found in Counties Antrim, Derry and Tyrone.

Rural Development Programme: Women

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to include measures exclusively aimed at women in the next Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 19376/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD's initial proposals for the next Rural Development Programme are currently being considered by a Stakeholder Consultation Group, which includes the NI Rural Women's Network. These initial proposals contain a range of measures which are open to women, either as farm business owners, landowners, rural entrepreneurs or members of a farm family.

I want to see a good uptake of these measures by rural women. The proposals for the next Rural Development Programme will go out for a full public consultation later in 2013 and I want to hear from rural women and our other stakeholders how we can better design our measures to encourage more applications from women, and increase their representation across the Programme generally.

In addition, an Equality Impact Assessment of the next Rural Development Programme will be carried out. This will look at the potential impact of the Programme on gender, as well as the other Section 75 groups. This consultation will take place at the same time as the consultation on the draft Programme, and will provide another opportunity for the public to have their say on the role of women within the next Rural Development Programme.

Job Opportunities for Women

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures she has taken to increase job opportunities for women living in rural areas.

(AQW 19377/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) 2007–2013 is not primarily a job creation programme however it has strong economic focus and provides funding for business creation and farm

diversification amongst other things. It is open to anyone living or working in a rural area irrespective of gender. Within the NIRDP women are a key target group both as direct and indirect beneficiaries of programme funding. Therefore while support for female entrepreneurs and job creation in general is crucial for a thriving and sustainable rural community, so also is the creation of the conditions that enable rural women to engage in and return to the world of work.

To date the Rural Development Programme has, despite the economic turn down, created 283 full time equivalent jobs available for both men and women. In addition 233 projects, undertaken by women applicants have been awarded £4.5m in grant aid. In recognition of the barrier that a lack of accessible childcare presents to woman in rural areas who wish to enter employment, the programme has supported 36 projects to aimed at developing both businesses and infrastructure for rural childcare provision.

Women have an important role to play in the delivery of Axis 3 of the NIRDP both as entrepreneurs and as members of Local Action Groups (LAGs). Therefore NIRDP's Network has facilitated a Thematic Working on Women in Rural Development. The group with representation from LAGs, YFCU, NIRWN and CSL has been identifying and sharing good practice and has held encouragement conferences and show cased inspirational role models. It has also worked closely with QUB with their gender mainstreaming work.

Finally, I am delighted to say that within LAGs there are 65 female LAG members who will ensure that the views of women are represented in the funding assessment and decision making processes.

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 18188/11-15, when she requested Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland to conduct an independent inspection of the Central Investigation Service.

(AQW 19380/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In May 2010 my Department's Permanent Secretary requested that the Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI) conduct an independent inspection of the Central Investigation Service. However, CJI were unable to do so and confirmed that DARD is not listed as one of the organisations that come under the CJI's statutory remit to inspect.

I intend to meet with the Minister of Justice and the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in the near future to discuss whether CIS can be added to the list of organisations that the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice must inspect.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what qualifications are deemed essential to the post of Investigator in the Central Investigation Service.

(AQW 19381/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Investigators must have a BTEC Certificate in Advanced Professional Investigative Practice. This qualification is accredited by a recognised body.

Fraud Hotline

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of calls received by the Fraud Hotline in each of the last three years, broken down by month.

(AQW 19384/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In response to your question, I have provided, at Annex A, the detail of the number of calls received by the Fraud Hotline in each of the last three years plus the current year to date, broken down by month.

Annex A

Year	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2009/2010	1	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
2010/2011	0	0	7	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	13
2011/2012	3	1	3	1	5	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	17
2012/2013	2	0	0	4	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	-	11

Fraud Hotline

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the costs incurred by the Fraud Hotline in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19385/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Fraud Hotline cost the Department £227 per annum. This equates to £681 over the last three years.

Farm Accident Statistics

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department records farm accident statistics.

(AQW 19418/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not routinely collect farm accident statistics. However, a one-off Social Survey of Farmers and Farm Families published by DARD in 2002 found that non-fatal accidents requiring medical treatment had occurred on 3 per cent of the surveyed farms in the previous 12 months.

North East Region Rural Development Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the projects that have been allocated funding in the North East Region Rural Development Programme cluster to date and the amount allocated to each.

(AQW 19425/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Axis 3 funding is delivered under a LEADER methodology through seven local council clusters. The methodology empowers local people to make local funding decisions to address local issues in line with an approved Local Development strategy.

The North East Region (NER) is one such cluster and below is a list of all projects in the North East Region that have been allocated funding. You will note that I have redacted the names of applications made by private individuals in line with their expectations of confidentiality and that all processing will take place in accord with the Data Protection Principles

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
	150 kw wind turbine	50,000.00
Moyle District Council	Bushmills Tourist Information Centre	250,000.00
Coleraine Riding for the Disabled Association	Coleraine Off-Road Trail Ride	174,780.00
	Green energy and environmental sustainability for Slemish Camping Barn project	50,000.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
	Metal Cutting Facility	50,000.00
Heritage Experience Ltd.	North East Heritage Experience	50,000.00
	The Range	50,000.00
GlenarmBuildings Preservation Trust	Technical Assistance Grant	5,000.00
Tullymore Rural Amenities Group	A Walk in the Park	1,982.81
Tinsdale Wood Design	Acquisition of additional machinery	5,900.00
DA O'Rawe Dental Surgery	Additional Dental Surgery	25,000.00
Carnroe Supplies Ltd	Additional Equipment Expansion	31,000.00
	Agricultural Equipment Fabrication and Repairs	11,250.00
Antrim Glens Tourism	Antrim Glens Tourism Publications	6,525.00
Coleraine Borough Council on behalf of Articlave Community Development Group	Articlave Village Plan	5,250.00
Maine Surface Finishing	Automatic Shot Blasting Facilities	50,000.00
Bailey Waste	Bailey Waste	9,000.00
Moyle District Council	Ballintoy Village Plan	3,000.00
Ballybogey & District Community Association	Ballybogey Village Action Plan	5,250.00
Woodbine Skips Ltd.	Barrel Separation System	50,000.00
	Boarding Kennels - Upgrade	16,085.08
	boarding kennels and cattery, also grooming parlour	45,000.00
The Bushmills Trust	Brighter Bushmills	14,310.00
Moorings Mediquip	Buddy Roamer walker	22,500.00
	Burnquarter Rifle Range	5,000.00
Cromore Castles	Business Expansion & Progression	39,612.50
	Camping Barn at Aunt Rachels Cottages	2,000.00
Carnlough Community Association	Carnlough Village Action Plan	5,250.00
	CASTLEROCK CATTERY	30,271.20
Castlerock Community Association (CCA)	Castlerock Community Development Project	23,947.98
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust	Causeway Coast and Glens, a landscape shaped by time	5,000.00
National Trust	Causeway Coastal Route Interpretation Project - Rathlin Island	4,250.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
National Trust	Causeway Coastal Route Interpretation Project - Cushendun Village	4,250.00
National Trust	Causeway Coastal Route Interpretation Project - Mussenden Temple	5,250.00
Giants Causeway Community Association	Causeway Townland Names	2,400.00
Cloughmills Community Action Team	Cloughmills C.A.T. Village Renewal Phase I	7,373.40
Cloughmills Community Association	Cloughmills Community Hall	35,701.50
	Cloyfin Wind Turbine	31,861.50
Colin Turtle Photography	Colin Turtle Photography	16,050.00
Islandmagee Community Development Association	Community Website Creation	4,915.35
Carnroe Supplies Limited	Computer Server Project	12,000.00
Ballymena Business Centre	Conference Audio Visual Equipment and Digital Display Unit	11,321.00
Larne Borough Council	Construction of a Covered BBQ and Event Area within Carnfunnock Country Park	67,500.00
	Cooldaragh Logs	16,070.00
Larne Borough Council	Creating A Clean, Green, Smart Tourist Environment	48,635.25
Larne Borough Council	Creating a Clean, Green, Smart Tourist Environment	45,198.75
Ballymena Borough Council	Creating a Cleaner Greener Tourist Environment	13,125.00
	Cromore Castles 2011	24,315.00
CT Sports Ltd	CT Sports Production Workshop	31,300.00
Cullybackey Residents Association	Cullybackey Village Action Plan	5,250.00
Cushendall District Development Group Ltd	Cushendall Development Group Application	11,190.00
Moyle District Council	Cushendall Village Improvement Scheme	51,720.00
Moyle District Council	Cushendun Village Plan	3,000.00
Ballymoney Borough Council	Dalriada Drives Feasibility Study	5,000.00
Antrim Estates Company	Dalriada Festival 2011	50,000.00
NER	Dalriada Links	5,000.00
Dervock & District Community Association	Dervock & District Village Action Plan	5,250.00
Dervock & District Community Association Limited	Dervock Streetscape Improvement Project	11,250.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
Acrodesign	Digital Print Machine	12,500.00
R.A. O' Neill Plant Hire LTD	Dredging projects	50,000.00
	Dressmaking & Alterations	1,350.00
	Dunaird Storage	50,000.00
Dunloy Development Partnership	Dunloy Village Plan	4,500.00
Agquip Ltd	Efficient Slurry Solutions	3,000.00
Agquip Ltd	Efficient Slurry Solutions	50,000.00
Ems Ltd	EMS Ltd Growth	33,500.00
Payescape	Enhance of IT infra-structure and Office environment	7,502.00
	Enhancing H&S on the Work Premises	15,424.34
Agquip Ltd	Equipment For Rapid Prototyping	36,975.00
Eventco (Caterers and Marquees)	Eventco Marquee Hire	31,687.50
D McV Wood Processors	Expanding Timber Processing Business	11,500.00
Loughbeg Garage Ltd	Expansion of Loughbeg Garage Ltd	50,000.00
	Expansion of Physiotherapy and Complementary Medicine Clinic.	2,579.63
moyle district council	Facilitation of Village Renewal and Development in the North east Rural Development Area	113,099.00
	Farm Energy Generation	30,900.00
Crow's nest Community Playgroup	Feasibility study into building a community hall suitable as use for Playgroup and out of schools cl	4,627.67
Antrim Estates	Feasibility study regarding installation off Mini Hydro electric	5,000.00
DFT(Diamonds Fixings & Tools) Ltd	Flaxmill extension & machinery	35,750.00
FMK Architecture Ltd	FMK Office Expansion	5,280.10
Coleraine Borough Council	Food Tourism Scoping	5,000.00
	Foriff Caravan Site (Improvements)	7,625.00
Ardclinis Outdoor Adventure	Garron Point Outdoor Education	26,250.00
Garvagh Museum Ltd	Garvagh Museum Ltd - Feasibility Study	5,000.00
	Garvalt Burn Hydroelectric Project.	50,000.00
	Glenn Eireann House	20,000.00
Gleno Valley Community Association	Gleno Valley Community Association Village Renewal Plan	4,875.00
Ballymena Borough Council	Glenravel Village Renewal Part 2	36,487.50

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
Awakin Ltd	Go Explore NI - Explore More!	15,000.00
Carnroe Supplies Ltd	Graphic Design Production	14,995.00
Moyle District Council	Gunagh Play Area	37,500.00
Moyle District Council	Hamill Terrace, Bushmills	48,585.00
	Hillhead Fishery	13,633.50
	Hydro Feasibility Study	2,750.00
Glenravel & District Community & Residents Association	Improving Glenravel Amenities	9,000.00
Dervock & District Community Association Limited	K.K. McArthur Festival of Running	14,325.00
	Kearney Vintage Tractors	3,783.34
Crusoes Coffee Shop	Kitchen And Shop Refurbishment	25,000.00
NER	Lough Neagh Co-operation Project	2,000.00
Coleraine Borough Council on behalf of Macosquin Village Community Association	Macosquin Village Plan	5,250.00
Maine Surface Finishing	Maine Surface Finishing - Wet Spraying	49,150.00
AJM Electrical Ltd	Manufacturing of festive lighting illuminations	9,846.74
Tinsdale Bespoke Furniture	Marketing and promotion of bespoke furniture	4,525.00
	Marketing Support for SC Accommodation	3,660.00
	McCollam Marine	3,482.50
	MCM Roadway Recycling	38,000.00
Larne Borough Council	Medieval Churches Project	22,250.25
Feeney Fabrications	Megabender	5,105.00
Ashgrove Engineering	Milling capacity expansion including new machine	50,000.00
Doherty Wood Shavings	Mixing Plant	37,500.00
ASF Engineering Limited	Modernisation of machine tools	12,000.00
ASF Engineering Ltd	modernisation of machine tools and marketing of asf engineering	22,567.50
Moyle District Council	Mosside Village Plan	3,000.00
Moyle District Council	Moyle District Council Public Realm Projects	187,031.25
Ballymena Borough Council	Myths & Legends Podcasts	5,000.00
Ballyprint.com	New Equipment	18,250.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
	new machinery	8,250.00
AQUAHOLICS	new purpose built dive vessel	50,000.00
North Antrim Ulster-Scots Culture and Heritage Region Hub (Na rUSh)	North Antrim Region Ulster-Scots Hub (Culture and Heritage Centre)	3,750.00
RPD Roofing	Office & Storage for RPD Roofing	46,000.00
CM Recycling	Operations Building	50,000.00
Broughshane Centre of Early Learning	Outdoor Play Area	14,285.00
	painting Victorian iron bridge	6,226.54
C McNicholl Portable Welding Service	Portable Welding Service	8,711.25
Portglenone Enterprise Group Property Limited (PEG)	Portglenone Village Renewal	47,328.75
Predator Charters Ltd	Predator Charters Ltd	47,430.00
The Village Garden (Broughshane)	Preserving Rural Heritage in Broughshane	1,140.00
Maine Surface Finishing	Primer Booth Installation	50,000.00
Bush Caravan Park	Project Works to Bush Caravan Park	28,239.00
PS Engineering	PS Steel Sales	12,500.00
Redbay Powerboating	Redbay Powerboating – Commercial Tourism Training Development	31,000.00
	Renewable energy	2,750.00
Larne Enterprise Development Co.Ltd. (LEDCOM)	Rural Conference Centre	33,000.00
Martin Contracting Services Ltd.	Rural contracting services business	23,724.00
	Rural Craft Production	45,000.00
Mid Antrim Tractors	Rural Export Support	5,000.00
Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Partnership	Rural Tourism Marketing	75,000.00
Seatons Marina	Seatons Marina Development	38,994.00
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust	Sense and Sustainability - A local sustainable tourism conference	5,000.00
David Stewart Engineering	Sheet Metal Production	38,315.00
Solve Engineering	Solve Engineering	5,453.00
CM Recycling	Static Woodchip Screening machine for CM Recycling business innovation	50,000.00
Stranocum & District Development Group	Stranocum Village Action Plan	5,250.00
Benbrook Enterprises	Structural Insulated Panel System	50,000.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
Paul Johnston Associates	Sustainable development and fisheries preservation	6,274.00
GAA Kit.com	TFMX-C1506 six head multi-needle garment embroidery machine	18,000.00
	Timber Recycling	6,000.00
Moneycarrie Engineering Ltd	To purchase a CNC plasma cutting machine	45,000.00
Tober Recycling	Tober Aluminium Recycling	50,000.00
	Translator's Office & facilities	21,738.00
Tullans Farm Holiday Park	Tullans Farm upgrade and extension stage 1	50,000.00
Cushendall Sailing and Boating Club	Ulster Laser Sailing Championships at Cushendall	2,711.25
	Victoria Glenn Design	1,900.00
NER	Village Links	5,000.00
Portballintrae Residents Association	Village Plan	5,250.00
Ballycarry Community Association	Village Plan Ballycarry	5,250.00
Rasharkin Community Association	Village Plan For Rasharkin	1,875.00
Millbrook Community Development Association	Village Plan Millbrook	5,250.00
Castlerock Community Association	Village renewal - Castlerock	35,482.50
Chain HR Ltd	Website Development and E-Marketing	4,593.75
	Wind Feasibility Study	2,500.00
	Wind Turbine Study	2,370.00
Philip Stewart Engineering	Workshop Expansion	35,000.00
	150kw wind turbine	2,750.00
Ballymena Borough Council	3 Rural Recreational Multi Use Games Areas	440,000.00
	3D High Definition Scanning	32,525.13
Ballymarlow & District Community Group	A Development and Growth Project for Ballymarlow & District Community Association	62,853.00
Maine Surface Finishing	Additional Paint Facility	50,000.00
Agquip Ltd	Advanced Manufacturing Solutions	49,750.00
Larne Borough Council	Antrim Hills Walking Festival	6,750.00
Coleraine Borough Council	Articlave Village Renewal	62,499.75
Ballymoney Borough Council	Ballybogey Multi-Use Games Area	62,499.75

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
Ballymaconnelly Renewal Group	Ballymaconnelly Renewal Project	6,836.25
Black's Organic Farm	Ballyvennaught hydro-electric scheme	50,000.00
Ballymena Business Centre	BBC 20KW PV Solar Project	30,000.00
Glenariff Improvement Group	Beach Cafe Feasibility Study	2,500.00
Bestbusprice.com	Bestbusprice.com	6,030.00
Broughshane Environmental Waterfowl & Wildlife Trust	Broughshane Waterfowl & Wildlife Centre	81,682.50
The Bushmills Trust	Bushmills Heritage Tourism Project	45,165.00
	Business Expansion - Eventco	30,025.00
	Cafe/Coffee Shop	50,000.00
	Cameron Steele Physiotherapy	45,353.50
Loft Sound LLP	Capital Equipment Acquisition & Expansion Program	21,850.00
Tinsdale Specialist Joinery Ltd	Capital Investment	16,750.00
	Carncairn Hydroelectric	50,000.00
Carnlough Community Development Group Ltd	Carnlough Village Implementation - Phase One	12,375.00
National Trust	Carrick a Rede - Beyond the Bridge	43,500.00
	Castletown Caravan Park	45,000.00
Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism	Causeway Coast & Glens Visitor Itineraries Marketing	75,000.00
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust	Causeway Coastal Route Interpretation Project - CCGHT Strategic Interpretive Benches	7,800.00
Ballymoney Borough Council	Cloughmills Biodiversity Riverside Walk and Activity Area	55,230.00
Moyle District Council	Cushendun Caravan Park Camping Pods	28,125.00
	Davison Renewable Energy	50,000.00
	Day Nursery	50,000.00
Ballymoney Borough Council	Dervock Community Facilities	247,500.00
	Development and diversification of existing private music business in rural location.	1,700.00
	Diversification into renewable energy generation at townland of Ballydown	2,750.00
Ballymoney Borough Council	Drumaheglis Tourism Development Project	465,800.00
	Dunamallaght Farm Self Catering Accommodation	50,000.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
Dunloy Development Partnership	Dunloy Community Centre	250,000.00
E M Autorepairs	EM Auto Repairs	1,500.00
	Engineering Workshop	20,750.00
Moyle District Council	Enhancing the sea based tourism product on the North Antrim Coast	352,886.00
Entyre Recycling Ltd	Entyre Recycling Ltd	50,000.00
Ballygally Community Development Association (BCDA) Ltd	Establishing a Social Enterprise & Community Hall	109,000.00
	Extension & Redevelopment Stage 2	14,700.00
Eagle Glen Community Patnership Ltd	Extension to Community Centre	176,250.00
Larne Borough Council	Family Recreation Area on the Fair Hill	62,499.75
J.L. and A.I. Baxter Farm Partnership	Farranlester wind turbine	2,750.00
	Feasibility study into a potential micro hydro-electric scheme at Knockan, Broughshane.	2,750.00
Festival Productions	Festival Productions	11,500.00
	Gaining Geographical Information Systems capabilities	3,400.00
Garvagh Development Trust (GDT)	Garvagh Village Renewal	45,142.50
Garvagh Development Trust (GDT)	Garvagh Village Renewal - Phase 2	17,357.25
Glenravel & District Community & Residents Association	Glenravel Village Renewal	17,010.00
The Glens Youth Club Ltd	Glens Youth Club	222,570.00
Larne Borough Council	Gobbins Cliff Path - Steel Staircase	403,087.00
'Everafter' Graveyard Solutions Survey Solutions (NI) Ltd	Graveyard Solutions	23,325.00
H&T Woodend	H&T Woodend Wind Turbine Installation	50,000.00
Moyle District Council	Hamill Terrace Public Art	12,000.00
Okotech Ltd	heatboss	7,200.00
Larne Borough Council	Heritage led 'treasure trail' through Glenarm Village	50,400.00
	Hydro Electric Scheme	2,750.00
	Hydro scheme, Farranmacallan Rd, Torrhead	2,750.00
	Hydro-electric Scheme	2,750.00
	Hydro-electric Scheme	2,750.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
	Hydro-electric Scheme	2,750.00
Loughgiel Community Association Ltd	Improvement of Early Years Services in a rural community	113,753.32
North East Region Lag	Innovative Village	5,000.00
North East Region Local Action Group	Innovative Village	61,200.00
	Investigation of Renewables including Wind Turbine(s)	2,750.00
Kearney Vintage Tractors	Kearney Vintage Tractors Business Development	12,500.00
Kells & Connor Community Improvement Association	Kells & Connor Community Improvement Initiative	34,648.50
Kells and Connor Communitiy Improvement Association	Kells and Connor History Trail	15,600.00
Ballymena Borough Council	Kells Community Garden	14,880.00
Coleraine Borough Council	Kilrea Play Park & Recreational Area	129,990.75
Coleraine Borough Council	Kilrea Village Renewal	62,499.75
Kings Country Cottages	King Country Cottages	5,070.00
Laragh Lodge	Laragh Lodge Marketing Development	5,906.50
Learning to Grow	Larne Lough Centre for Traditional and Environmental Skills	50,000.00
Learning to Grow	Larne Lough Therapy Garden	35,400.00
Loughgiel Community Association	Loughgiel Sowing Seeds For A Healthy Future	127,125.00
Low Carbon Solutions Ltd	Manufacture of Combined Heat & Power Units	50,000.00
	Mc Closkey GAIA 133 Wind Turbine Installation	38,041.00
	McKillop Renewable Project	2,525.00
	New and upgrade of facilities	43,500.00
Quad-X	New Factory Materials	50,000.00
Countryside Recreation Northern Ireland	North Coast Canoe Trail and Ballintoy Harbour Bothy	45,330.50
Coleraine Borough Council	Orientation & Interpretative Project, Castlerock	27,017.25
Ballymena Borough Council	Portglenone Phase 3	250,000.00
Portglenone Enterprise Group Property Ltd	Portglenone Village Renewal	15,000.00
Cloughmills Community Action Team	Powering Cloughmills	4,125.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
	Provision of veterinary nurse training facilities	17,892.50
Bailey Waste	Purchase/installation of automatic baler	50,000.00
Ramage Contracts	Ramage Contracts	11,702.20
	Rathlin Island Hostle	50,000.00
Coleraine Borough Council	Recreational Area in Articlave	90,049.07
Ballycarry Community Association	Restoration of Ballycarry Heritage	34,132.80
Moyle District Council	Runkerry ASSI Boardwalk	7,219.50
The Sash Renovation Company	Sash Window Manufacturing	12,050.00
	Scott Wind	2,162.50
Scullion Hurls	Scullion Hurls - Developing the business to tourism	10,000.00
	Slemish Camping Barn and Arts Centre	50,000.00
	Springhill hydro-electric scheme	42,207.50
	The Barn @ Dundermotte	49,000.00
Ballymoney Borough Council	The Old Mill Site Feasibility Study	5,000.00
Prettyuseful Map Company Ltd	The Pretty Useful Map Company Ltd	9,714.50
Glenariff Improvement Group	Townland Boundary Marker Scheme	17,812.50
Village Links (Mainstream)	Village Links (Mainstream)	73,000.00
Moyle District Council	Village Renewal Facilitation/Animation in the NER Area	16,125.00
asf engineering limited	Water jet cutting machine	50,000.00
Moyle District Council	Waterfoot Village Improvement Scheme	62,055.75
Moyle District Council	Waterford Watersport & Caravan Amenity Block	96,750.00
	Wind energy diversification	45,575.00
Fergus and Samuel Miskelly	Wind Monitoring Analysis and Feasibility Study	2,750.00
	Wind Turbine	2,750.00
	Wind Turbine Feasibility Study	2,750.00
	Wind Turbine Feasibility Study	2,750.00
	Wind Turbine Feasibility Study	2,750.00
	Wind Turbine on lands at 48 Loughill road	2,750.00
	Woodbank Hydroelectric project	50,000.00
	Ballyvoy Camping Barn	50,000.00

Org Name	Project Title	Grant Awarded
Bailey Architecture	Construction of a new office to facilitate expansion of existing architectural business	17,385.00
Broughgammon Farm	Hydro Electric Feasibility Study	2,500.00
	Indoor exercise areas for horses and dogs at Firgrove Pet Resort and enclosed horse walker.	15,700.00
	Linford power generation	2,750.00
Ashgrove Engineering	Machine Capability Upgrade	50,000.00
	Sandblasting equipment	2,750.00
	Wind Feasibility Study	2,750.00

Agri-Environment

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that the EU Agriculture Committee has signalled a ring fencing of 25 percent for agri-environment spend, what plans her Department has to match or increase funding for agri-environment?

(AQW 19446/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Agri-environment in the current NI Rural Development Programme accounts for 36% of the overall programme budget. I have no plans at present to increase this percentage for the remainder of the current programming period.

My Department in conjunction with our stakeholders is currently considering the overall needs of agriculture, the environment and rural areas for the future rural development programme. However the shape and size of the 2014-2020 programme and the balance of funding across priorities will be very dependant on the rural development budget available.

The EU Commission rural development proposals require climate change and the environment to be cross cutting objectives for the 2014-2020 programme. The MEP agriculture committee amendment proposes a ring fencing of 25% funding for the agri-environment and organic farming measures. There are however other measures within the proposed regulation which will also contribute to achieving our environmental objectives. The final rural development regulation has not yet been agreed and the list of measures which may contribute to this objective is still subject to change.

Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what was the total spend on hospitality by her Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19493/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Hospitality costs for the Department and its Agencies for 2011-12 were:

2011/12 £53,259

Freeza Meats, Newry

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, further to her press statement and pursuant to AQW 18544/11-15, when she became aware that meat from Poland that was being stored at Freeza Meats, Newry and contained 80 percent horse DNA, was being detained due to the packaging and queries regarding labelling and traceability.

(AQW 19503/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD Officials have been aware since the autumn of 2012 that two pallets of meat had been detained at Freeza Meats as part of an ongoing investigation being taken forward by Newry and Mourne District Council.

As a result of sampling carried out behalf of the FSA on the 25th January 2013, it was confirmed to DARD Officials by the FSA at a meeting of Food and Feed Incident Management Group on the afternoon of Friday 1 February 2013 that this material was 80% horse meat.

This information was confirmed in a submission, copied to me at 17.33 on the same day.

Solar Energy

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 19010/11-15, to detail the number of successful applications for solar energy in each Local Action Group area in the Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 19543/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The number of successful applications to Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme for solar energy projects are as follows:

Cluster	Number of Successful Solar Applications
ARC	0
DRAP	2
LRP	2
NER	1
SOAR	1
SWARD	5
GROW	0

Local Action Groups

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 19010/11-15, to detail the monetary value of each application in each Local Action Group area.

(AQW 19544/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below breaks down the monetary value of applications for solar energy projects supplied in AQW 19010/11-15 into individual project amounts.

Cluster	No of applications	Grant requested £
ARC	2	75,000 75,000
DRAP	1	47,360
LRP	4	15,000 9,479 70,000 44,976
NER	1	30,000
SOAR	1	50,000

Cluster	No of applications	Grant requested £
SWARD	12	40,000
		40,000
		55,000
		10,500
		11,000
		11,000
		26,000
		19,000
		7,250
		50,000
		50,000
6,300		
GROW	0	

Live Cattle Export Business Opportunities

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department is aware of any live cattle export business opportunities to Libya.

(AQW 19554/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There is presently no health certification in place to facilitate the export of live cattle to Libya.

Cockle Fishing

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many cockles were in Belfast Lough in 2009 prior to the experiment of cockle fishing when 13 vessels were allowed to enter Belfast Lough; and how many cockles were in the ground when this experiment was over.

(AQW 19571/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In February 2009, prior to the start of the 2009 experimental fishery, the Belfast Lough Cockle sites were estimated to hold 850 tonnes. In March and June 2010, surveys of the sites indicated a cockle resource of 150 tonnes.

Illegal Horse Movements

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department was aware of illegal horse movements prior to 25 January 2013.

(AQW 19667/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has been aware of allegations relating to movement of horses which have not been in full compliance with the Horse Passport Regulations (NI) 2010. Compliance checks have been conducted, and where irregularities have been detected, direct action such as the prevention of movement of relevant consignments [to Britain] has been taken.

Children and Young People's Action Plan 2011-2013

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to strengthen the social and economic infrastructure of rural areas in North Antrim in line with the Children and Young People's Action Plan 2011-2013.

(AQW 19712/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD takes its Section 75 responsibilities seriously and we are working hard to ensure that children and young people in rural communities throughout NI have a voice in shaping those public policies that impact on their lives.

Most of the Actions in our Children & Young People's Action Plan are not specifically targeted at any particular area of NI although hopefully the actions in the Plan will appeal to young people right across NI, including those living in the North Antrim area and other rural communities too. Our work has delivered on outcomes for children and young people right across rural NI, for instance;

A minimum of 5% of the budget for Axis 3 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-13 is directed towards benefiting young people and children. In the North East Region (NER) Joint Council Committee area, which includes the North Antrim area, grant assistance of just over £2 million has been awarded towards projects which are recorded as benefiting children and young people. This represents over 22% of the total allocation currently committed by NER.

Development of the next Rural Development Programme, covering the period 2014 to 2020, is currently underway. The Programme is being developed in line with Europe's priorities for Rural Development, which include social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) is a leading representative group for young people in agriculture and rural communities in NI. DARD currently provides a 3 year grant of £75k per year to the YFCU (2011-14) subject to YFCU fulfilling five specific work areas, as agreed. These include;

- Joint campaigns and activities in conjunction with the GAA.
This initiative is bringing young people from different community backgrounds together to work on common issues.
- A schools outreach programme of a cross-community nature.
Young people in Key Stage 3 and 4 from different community backgrounds are involved in sporting and life based activities together. The aim is to break down barriers and widen experiences in a programme which fits in with the school curriculum.

As stated in our Plan we have, and will continue to meet with children & young people and their representative organisations throughout NI to identify further useful actions that our business areas can take forward to better promote participation and involvement of children and young people in all areas of NI.

Single Wind Turbines

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers have constructed single wind turbines on their land, in the last three years.

(AQW 19738/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has no statutory responsibility in the construction of wind turbines on farms or the auditing of them, therefore I cannot answer your question.

Horse Meat Contamination

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many meetings she has held with major supermarket chains in connection with the recent issue of horse meat contamination.

(AQW 19787/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In order to support the Agri-food industry in my role as DARD Minister, I met with the NI Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) whose members include for example Spar, Costcutter, Vivo, NISA and many local traders, and the NI Retail Consortium (NIRC) whose members include Tesco, Sainsburys, Marks & Spencer and Asda, on 13 February 2013 to discuss the on-going horsemeat problem and promote the reputation of safe local produce. A representative from LIDL was also present at the meeting.

Caravan Parks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what proportion of the £4 million investment by Forest Service for upgrading caravan parks will be allocated to North Down.

(AQW 19916/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A business case is being developed which will consider how best Forest Service can invest the £4 million allocated as part of the Jobs and Economy Initiative.

At this stage no decisions have been taken about how or where the money should be spent.

Horse Meat

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many meetings she has had with (i) the Food Standards Agency; and (ii) the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety since the news broke of horse meat being found in food products.

(AQW 19939/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have met with the Food Standards Agency on 5 occasions and the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety once since the news broke of horse meat being found in food products.

Food Produce Containing Horse Meat

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether burgers or meat products containing horse meat have been supplied to her Department's public buildings or the College for Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise.

(AQW 19947/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I can confirm that burgers containing horse meat have been supplied to the Eurest outlets at Greenmount and Loughry campuses of CAFRE. CAFRE has a service contract with Eurest (a subsidiary of Compass) which commenced in August 2011, to provide catering across the three CAFRE campuses.

Compass took the precautionary measure of withdrawing from the menu all burgers supplied by a manufacturer within its supply chain, whose products were referred to in the media and sent samples for testing. Subsequently, on Thursday 14 February, the test results revealed traces of equine DNA which Compass notified immediately to CAFRE Management. On Friday 15 February, as soon as CAFRE received written confirmation from Compass, all staff and students were notified of the situation.

I can also confirm Serco provides the catering services in Dundonald House. They are not aware of any instance where horsemeat has been confirmed in any of the products sold by them.

Vaccination of Badgers and Cattle

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what information she has provided to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee for their inquiry into the vaccination of badgers and cattle in England and Wales in relation to Bovine TB.

(AQW 20137/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee's inquiry into the vaccination of badgers and cattle in relation to Bovine TB.

While the role of the EFRA Committee is to examine the policy of Defra, we shall respond to any requests the Committee may make to DARD and shall be interested to see the outcome of its inquiry.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Olympians and Paralympians nominated for an Honour

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list every person, including Olympians and Paralympians, whom she nominated for an Honour within the Queen's New Year Honours.

(AQW 18202/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): None.

Department of Education

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education how the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority will achieve savings of £40million by the end of the budgetary period.

(AQW 19206/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The creation of ESA will assist in the delivery of two areas of savings within the Department's Savings Delivery Plan. Firstly, the establishment, under ESA of a regionalised schools development service importantly secures future professional development in schools whilst savings of the £25million per year are being delivered from the budget for professional support for schools. Secondly, the regionalisation of education administration, under ESA, shall make that administration sustainable amidst the £15 million savings being made per year from the administration and management costs of DE's arms-length bodies.

Finally, and more longer term, the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit's three reports into the scope for cost reduction in educational services outline further the potential for ESA to realise savings. A key finding of these reports was that there was often unexplained variation in practice and in costs across the Education & Library Boards. A central theme of the reports was the scope to improve value for money by operating services on a more consistent basis, learning from and applying good practice that already exists within some ELBs and best practice from elsewhere.

The establishment of ESA will require the design and delivery of support services that operate consistently across all parts of the north. This provides an early opportunity to address unnecessary variations in practice and to apply learning and best practice in line with the recommendations of PEDU. That work is now being taken forward.

Teachers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many teachers, who have qualified in the last two years, have failed to obtain employment as a teacher.

(AQW 19419/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Not all graduates will have registered with the General Teaching Council (GTCNI) as they may wish to teach elsewhere or to pursue a different career path. The table below details the number of teachers who have qualified in the last two years; the number who registered and of those registered the number who failed to obtain any employment as a teacher in schools in either a permanent or temporary capacity. Figures do not include teachers employed in Voluntary Grammar Schools.

Graduate Year	Graduate numbers	GTCNI Registered Graduate numbers	Number of registered graduates failing to find employment as a teacher
11/12	662	538	70
12/13 (to date)	639	484	101

Staff Salary Payments

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what is the unit cost of producing a salary payment by (i) his Department's Teachers Branch; (ii) an Education and Library Board; and (iii) a voluntary grammar school.

(AQW 19469/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The unit cost of producing a salary payment by (i) DE Teachers' Pay Team and (ii) each Education and Library Board are detailed in table below: -

	Unit cost Financial Year 2011/2012
DE Teachers' Pay Team	£3.96
BELB	£5.45
WELB	£6.15
NEELB	£7.95
SEELB	£8.25
SELB	£7.93

The Department does not hold this information in respect of Voluntary Grammar Schools and to obtain it would be disproportionate in terms of cost.

Voluntary Grammar Sector

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what is the annual value of goods and services procured by the Voluntary Grammar sector.

(AQW 19470/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is not possible to accurately identify from voluntary grammar school accounts the annual value of goods and services procured by sector, as certain categories of expenditure may contain costs not solely associated with the procurement of goods and services. This includes expenditure on sports and games, or health and safety. It is also not possible to separate the total value of those goods and services procured using public funding and those procured using other funding sources.

The total expenditure classified by voluntary grammar schools as other operating costs and expenditure on school meals and canteen provision (i.e. excluding all staff salaries) was £38 million in 2011-12. It is reasonable to assume that the majority of this expenditure will be on the procurement of goods and services.

It should be noted this figure does not generally include expenditure associated with preparatory departments or boarding departments. However, some schools do not separate school meal and canteen expenditure for preparatory departments and in such cases the total expenditure for the school has been included.

The Education and Library Boards have advised that they do not hold details of which contracts are utilised by particular schools, however, all schools can access Board contracts and are issued with usernames and passwords for ELBCAT.

Children with July and August Birthdays

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the impact of the change in legislation on children with July and August birthdays on applications within each school sector.

(AQW 19471/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The July/August priority pre-school admissions criterion was introduced to address concerns that children with a July/August birthday, if they failed to secure a pre-school education place,

would not benefit from an educational experience until after their fifth birthday when they commenced primary education.

There is no educational reason why older children should have priority access to pre-school education. The legislative amendment was made to remove a provision which evidence indicated may have a detrimental effect on younger children's educational outcomes.

When this requirement was introduced the level of pre-school provision stood at around 45%. Provision has increased significantly since then, reflected in the current Programme for Government commitment to ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.

Removal of this priority admissions criterion will therefore promote equality of access to pre-school education at all types of pre-school setting.

Northern Ireland Curriculum

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the current nursery curriculum as a basis for developing a revised foundation stage of the Northern Ireland curriculum.

(AQW 19472/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Learning to Learn Framework proposed ensuring that experiences in primary school build more effectively on the child's previous education and learning experiences, and included the proposal to extend the Foundation Stage to include a non compulsory year (pre-school) and two compulsory years (primary), with one foundation curriculum to incorporate pre-school.

The curricular guidance for pre-school education is designed to support and promote good quality pre-school educational provision and outlines the range of learning opportunities which children of this age should have through play and other relevant experiences. The Foundation Stage aims to build on pre-school learning experiences by providing children with an appropriate learning programme to develop their dispositions to learn and to provide them with the skills and competencies they will need to succeed in school and future life.

The Chief Inspector's Report 2010-12 states that "A greater number of primary schools need to develop links at key transition stages, from pre-school to Foundation Stage."

The proposal to extend the Foundation Stage to include the non compulsory pre-school year is aimed at enabling primary schools to develop better links between the existing statutory primary and non statutory pre-school curricula and building more effectively on the previous learning experiences of children ensuring a continuum of provision.

The focused consultation concluded on the 31 January 2013 and I will consider the comments received during consultation and their impact on the current proposals before finalising the way forward.

Shared Education Working Group

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education for an update on the work of the Shared Education Working Group.

(AQW 19500/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Ministerial Advisory Group, on advancing shared education, has engaged with a wide range of key stakeholders, individuals and interested parties with a call for written submissions in October/November 2012. They also visited a number of projects and examples of good practice throughout the North of Ireland. Further information can be obtained from the Queens University Belfast website: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/MinisterialAdvisoryGroup/ProgrammeofWork/>

I anticipate receiving their report by the end of this month.

Home To School Transport Scheme

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education to detail, for each of the last three years, (i) the number of (a) primary school pupils; and (b) post-primary school pupils enrolled at schools within Translink Metro zones; and (ii) as a proportion of each total, how many pupils were eligible for free travel on existing Metro services through the Home to School Transport scheme.

(AQW 19527/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Belfast Education and Library Board has supplied the following information:

	Number of pupils enrolled in BELB schools within Metro Zones	Number of pupils eligible for Metro passes	Proportion of total enrollment with passes
2011/12 Primary	21,835	119	0.54%
2011/12 Post Primary	29,584	1256	4.25%
2010/11 Primary	21,611	133	0.62%
2010/11 Post Primary	29,818	1260	4.23%
2009/10 Primary	21,648	152	0.70%
2009/10 Post Primary	29,922	1173	3.92%

GCSE Examinations

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to list the meetings he has had with his counterparts in other regions of the United Kingdom to discuss proposed revisions to GCSE examinations.

(AQW 19538/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I met with my Ministerial counterparts in Wales and Scotland to discuss proposed revisions to GCE / GCSE examinations as detailed below:

- Leighton Andrews AC / AM on 4 July 2012
- Michael Russell MSP – Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong learning on 24 August 2012

I sought a meeting with Michael Gove to discuss changes to GCSE and A level qualifications, in September 2012. He declined to meet with me. I will however be discussing qualifications reform with Elizabeth Truss MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Education (in England) on 28 February 2013.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant of AQW 19038/11-15, to detail the findings of the (i) Deloitte assignment on the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) delivery models and location options; and (ii) Price Waterhouse Coopers assignment into the provision of an assessment centre for ESA.

(AQW 19579/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Deloitte assignment produced recommendations for an organisation structure for the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) to Head of Service level. Their recommendations were designed also to help inform the development of locations options for ESA, including ESA headquarters (HQ), sub-regional offices and other related accommodation. The document is detailed and so I have arranged for a copy of it to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Under the same assignment Deloitte also produced a paper on ESA location strategy. This was completed in April 2010 and suggested a decentralised model with the clustering of relevant services for purposes of efficiency.

The Price Waterhouse Coopers assignment in question was to design and manage a recruitment process for the appointment of seven Directors to ESA. The process was consistent with the four principles set out in the NICS Commissioner's Code, including the design and implementation of an assessment centre. The recruitment process commenced on 15 June 2009 with the advertisement of seven Director posts for ESA. The initial recruitment process saw the appointment of six of the seven Directors. In October 2009 a second competition was run to appoint the seventh Director which concluded at the end of December 2009 resulting in no successful appointments being made.

Non-Recognition of A-Levels in the Republic of Ireland

Mr Storey asked Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW16096/11-15, for an update on the current situation.

(AQW 19582/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: CCEA continue to work with their counterparts in the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and Central Applications Office (CAO), to address issues relating to Applied A Levels, BTECs and the A* grade. I have decided that these issues should be included within the scope the fundamental review of GCSEs and GCE A Levels here.

Following a meeting between the IUA and CCEA in November 2012, they are now analysing statistical information with a view to producing a joint paper highlighting a number of fundamental issues about the current system which need to be addressed. It is not possible to give an exact timescale for production of this report. However, CCEA has advised that details of the work to be undertaken will be finalised and timelines agreed with the IUA in the near future.

Teacher Education Review

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 16370/11-15, for an update on the current situation.

(AQW 19598/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The proposed strategy document will represent the culmination of the most detailed review of teacher education undertaken in the last thirty years. Work to update and refine the contents of the strategy has been ongoing and I have asked officials to brief me further on the broad proposals contained in it.

The final strategy document will be published with the agreement of the Minister for Employment and Learning and following further engagement with key stakeholders.

School Closures

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many pupils have been affected by school closures in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 19600/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The total number of pupils affected by school closures in each of the last ten years will include those who were attending the schools at the time of their closure, as well as those attending schools to which pupils transferred and, potentially, those children who would otherwise have attended the school, had it not been closed.

Of these three groups, the Department is only able to provide information on the number of pupils attending the school at the time of the school census previous to the school closure. This information has been provided, for each of the last ten years, in the table below.

Pupils attending schools which were closed in 2002/03 – 2011/12

Year of closure	Pupils attending schools closed during that year
2002/03	339
2003/04	65
2004/05	111
2005/06	457
2006/07	373
2007/08	712
2008/09	623
2009/10	123
2010/11	323
2011/12	352

Source: School census.

Note: Figures relate to children attending nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools in the years specified.

Education and Library Boards: Goods and Services Procured

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what services are procured by voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools from Education and Library Boards.

(AQW 19602/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is not possible to accurately identify from voluntary grammar school accounts the annual value of goods and services procured by sector, as certain categories of expenditure may contain costs not solely associated with the procurement of goods and services. This includes expenditure on sports and games, or health and safety. It is also not possible to separate the total value of those goods and services procured using public funding and those procured using other funding sources.

The total expenditure classified by voluntary grammar schools as other operating costs and expenditure on school meals and canteen provision (i.e. excluding all staff salaries) was £38 million in 2011-12. It is reasonable to assume that the majority of this expenditure will be on the procurement of goods and services.

It should be noted this figure does not generally include expenditure associated with preparatory departments or boarding departments. However, some schools do not separate school meal and canteen expenditure for preparatory departments and in such cases the total expenditure for the school has been included.

The Education and Library Boards have advised that they do not hold details of which contracts are utilised by particular schools, however, all schools can access Board contracts and are issued with usernames and passwords for ELBCAT.

Children from Ethnic Minorities

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education how the attainment of children from ethnic minorities is monitored; and for his assessment of their current level of attainment.

(AQW 19617/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The attainment of all children including those from ethnic minorities is monitored on an ongoing basis by their teachers in their schools. Teachers assess pupils work as part of their day to

day teaching. They observe how pupils carry out classroom activities and will assess how pupils are progressing.

Additionally, the annual school leavers' survey which collects the qualifications and destinations of all pupils leaving grant aided post primary schools provides information on the attainment of pupils at the point at which they leave school and includes information on the attainment of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Data from it show that pupils from ethnic backgrounds who stay on to take level 3 qualifications perform above the average for all pupils against the key indicators of 2 + A Levels (or equivalent) and 3+ A Levels (or equivalent) at grades A*-E. Performance at 5 + GCSEs A*-C is similar to average but falls below the average when the indicator includes GCSE English and maths. The performance of Traveller pupils however is significantly below that of other minority ethnic pupils across all three indicators.

This information is used to inform policy and practical interventions to support pupils, particularly those whose first language is not English, to reach their full potential. For example, my Department supports the Education and Library Boards and schools through the work of the Inclusion and Diversity Service and the Traveller Education Support Service to take positive action to address the additional educational needs of Traveller and Newcomer children to help close the performance gap and ensure these pupils can access the curriculum and get involved in every aspect of school life.

Educational Underachievement and Deprivation

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education, given the link between educational underachievement and deprivation, why funding from his Department which is aimed at deprived areas is not greater.

(AQW 19624/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is a key aim of the Executive to address the challenges of disadvantage and inequality that afflict society, including through closing the gap in educational underachievement between those who are least and those who are most disadvantaged. Consequently, the work of number of Departments is critical to creating the conditions to make better outcomes possible, particularly through integrating different services, aligning them with the work of schools, and helping schools reach into their communities.

My focus is to provide coherent, sustained and effective evidence based interventions that break the cycle of deprivation and educational underachievement.

High quality teaching and learning are at the heart of tackling educational underachievement. I have a coherent suite of policies in place to raise standards and tackle educational underachievement in schools. These policies include the school improvement policy, the literacy and numeracy strategy, the revised curriculum, entitlement framework, the framework for early years education and learning and the SEN and inclusion review.

The Common Funding Formula provides all schools with additional core funding to help meet the educational needs of children from socially deprived backgrounds and those underperforming for their age. In the current 2012/13 financial year, the Department distributed £56.9 million through the Common Funding Formula, under the Targeting Social Need factor.

I am not satisfied, however, that the current Scheme sufficiently targets social deprivation. I, therefore, commissioned Sir Robert Salisbury's recently published review of the Common Funding Scheme, which has recommended increased levels of formula funding for pupils from deprived backgrounds through the introduction of a pupil premium. I will assess the impact of this recommendation, along with the others in the report, very carefully to inform my own proposals for change, which I intend to bring forward later in the year.

In addition, my Department dedicates substantial resources to provide a range of assistance, programmes and services to ensure that disadvantaged children have access to and can fully participate in school life, obtain formal qualifications, enhance their employment opportunities and ultimately provide a route out of poverty. These include the provision of Free School Meals and clothing allowances and a range of programmes targeted at socially deprived areas, including Sure Start,

extended schools, full service provision, Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry Bright Futures and nurture units.

My Department also has a key role in working with a number of Departments to ensure a coherent approach to proactively tackling disadvantage and improving educational outcomes. This includes the Department for Employment and Learning, in relation to the Education Maintenance Allowance Scheme and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister on a literacy and numeracy project, which will recruit 230 additional teachers.

GCSEs Grade A-C

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education to outline the reasons for only 68.3 percent of school leavers in the East Belfast constituency attaining five GCSEs Grade A*-C.

(AQW 19703/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have in place a coherent set of policies designed to improve educational outcomes for all our young people and to address the root causes when pupils are not achieving to their full potential. These policies include the school improvement policy, "Every School a Good School" and the strategy for improving literacy and numeracy, "Count, read: succeed". I remain committed to tackling educational underachievement wherever it exists.

The most recent statistics available show that these policies are working, with continued improvements in pupil attainment at GCSE level for all school leavers in the north of Ireland as well as for pupils resident in the East Belfast constituency.

	School leavers resident in the East Belfast Constituency*1		School leavers in the north of Ireland	
	2006/07	2010/11	2006/07	2010/11
Percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. equivalents)	59.8	68.3	64.7	73.2
Percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. equivalents) inc. GCSE English and maths.	52.1	58.2	54.2	59.5

*1 Please note the data are based on the residential postcode of each pupil and not on the location of the school.

The challenge now is to ensure the effective implementation of these policies by all schools so that the improvement in educational outcomes continues, with particular emphasis on how they contribute to raising standards for those pupils entitled to free school meals.

Indeed, the Programme for Government 2011-2015 has a stretching target to raise the percentage of school leavers, entitled to free school meals, achieving five or more GCSEs (or equivalent) including GCSE English and maths by 2015.

In addition to these policies I launched an advertising campaign in September last year which aims to inform and engage all parents, but in particular those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more engaged in their child's education. The campaign provides parents with consistent, authoritative information on schooling and the steps they can take to support their child in achieving good educational outcomes.

£12million will also be invested to improve literacy and numeracy levels in schools over the next two years. This will result in 230 unemployed teachers being appointed as part of a programme to ensure extra support for children in primary schools who are struggling with reading and maths. It will also

direct support to pupils in post-primary schools who are not predicted to get at least a 'C' grade in English and/or maths

Both the advertising campaign and intervention to support the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in schools complement the policies I have in place to support raising standards and to achieve improved outcomes for all our young people.

Irish Language Posters

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18910/11-15, to detail (i) the number of posters produced in (a) English; and (b) Irish; and (ii) the cost of the poster element of the campaign to date.

(AQW 19716/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

(i) The number of posters produced for the Education Works campaign is as follows:

	No of posters produced	No of posters posted on sites
(a) English	5	588
(b) Irish	3	28

(ii) The total cost of the poster element of the campaign to date is £52,304.

Education Maintenance Allowance Scheme

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education how much funding his Department will contribute to the new Education Maintenance Allowance scheme.

(AQW 19736/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education will contribute £1.85 million in 2013/14 and £3.6 million each year from 2014/15 to the new Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Scheme.

In addition, the Department will continue to provide additional resources of approximately £345,000 each year to help schools fund the costs associated with the administration of the scheme.

The Department's total funding for the EMA scheme, therefore, amounts to almost £2.2 million in 2013/14 and £3.95 million from 2014/15.

Through this funding the Department will ensure that the EMA Scheme continues to support young people in greatest need to remain in education, to achieve formal qualifications, break the cycle of poverty and low educational attainment and, in turn, enhance their lifetime opportunities.

South Belfast Post-Primary Schools

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) most recent enrolment; and (ii) capacity figures for each of the South Belfast post-primary schools, broken down by sector.

(AQW 19758/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the table below:

Actual and Approved Enrolments in post-primary schools in South Belfast 2012/13

School name	School type	Management type	Actual Enrolment	Approved Enrolment
St Joseph's College	Secondary	Catholic maintained	538	664

School name	School type	Management type	Actual Enrolment	Approved Enrolment
Malone Integrated College	Secondary	Grant Maintained Integrated	708	800
Wellington College	Grammar	Controlled	783	770
Methodist College	Grammar	Voluntary - Other managed	1,784	1,810
The Royal Belfast Academical Institution	Grammar	Voluntary - Other managed	1,045	1,050
Rathmore Grammar School	Grammar	Voluntary - Catholic managed	1,273	1,260
Victoria College	Grammar	Voluntary - Other managed	874	870
Hunterhouse College	Grammar	Voluntary - Other managed	708	710
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	Grammar	Voluntary - Catholic managed	819	770
Knockbreda High School	Secondary	Controlled	395	600
Newtownbreda High School	Secondary	Controlled	697	850

Source: NI school census.

Note: Pupils admitted to year 8 on appeal or by direction of the Exceptional Circumstances Body, and pupils with a statement of special educational needs are included in the actual enrolment figure but do not count towards the approved enrolment figure. Further, the approved enrolment figures do not take account of any temporary increases to that number granted to the school by the Department under the temporary variation policy.

Regional Training Unit

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how much has been spent by the Regional Training unit in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19777/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

(i) The Regional Training Unit spend in the last five years is as follows:

- 2007/08 £3,047k
- 2008/09 £3,107k
- 2009/10 £2,992
- 2010/11 £3,346k
- 2011/12 £2,407k

(ii) The Regional Training Unit spend in the last five years in respect of the Professional Qualification for Headship is as follows:

- 2007/08 £625k
- 2008/09 £876k
- 2009/10 £714k
- 2010/11 £858k
- 2011/12 £790k

Building Bulletin 93

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education whether all schools built since 2007 are fully compliant with Building Bulletin 93.

(AQW 19778/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All schools built since 2007 are required to be compliant with BB93 through the use of appropriate design, materials and construction techniques.

If a school identifies issues with sound transmission post-construction, these are fully investigated by a suitably qualified acoustician and where necessary, appropriate remedial works are carried out.

Education and Library Board: Expenditure

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18560/11-15, for his assessment of the impact of this expenditure on the maintenance backlog in each Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 19779/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The education estate is large, encompassing some 1200 schools, and has a significant number of old buildings that have an increased maintenance burden associated with ageing.

The level of maintenance backlog fluctuates continuously due to changes in the assets in the schools' estate. Increases occur due to asset deterioration, identified from a rolling programme of asset surveys. Reductions result from maintenance being carried out, from assets being replaced (through investment in major and minor works) or from assets being disposed of. The level of Category 1 (very poor asset condition) and Category 2 (poor condition) maintenance backlog has remained reasonably consistent in the last three years rising from just under £300m in 2010 to its current figure of just over £300m.

It should be noted that not all maintenance (and minor works) expenditure will directly impact on the level of maintenance backlog. Whilst the Education and Library Boards undertake a programme of planned maintenance across the schools' estate that influences the level of maintenance backlog (typically targeted at Category 1 maintenance issues), they are also required to undertake reactive maintenance to address unexpected emergency issues such as a heating system failure and repairs due to flood damage or vandalism. The cost associated with such inescapable works is not reflected in the maintenance backlog.

It is also important to note that while the system records the maintenance backlog for all schools in the estate, the Education and Library Boards are only responsible for carrying out maintenance in the controlled, maintained and Irish Medium sectors. Almost one fifth of the total backlog relates to assets in other sectors that are responsible for their own maintenance (grant maintained integrated, voluntary and other). Funding for these schools includes an allocation for maintenance

As Minister I have recognised the need to try and stem the inexorable rise in maintenance across the estate and tackle the historic underinvestment in schools. My ability to do so is obviously limited by the resources to do the work. I have increased significantly the level of funding ring-fenced for maintenance this year and next. This level of investment will help address the maintenance backlog and I would anticipate a reduction in the overall figure in the coming years as the rolling programme of asset surveys is updated.

Primary Schools: Computer Based Assessments

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many primary schools had completed their computer based assessments by the end of December 2012.

(AQW 19780/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: CCEA wrote to all schools on 20 December advising that the assessment period had been extended until 11 January 2013, allowing schools additional time to complete the assessments.

CCEA has confirmed that 96% of the NINA (Numeracy) assessment and 95% of the NILA (Literacy) assessments in student terms had been completed by 11 January 2013.

In terms of the number of assessments completed by schools by the end of December 2012, the following statistics were correct as of 20 December 2012.

A summary of the assessment status from the 856 schools which uploaded pupil data (approximately 88,000 pupils) is provided in the tables below. Just over 780 schools (see Table 2) completed 90% or more of NILA and NINA.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT STATUS

Description	NINA	NILA
No. of schools started assessments	843	844
No. of schools completed assessments	389	394
No. of pupils completed assessments	84,072*	84,013*

* - Included IM

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED

School assessments completed	Number of schools (and percentage of total primary schools)	
	NINA	NILA
90% +	787(92%)	781(91%)
75% +	811(95%)	808(94%)
50% +	826(96%)	821(96%)

All of the above statistics were provided by CCEA.

Translink: School Transport

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education what negotiations he has had with Translink on cost reductions for the provision of school transport; and to outline the timescale for the completion of these discussions.

(AQW 19781/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) is responsible for negotiating the Translink contract on behalf of all Boards. I have been informed by the SELB that, as part of the normal contracting process with Translink, costs for school transport have not increased since 2010. Additionally rebates to the value of £500,000 in the financial year 2011/2012 and £300,000 in the current financial year have been achieved in negotiations with Translink by the SELB on behalf of the Department of Education.

Further contractual discussion on future cost reductions will be scheduled to take place with the onset of the forthcoming financial year.

Gender Specific Teaching Methods

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education for an update on plans to conduct further research into gender specific teaching methods.

(AQW 19783/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At this stage I have no plans to commission such research. We already have a significant body of research and inspection evidence that identifies the effective characteristics of high quality

teaching. That evidence does not support the thesis that there is a single, preferred teaching method for boys - or indeed for girls

Rather it is important that pupils, whatever their gender, can see the relevance of what they are taught and make connections across different areas of learning. The revised curriculum offers teachers the flexibility they need to do this and to encourage pupils to explore and identify their individual preferred learning styles. Additionally, high quality teaching will include appropriate differentiation to meet the needs and learning styles of individual pupils, again with the focus on the pupil not on his or her gender.

Our evidence shows that good teachers in effectively led schools already deliver high quality teaching and learning to meet the needs of their pupils regardless of gender. Our challenge is to ensure that good practice is embedded effectively in all our schools for the benefit of all our pupils.

Support for Male Pupils

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education whether each school will be required to offer male pupils support during their key transitional stages.

(AQW 19784/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Teachers use their professional judgment to assess whether a pupil requires support at all stages of their education. This assessment may include classroom observation, analysis of formative assessment or use of other data such as results from public examinations and the findings of school inspection reports. It is teachers, with their knowledge of a child and supported by parents and school leaders, who are best placed to identify the need for and most effective means of support and intervention for each pupil regardless of gender.

My Department and its delivery partners also assess potential areas of underachievement and where the need for additional action has been identified steps are being taken to address it such as the introduction of Extended and Full Service schools and SureStart programmes.

My Department is currently studying the recommendations contained in the recently published report "Taking Boys Seriously – A Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Male School-Life Experience in Northern Ireland" by the University of Ulster and will consider whether any additional action may be required.

Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education, given that Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt is a Core School and meets the Sustainable Schools Criteria, why it is not a priority for new build.

(AQW 19792/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware of the desire for a new build for Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt, and I met with the school Principal, the Chair of the Board of Governors, and local representatives on 12 February to discuss firsthand.

You will appreciate that I have difficult choices to make with many schools desperately in need of new builds competing for limited capital funding.

I will continue to examine the case for capital investment across the estate and the proposals for Holy Family PS will be considered alongside other priorities as part of any future capital announcement.

Education Bill Concerns

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education how many schools, Boards of Governors and parents have written to his Department expressing concern about the Education Bill.

(AQW 19795/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have received 44 letters expressing concern about the Education Bill.

The details are outlined below.

- 1 letter received on behalf of the Association of Principals Teaching in Integrated Schools.
- 39 letters received on behalf of the Board of Governors of Integrated Schools.
- 4 letters from MLA's on behalf of constituents.

I have not received any letters from parents.

Causeway School Museum

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education whether there are any plans to withdraw funding from the Causeway School Museum in the North Eastern Education and Library Board; and to explain the reason for any such plan.

(AQW 19797/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board have taken the decision to close the non-statutory services it currently provides at the Causeway School Museum due to financial constraints.

Study of Chinese in Schools

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to promote the study of Chinese in schools.

(AQW 19801/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Modern languages are a statutory requirement at KS3 and a qualification choice at KS4 and Sixth form. Schools are encouraged to offer a wider range of modern languages, and the revised curriculum offers schools more flexibility in the choices of subjects they can offer to meet the needs of their pupils. The revised curriculum has broadened the range of modern languages that schools can now offer so that, instead of being limited to choosing from 5 languages as previously, schools are now able to choose any of the languages of the 27 EU member states to meet the minimum requirement, as well as any other additional languages they wish, including Chinese/Mandarin. The revised curriculum also includes scope for schools wishing to offer language learning at primary level before it becomes a statutory requirement at Key Stage 3.

I recognise the importance of language learning both socially and economically. To compete as a global economy we need a workforce that can communicate effectively with people from all backgrounds, including those from the international business community. With this in mind, I have recently met with Mr Shen Yang, Minister Counselor (Educational), Chinese Embassy and with representatives from the Confucius Institute at the University of Ulster to discuss its proposed Confucius Classroom scheme and I have asked for further information to enable me to consider if my department can assist with this.

The Member may also wish to note that the British Council, which is part funded by my Department, administers a number of initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of Chinese language and culture as well as increasing internationalism and links between schools here and in China e.g. study visits, summer immersion courses, student placements etc., all of which are open to schools in the north. It has also recently produced an education pack - Snakes and Dragons - for primary schools to explore Chinese culture and language with pupils in the run up to the Chinese New Year and beyond. The pack was sent to all primary schools in the north in January 2013.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18557/11-15, when he will publish the report on the work of the project team.

(AQW 19802/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have written to advise all key stakeholders of the outcome of the project to determine the future delivery of procurement services in the education sector.

The project included significant engagement with other government departments and agencies. The project team met a number of procurement staff from the Education and Library Boards both formally and informally during the lifespan of the project.

Procurement staff within ESA will continue to be responsible for a range of functions. It is not envisaged that there will be a reduction in professional procurement staff within the education sector. However, there may be the opportunity for a small number of procurement staff to apply for secondment to CPD, as education specialists. The numbers required will become clearer as the project to implement the transfer of education procurement services to CPD goes forward.

Regional Training Unit

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how much the Regional Training Unit has spent on the Professional Qualification for Headship in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19803/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

(i) The Regional Training Unit spend in the last five years is as follows:

■ 2007/08	£3,047k
■ 2008/09	£3,107k
■ 2009/10	£2,992
■ 2010/11	£3,346k
■ 2011/12	£2,407k

(ii) The Regional Training Unit spend in the last five years in respect of the Professional Qualification for Headship is as follows:

■ 2007/08	£625k
■ 2008/09	£876k
■ 2009/10	£714k
■ 2010/11	£858k
■ 2011/12	£790k

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19134/11-15, how many staff from his Department will transfer to Central Procurement Directorate.

(AQW 19804/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have written to advise all key stakeholders of the outcome of the project to determine the future delivery of procurement services in the education sector.

The project included significant engagement with other government departments and agencies. The project team met a number of procurement staff from the Education and Library Boards both formally and informally during the lifespan of the project.

Procurement staff within ESA will continue to be responsible for a range of functions. It is not envisaged that there will be a reduction in professional procurement staff within the education sector. However, there may be the opportunity for a small number of procurement staff to apply for secondment to CPD, as education specialists. The numbers required will become clearer as the project to implement the transfer of education procurement services to CPD goes forward.

Education Sector: Procurement of Goods and Services

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many meetings took place with staff in the procurement sections of the Education and Library Boards to discuss possible options for the future procurement of goods and services within the education sector.

(AQW 19805/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have written to advise all key stakeholders of the outcome of the project to determine the future delivery of procurement services in the education sector.

The project included significant engagement with other government departments and agencies. The project team met a number of procurement staff from the Education and Library Boards both formally and informally during the lifespan of the project.

Procurement staff within ESA will continue to be responsible for a range of functions. It is not envisaged that there will be a reduction in professional procurement staff within the education sector. However, there may be the opportunity for a small number of procurement staff to apply for secondment to CPD, as education specialists. The numbers required will become clearer as the project to implement the transfer of education procurement services to CPD goes forward.

School Transport

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has had with other Ministers on the regulation of school transport provided by private operators.

(AQW 19806/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have had no direct contact with other Ministers in relation to the regulation of school transport provided by private operators. However, officials from the Department of Education have been working recently with their counterparts in the Department of the Environment in relation to the cabotage issue which affected private transport operators contracted to provide school services in the Western Education and Library Board area.

Sure Start Provision

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Education whether the Glenariffe, Cushendall and Cushendun wards in Antrim, and the Coast Road ward, Carnlough will be included in the expansion of Sure Start provision to an additional 21 wards.

(AQW 19808/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I plan to extend Sure Start services to encompass the top 25% areas of disadvantage at ward level subject to the availability of resources. Cushendall and Cushendun are not wards; they are within the wards of Glanaan and Glendun. The wards of Glenariff, Glendun, Glanaan and Carnlough do not fall within the top 25% most disadvantaged wards as measured by the Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) and are not therefore included in the expansion of the Sure Start programme.

Capital Investment: New Build Primary Schools

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to detail the value of the capital investment in new build primary schools since 1999, broken down by constituency.[R]

(AQW 19810/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The capital investment in new build primary schools since 1999, broken down by constituency is detailed in the table below.

Primary School	Construction Costs (million)	Parliamentary Constituency
Orangefield Primary School, Belfast	7.0	Belfast East

Primary School	Construction Costs (million)	Parliamentary Constituency
Belmont Primary School, Belfast	1.3	Belfast East
Cregagh Primary School, Belfast	1.31	Belfast East
Loughview Integrated Primary School, Belfast	0.38	Belfast East
Loughview Integrated Primary School, Belfast	1.59	Belfast East
Total	11.58	
Cavehill Primary School Belfast	2.21	Belfast North
Lowwood Primary School, Belfast	1.71	Belfast North
Whitehouse Primary School, Newtownabbey	3.59	Belfast North
Total	7.51	
Finaghy Primary School, Belfast	2.93	Belfast South
St Bride's Primary School, Belfast	0.94	Belfast South
Cranmore Integrated Primary School, Belfast	1.3	Belfast South
Taughmonagh Primary School, Belfast	3.09	Belfast South
St Ita's Primary School, Carryduff	3.35	Belfast South
St Joseph's Primary School, Carryduff	5.9	Belfast South
Total	17.51	
Forthriver Primary School, Belfast	1.55	Belfast West
Our Lady Queen of Peace, Derriaghy	1.98	Belfast West
Gaelscoil na bhFal Primary School, Belfast	2.0	Belfast West
St Clare's Primary School, Belfast	2.57	Belfast West
St Kevin's Primary School, Belfast	2.96	Belfast West
Bunscoil an Tsleibhe Dhuibh, Belfast	1.17	Belfast West
Scoil na Fuisseoige	1.68	Belfast West
Total	13.91	
St MacNissi's Primary School, Larne	1.21	East Antrim
Total	1.21	
Damhead Primary School, Coleraine	0.92	East Londonderry
Carnalridge Primary School, Portrush	1.6	East Londonderry
Drumrane Primary School	1.1	East Londonderry
Total	3.62	
Gracehill Primary School, Ballymena	1.7	North Antrim
Bushvalley Primary School, Ballymoney	0.59	North Antrim
Camphill Primary School, Ballymena	2.9	North Antrim

Primary School	Construction Costs (million)	Parliamentary Constituency
Leaney Primary School, Ballymoney	1.74	North Antrim
Fourtowns Primary School, Ahoghill	2.2	North Antrim
Moorfields Primary School	2.1	North Antrim
Millquarter Primary School, Toomebridge	0.82	North Antrim
Ballymena Maintained Primary Schools (x2)	5.0	North Antrim
St Mary's Primary School, Portglenone	3.9	North Antrim
St Patrick's & St Brigid's Primary School, Ballycastle	3.9	North Antrim
Total	24.85	
Loanends Primary School, Nutts Corner	0.98	South Antrim
Mossley Primary School, Newtownabbey	4.2	South Antrim
Templepatrick Primary School	3.9	South Antrim
St Joseph's Primary School, Crumlin	2.47	South Antrim
Creggan Primary School, Randalstown	1.00	South Antrim
Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School, Lisburn	1.05	South Antrim
St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Forkhill	1.52	South Antrim
Total	15.12	
Moira Primary School	1.18	Lagan Valley
Riverdale Primary School, Lisburn	1.27	Lagan Valley
Meadow Bridge Primary School	1.72	Lagan Valley
Downshire Primary School	3.13	Lagan Valley
Ballinderry Primary School	2.3	Lagan Valley
Pond Park Primary School, Lisburn	4.9	Lagan Valley
Christ The Redeemer Primary School, Dunmurry	3.1	Lagan Valley
Ballymacward Primary School, Lisburn	1.09	Lagan Valley
Ballymacrickett Primary School	2.90	Lagan Valley
St Colmans, Lambeg	2.62	Lagan Valley
Total	24.21	
Kilmaine Primary School, Bangor	4.09	North Down
Ballyholme Primary School, Bangor	3.8	North Down
Towerview Primary School, Bangor	3.6	North Down
Total	11.49	
All Children's Controlled Integrated Primary School, Newcastle	1.32	South Down

Primary School	Construction Costs (million)	Parliamentary Constituency
Cumran Primary School, Clough	1.6	South Down
St Patrick's Primary School, Saul	1.5	South Down
Bronte Primary School, Banbridge	1.2	South Down
Drumadonnell Primary School	1.2	South Down
St Dallan's Primary School, Warrenpoint	2.45	South Down
St Colman's Primary School, Saval	0.84	South Down
Carrick Primary School, Warrenpoint	2.9	South Down
St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle	3.13	South Down
Total	14.94	
Castle Gardens Primary School, Newtownards	2.7	Strangford
Victoria Primary School, Newtownards	3.31	Strangford
Dundonald Primary School	5.25	Strangford
Newtownards Model Primary School	4.98	Strangford
Victoria Primary School, Ballyhalbert	1.50	Strangford
Total	17.74	
Richmond Primary School, Ballygawley	0.9	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Orchard County Primary School, Portadown	1.19	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Blessed Patrick O'Loughran Primary School, Castlecaulfield	0.84	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Windmill Integrated Primary School, Dungannon	2.12	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Florencecourt Primary School	0.7	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Maguiresbridge Primary School	1.06	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Kesh Primary School	1.71	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Lisbellaw Primary School	2.3	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
St Ninnidh's Primary School, Derrylin	1.02	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Enniskillen Integrated Primary School	2.4	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Coranny & Cornagague Primary School, Roslea	1.58	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Total	15.82	
Holy Trinity Primary School, Cookstown	3.0	Mid - Ulster
Woods Primary School, Magherafelt	0.7	Mid - Ulster
St Patrick's Primary School, Donaghmore	1.88	Mid - Ulster
Magherafelt Primary School & Nursery School	4.68	Mid - Ulster
St Columba's Primary School, Straw	1.56	Mid - Ulster
Total	11.82	

Primary School	Construction Costs (million)	Parliamentary Constituency
St John's Primary School, Armagh	0.81	Newry and Armagh
Our Lady & St Mochua's Primary School, Keady	1.05	Newry and Armagh
Dromintee Primary School, Newry	2.1	Newry and Armagh
St Peter's Primary School, Cloughreagh	3.2	Newry and Armagh
St Joseph's Primary School, Madden	1.3	Newry and Armagh
Total	8.46	
Ballydown Primary School, Banbridge	1.54	Upper Bann
Maralin Primary School	2.2	Upper Bann
Waringstown Primary School	1.4	Upper Bann
Total	5.14	
Drumahoe Primary School, Derry	0.94	Foyle
Lisnagelvin Primary School	5.5	Foyle
Oakgrove Integrated Primary School, Derry	2.6	Foyle
St Patrick's Primary School, Pennyburn	4.18	Foyle
Total	13.22	
Gibson Primary School, Omagh	2.6	West Tyrone
Bready Jubilee Primary School, Strabane	0.86	West Tyrone
Cooley Primary School, Omagh	1.19	West Tyrone
Edwards Primary School, Castlederg	1.8	West Tyrone
Killen Primary School	1.1	West Tyrone
St Mary's Primary School, Killyclogher	1.7	West Tyrone
St Dympna's Primary School, Dromore	1.22	West Tyrone
Total	10.47	

Redundancy or Enhancement Packages

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education whether he or his officials have had discussions with Trade Unions and teachers representatives regarding redundancy or enhancement packages for vice-principals and principals.

(AQW 19842/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The nature of a principal post is such that it is possible to make a principal redundant only in cases of school closure or amalgamation. Vice-principals can be made redundant if the particular post is being suppressed or through a transferred redundancy if the employing authority does not require the vice-principal post to be publicly advertised.

Officials have been engaged in discussions with teacher unions and employers about the reintroduction of a scheme which would allow the early release of a limited number of teachers in the interests of the efficient discharge of the employer's function. Such a scheme would be intended to improve the quality of educational provision in schools and would be subject to approval of a business case and

the availability of resources. As with redundancy, it would not be an option to be offered simply to accommodate a teacher who wishes to retire prematurely.

Community Use of School Facilities

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what guidance has been issued by his Department or Education and Library Boards to schools on community use of school facilities.

(AQW 19845/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's Guide for School Governors "Every School a Good School -The Governors' Role" provides guidance to schools with regard to making their premises available for wider community use. A Working Group report, 'How Best to Increase the Community Use of the School Site', published in 2011, also provides practical guidelines for schools to help them enhance the community use of school premises.

As part on ongoing efforts to promote greater community access to school facilities, a further Working Group led by the Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools was established to develop detailed operational guidance to assist school leaders in dealing with the many practical issues which must be considered when making school premises available for wider community use.

The draft guidance which the Working Group produced is currently being considered by my Department. Once finalised, the guidance will be made available to all schools.

Whilst there are no financial incentives available, the guidance will outline the potential benefits to schools of greater community involvement and highlight how more effective partnering of schools with the communities they serve can lead to better access to essential services, improved local availability of sports, arts and other facilities and improved outcomes for families and children.

The guidance will also include a range of case studies which will demonstrate existing good practice and the benefits which have been achieved and will hopefully inspire those schools not already opening their doors for wider public use to consider doing so.

Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of a full-time postgraduate course being the only professional qualification for teachers in Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance; and what consideration he is giving to funding suitable part-time courses in this competency.

(AQW 19860/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The joint DE DEL "Preparing for Success" careers strategy endorses the partnership model of careers guidance as the preferred model of provision for young people. The strategy makes clear that careers teachers and careers service advisors have distinct but complementary roles. Schools are responsible for providing effective careers education for which a specific careers guidance qualification is not required but should provide access to the qualified professional expertise and impartial advice and guidance available through the careers service.

My officials are continuing to explore methods to help build the capacity of careers teachers to lead, manage and deliver an effective careers programme is for pupils through training modules.

Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education how his Department ensures that Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (i) complements the curriculum and is consistent within, and between, schools; (ii) informs young people of the jobs available in a modern economy; and (iii) equips young people to access and analyse Labour Market Information.

(AQW 19861/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am fully committed to the continuous improvement of the quality of careers education across all schools and my Department is taking this forward through the full and continuing implementation of the joint DE DEL careers strategy.

Schools have a number of tools at their disposal to support them in the development of careers education and implementation of the careers strategy. The Education and Training Inspectorate has developed tailored, quality standards indicators for self-evaluation, and my Department has published a Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) map and guide. The CEIAG map and guide aims to improve the quality of career learning opportunities, define the key features of a CEIAG programme, and encourage greater consistency across schools. The CEIAG map recognises that within every single area of learning of the curriculum there are opportunities to raise pupil's aspirations and help them make connections between learning, work, and career choices.

In addition, all schools are members of Area Learning Communities (ALCs). ALCs are required to report to the department annually by way of an implementation plan on 4 key strategic entitlement framework priorities, one of which is to develop and deliver a careers programme which assists young people in making informed choices around courses and pathways open to them. The core principle of the entitlement framework is to guarantee equality of access for all young people to a broad, balanced and more economically relevant curriculum with clear progression pathways. The flexibility offered by the entitlement framework means that schools are able to take account of labour market information and priority growth areas in developing their curricular offer.

Schools have partnership agreements with the Department for Employment and Learning's Careers Service which provides pupils with impartial advice and guidance and access to a wide range of up-to-date careers information such as labour market information factsheets and case studies. Employers also play an important role in providing careers information and advice and my officials have been engaging with business representative bodies to explore how the business community can play a greater role in careers education.

Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education whether schools have adequate resources to provide high quality Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance.

(AQW 19862/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) scheme, the Board of Governors of every grant maintained school receives a delegated budget to meet the costs of providing access to the curriculum within that school. How the school delivers the curriculum to meet the statutory requirements is a matter for the Board of Governors and senior management team of that school. Impartial advice and guidance is provided free to schools in partnership with Careers Service through the full and continuing implementation of the joint careers strategy and action plan.

Capital Build Programmes

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education which schools in the East Londonderry constituency have received approval for major capital build programmes since 2007.

(AQW 19875/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My statement to the assembly on 25 June 2012 announced that the process for building three special schools would be advanced; one of these schools was Rossmar Special School which is in the East Derry constituency.

My capital announcement of 22 January 2013 included a new build solution to service the needs of 3 primary schools (Craigback, Mullabuoy and Listress) on the outskirts of Derry. While it is accepted that Craigback and Mullabuoy are in the Foyle constituency, Listress Primary School is in East Derry constituency.

School Meals

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what his Department is doing to provide healthier and better choices of school meals.

(AQW 19888/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education (DE) recognises that a healthy, balanced diet is vital for children's growth and development, and for their long term health and well being and has proactively worked to improve the quality of food in schools here.

Compulsory nutritional standards for school lunches have been in place in all of our schools since September 2007. Standards for other food and drinks provided in schools (breakfast clubs, tuck shops, vending machines) have also been drawn up to which schools are expected to adhere. I have allocated funding of over £3 million in 2012/13 to support the implementation of the standards to ensure that pupils are presented with healthy options and encouraged to eat healthily. DE also provides joint funding for a regional Food in Schools Coordinator to provide specialist support in all aspects of healthy eating.

DE is currently working with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to finalise a joint Food in Schools policy which advocates a whole school approach to all food and drinks provided in schools to ensure that all children should develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices now and in later life. I intend, along with the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, to seek Executive agreement on the policy as soon as possible. Subject to that agreement, it is intended to publish the policy later in this school year.

Donaghadee Primary School

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many children currently attend Donaghadee Primary School.

(AQW 19889/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Figures provided by the school for the 2012/13 census exercise indicate a total enrolment of 431 pupils, including 52 pupils in a nursery unit attached to the school.

Donaghadee Primary School

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education whether there are any plans to expand Donaghadee Primary School.

(AQW 19890/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Any significant change to a school, such as an increase in enrolment, requires an approved statutory Development Proposal.

To date, the South Eastern Education and Library Board has not brought forward such a proposal for Donaghadee Primary School.

Integrated Primary or Post-Primary Education

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19042/11-15, how projected need within the integrated sector will be assessed through the area planning process in areas that currently do not have a local option for integrated primary or post-primary education.

(AQW 19891/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards, which are the statutory planning authorities within their areas, have adopted a Needs Model as the means of assessing the need for places in each of their District Council areas. The model uses the most up to date, complete and reliable data available at any point in time. It reflects the current pattern of enrolments between, broadly, the controlled, maintained and integrated sectors, and as such is the starting point for planning.

The process of engagement with the various sectors will provide the opportunity for them to make a case for the expansion or contraction of their particular sector. Such cases should be based on objective evidence. This will enable the Boards (working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools), to take account of all relevant circumstances, including demand for and supply of places in all sectors. The bodies involved in integrated education, including NICIE and the schools themselves, should engage with the Boards to make a case for increased provision where they think the data warrant it. No sector is limited to the growth shown in the model. It is vital, however, that robust data are presented to support a case for opening a new school or expanding an existing one, as, if the integrated sector is to grow beyond the projected figures in the model, there must be a consequent reduction in numbers elsewhere to live within the total planning figure.

I should add that, because the Needs Model provides data at District Council level only, it is not a basis for making decisions about the siting, opening or closing of individual schools. Such decisions must be made taking account of local circumstances in the context of the overall numbers in the model.

I must stress that the area planning process is iterative and plans will be kept under review and will change over time to reflect changing circumstances and developing needs.

Community Use of School Facilities

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what measures his Department is taking to incentivise the opening of schools for community use.

(AQW 19902/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's Guide for School Governors "Every School a Good School -The Governors' Role" provides guidance to schools with regard to making their premises available for wider community use. A Working Group report, 'How Best to Increase the Community Use of the School Site', published in 2011, also provides practical guidelines for schools to help them enhance the community use of school premises.

As part on ongoing efforts to promote greater community access to school facilities, a further Working Group led by the Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools was established to develop detailed operational guidance to assist school leaders in dealing with the many practical issues which must be considered when making school premises available for wider community use.

The draft guidance which the Working Group produced is currently being considered by my Department. Once finalised, the guidance will be made available to all schools.

Whilst there are no financial incentives available, the guidance will outline the potential benefits to schools of greater community involvement and highlight how more effective partnering of schools with the communities they serve can lead to better access to essential services, improved local availability of sports, arts and other facilities and improved outcomes for families and children.

The guidance will also include a range of case studies which will demonstrate existing good practice and the benefits which have been achieved and will hopefully inspire those schools not already opening their doors for wider public use to consider doing so.

School Canteen

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary schools which have a (a) school canteen operated by a private firm; and (b) a canteen operated by the school or the Education and Library Board.

(AQW 19909/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The details requested are as follows:-

	Private Firm	School/ELB
Primary	6	872
Post-Primary	10	215

Teachers with Prison Sentence

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how many currently employed teachers have served a prison sentence.

(AQW 19926/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Neither the Department of Education nor the Employing Authorities hold this information.

The AccessNI Code of Practice and Explanatory Guide stipulates that, once a recruitment decision has been made, an employer must not retain Disclosure Information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary. In general this should be for a maximum of six months.

Appointment of Teachers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education what vetting arrangements are in place across the various sectors in relation to the appointment of teachers.

(AQW 19928/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education requires all Employing Authorities and schools to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (criminal records check) from AccessNI before appointing a teacher. Details of convictions and other information disclosed in a Certificate must be considered by the employer before a teaching appointment is confirmed.

Cap Primary School Class Sizes

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education whether he plans to bring forward legislation to cap class sizes for primary 5 to primary 7 classes.

(AQW 19948/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There has been considerable research carried out on the effect of class sizes on the teaching and learning of pupils. While evidence suggests that smaller class sizes in early years can have a positive impact on outcomes, it has also consistently highlighted that the quality of teaching and allowing teachers the flexibility to adapt their teaching in different situations, are the most important factors in determining educational outcomes. These key factors are reflected in core Departmental policies, namely DE's literacy and numeracy strategy and the revised curriculum. In view of the evidence surrounding the early years, it is DE's policy to keep classes for our youngest pupils, (Years 1-4), to a maximum of 30 pupils.

There is no evidence to demonstrate that smaller class sizes positively affect outcomes for pupils in Years 5-7 and in line with DE's policy to give schools as much autonomy as possible, it is a school's Board of Governors that has responsibility for determining their school's staffing complement and for managing the school's education budget which would include class sizes, taking account of parameters set for Years 1-4.

Ultimately, what is essential for good quality provision is high quality teaching, a curriculum that is matched to the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils and a focus on improvement and raising standards.

The Revised Curriculum which has been in place since 2009/10 allows our teachers to tailor the curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils and to adapt their teaching. In addition, the effective use of data to track pupil progress allows teachers to identify those pupils at risk of not achieving their

full potential and enabling them to adapt the strategies they use in their delivery of the curriculum, customising it to best effect.

Furthermore, the recent findings of the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) and Trends in Mathematics and Science (TIMMS) studies of Year 6 pupils shows that our Key Stage 2 outcomes show high attainment at primary level education.

Based on the above I have no plans to review or consider a cap on class sizes for pupils in Years 5-7.

Homework Clubs: South Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education, given the levels of educational underachievement in working class areas, to detail the financial support allocated by his Department to homework clubs in South Belfast, over the last three years.

(AQW 19950/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not make specific provision for homework clubs or routinely collect information on such clubs.

However, the Extended Schools programme provides additional funding to schools serving the most deprived areas, and which meet set criteria, to provide for a wide range of services and activities outside of the traditional school day which aim to remove barriers to learning and improve levels of educational achievement for disadvantaged children and young people. Where assessed as needed by school principals, this provision may include after school learning support activities such as homework clubs.

The Belfast and South Eastern Education and Library Boards have confirmed that a total of 22 schools have qualified for Extended Schools funding in the South Belfast constituency in 1 or more of the last 3 financial years. Of those, 15 schools currently provide after school learning support activities/homework clubs with the aid of Extended Schools resources. Details are provided in the tables below.

Eligible Extended Schools in South Belfast (BELB)	Extended Schools Allocation 2010/11	Extended Schools Allocation 2011/12	Extended Schools Allocation 2012/13	After School Learning Support/ Homework Club 2012/13
Arellian NS	£9,430	£9,430	£10,660	No
Rosetta PS	Did Not Qualify	Did Not Qualify	£26,976	Yes
Nettlefield PS	£28,100	£29,038	£33,150	Yes
Taughmonagh PS	£25,243	£24,898	£27,820	Yes
Donegall Road PS	£19,045	£18,400	£22,457	No
Fane Street PS	£20,211	£21,678	£25,967	No
Blythefield PS	£12,300	£13,225	£14,690	Yes
Botanic PS	£23,805	£23,920	£26,780	Yes
Holy Rosary PS	Did Not Qualify	£27,773	£30,226	Yes
St Malachy's PS	£23,200	£28,290	£33,150	Yes
Scoil an Droichid	£14,875	£18,314	£21,093	Yes
Cranmore Integrated PS	£23,144	£19,225	£25,187	Yes
St Joseph's College	£36,363	£36,122	£40,626	Yes

Eligible Extended Schools in South Belfast (BELB)	Extended Schools Allocation 2010/11	Extended Schools Allocation 2011/12	Extended Schools Allocation 2012/13	After School Learning Support/ Homework Club 2012/13
Malone Integrated College	£38,249	£33,250	£42,706	Yes
Fleming Fulton Special School	£18,573	£18,486	£19,240	No
Harberton Special School	£23,230	£23,489	£26,650	No
Park Education Resource Centre	£16,848	£18,400	£19,436	Yes
Glenveagh Special School	£23,230	£22,713	£25,967	No
Oakwood Special School	£14,375	£15,295	£17,583	No
Totals	£370,221	£401,946	£490,364	

Eligible Extended Schools in South Belfast (BELB)	Extended Schools Allocation 2010/11	Extended Schools Allocation 2011/12	Extended Schools Allocation 2012/13	After School Learning Support/ Homework Club 2012/13
Belvoir Park PS	£23,900	£23,400	£30,486	Yes
Knockbreda HS	£30,770	£29,850	£29,510	Yes
Newtownbreda HS	Did Not Qualify	Did Not Qualify	£42,004	Yes
Totals	£54,670	£53,250	£102,000	

Learning Support Units

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how many learning support units operate within post-primary schools in the (i) controlled (ii) maintained; and (iii) integrated sectors, broken down by location.

(AQW 19963/11-15)

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

POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRES 2012/13

School name	Education and Library Board	Management type	No of Learning Support Centres
Ballymoney High School	North Eastern	Controlled	3
Banbridge High School	Southern	Controlled	1
City Armagh High School	Southern	Controlled	4
Clounagh Junior High School	Southern	Controlled	3

School name	Education and Library Board	Management type	No of Learning Support Centres
Coleraine College	North Eastern	Controlled	3
Cookstown High School	Southern	Controlled	1
Dundonald High School	South Eastern	Controlled	3
Glengormley High School	North Eastern	Controlled	1
Kilkeel High School	Southern	Controlled	1
Larne High School	North Eastern	Controlled	2
Lisneal College	Western	Controlled	1
Magherafelt High School	North Eastern	Controlled	2
Monkstown Community School	North Eastern	Controlled	2
Orangefield High School	Belfast	Controlled	1
Tandragee Junior High School	Southern	Controlled	2
De La Salle High School, Downpatrick	South Eastern	Catholic Maintained	1
Drumcree College	Southern	Catholic Maintained	2
Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney	North Eastern	Catholic Maintained	3
St Brigid's College, Shantallow	Western	Catholic Maintained	2
St Ciaran's High School, Ballygawley	Southern	Catholic Maintained	1
St Columban's College, Kilkeel	Southern	Catholic Maintained	1
St Joseph's Boys' High School, Newry	Southern	Catholic Maintained	1
St Joseph's College, Belfast	Belfast	Catholic Maintained	4
St Joseph's College, Coalisland	Southern	Catholic Maintained	4
St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen	Southern	Catholic Maintained	1
St Malachy's High School, Castlewellan	South Eastern	Catholic Maintained	5
St Mark's High School, Warrenpoint	Southern	Catholic Maintained	1
St Mary's High School, Downpatrick	South Eastern	Catholic Maintained	1
St Patrick's Co-ed Comprehensive College, Maghera	North Eastern	Catholic Maintained	1
St Patrick's College, Banbridge	Southern	Catholic Maintained	2
St Patrick's High School, Lisburn	South Eastern	Catholic Maintained	3
St Paul's High School, Bessbrook	Southern	Catholic Maintained	1
Blackwater Integrated College	South Eastern	Grant Maintained Integrated	3

Source: School census

South Eastern Education and Library Board: Learning Support Units

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education at which locations learning support units are operating in controlled post-primary schools in the South Eastern Education & Library Board area.

(AQW 19964/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Figures provided by schools for the 2012/13 census exercise indicate that Dundonald High School was the only controlled post-primary school in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area in which learning support centres were operating. Three learning support centres were recorded as being in operation at the school.

Horse Meat: Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what advice his Department has given to schools on the ongoing horse meat issue.

(AQW 19993/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is important to note that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has advised that there is no reason or evidence to suspect that there is a food safety risk from products which contain horsemeat or horsemeat DNA. However, it is not acceptable that mislabelled frozen meat products have been found in the food supply chain.

In line with advice provided by the FSA, I have written to the Chief Executives of the ELBs to emphasise that, whilst there is no evidence that products which contain horsemeat or horse DNA pose a food safety risk, in circumstances where a Board is made aware that mislabelled frozen meat products are being supplied to schools it is imperative that immediate action is taken by the ELB to ensure these products are withdrawn and removed from school menus.

The ELBs remain in close contact with their suppliers to ensure that they are updated as soon as a supplier is made aware that a product may be mislabelled and that the necessary action is taken. I am aware that the ELBs wrote to schools and school meals kitchens last week, following the decision by a supplier to withdraw certain burger items pending receipt of test results, to advise that these products must not be used and will be removed by the supplier.

The Department has also written to schools in the voluntary grammar and grantmaintained integrated sectors to advise that where a school is made aware that mislabelled frozen meat products are being supplied to schools immediate action should be taken by the school to ensure these products are withdrawn and removed from school menus.

I have agreed that the Food Standards Agency will circulate to the Department and the Boards any communications in relation to the horsemeat incident/investigation.

I consider that through this approach we can ensure collectively that early action is taken to seek to ensure that mislabelled products are not supplied to schools.

Projected Capital Spend

Mr Storey asked Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19188/11-15, what approval stage has been achieved by each project.

(AQW 19994/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Progress as at 19 February 2013 on the 18 capital build projects announced in June 2012 is shown in the table below:

School	Estimated Construction Start	Current Status
Victoria Park Primary School	Mid May 2013	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. Waiting for final EA to be submitted to Department.
Eglinton Primary School	June 2014	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. EA has been submitted to the Department and currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Foyle College / Ebrington Primary School	Autumn 2013	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. Waiting for Stage D approval to finalise EA.
Enniskillen Model	August 2014	Stage C and costs due July 2013. EA has been submitted to the Department and currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Dromore Central	Sept 2013	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. Waiting for final EA to be submitted to Department.
St Clares Primary School Newry & St Colman's Abbey Primary School Newry	September 2013	Stage D approval. PQQ templates with Project Manager. PQQ expected March 2013. Department waiting for additional information to finalise EA.
St Mary's Primary School Banbridge	August 2013	Stage C approval. Revised Stage D requested by DE. EA is currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Tannaghmore Primary School Lurgan	June 2013	Stage D approval. EA has been submitted to Finance Director for submission to DFP.
St Teresa's Primary School Lurgan	May 2013	Stage D approval. EA is currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.

School	Estimated Construction Start	Current Status
Colaiste Feirste	November 2013	Stage C approval. Revised stage D requested by DE. Awaiting approval of Stage D before EA can be finalised.
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	August 2013	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. EA is currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Belmont House Special School -Derry	June 2014	Consultants to be appointed. Economic Appraisal awaited.
Rossmar Special School Limavady	May 2014	Consultants to be appointed. Economic Appraisal awaited.
Castletower Ballymena	2015	Consultants to be appointed. Department waiting for final EA to be submitted.

Schools with Reception Classes

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19185/11-15, to list the schools who have reception classes, broken down by (i) Education and Library Board area; and (ii) management type.

(AQW 19995/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details reception classes solely made up of reception pupils. It should be noted that reception age pupils may also be enrolled, not in distinct reception classes, but in groups alongside pupils of compulsory school age.

In addition to the reception classes listed there are 84 primary schools with 299 reception pupils who are integrated with Year 1 – 7 pupils.

Management Type	Education and Library Board	School name	Reception pupils
Controlled	North-Eastern	Hezlett Primary School	17
Controlled	North-Eastern	Macosquin Primary School	10
Controlled	North-Eastern	Randalstown Central Primary School	8
Catholic Maintained	North-Eastern	St Comgall's Primary School, Antrim	25
Catholic Maintained	North-Eastern	St Patrick's Primary School, Portrush	7
Catholic Maintained	South-Eastern	St Joseph's Primary School, Newcastle	12
Catholic Maintained	South-Eastern	St Mark's Primary School, Dunmurry	25
Catholic Maintained	Western	Holy Family Primary School, Omagh	14

Source: School census

Conductive Education

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18515/11-15, what research his Department has carried out into Conductive Education as a method of teaching.

(AQW 20011/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has not, to date, carried out any research into Conductive Education as a method of teaching.

Primary and Post-Primary Schools in the East Londonderry Constituency

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education which (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary schools in the East Londonderry constituency have been (a) assessed as requiring Capital Build replacement; and (b) are not currently listed in the Capital Investment announcement.

(AQW 20018/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Over the years the department has received many proposals for new school builds which have not progressed. I have made clear that these historic applications have no standing. However they can come forward again for consideration, if identified as a priority, when capital investment decisions are being made.

The key criteria in determining eligibility for capital investment in my recent announcement has been alignment with emerging area plans and confirmation from Managing Authorities of their priorities for new builds within their areas.

The selection of new major works has been on the basis of effecting rationalisation; supporting unmet need; addressing serious accommodation inadequacies and schools operating on split sites, substandard conditions or overcrowding; or addressing undue reliance on temporary accommodation.

In discussions with the WELB in advance of my January 2013 capital investment statement Ballykelly Primary School within the East Derry constituency was identified as a priority for a new build, however due to budget constraints could not be included in my announcement.

The reality is that the budget settlement for this Spending Review period means that the need for investment far exceeds the funds available.

DE: Projected Underspend

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's projected underspend for this financial year.

(AQW 20024/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In line with its performance in previous years the Department is planning to minimise the level of underspend against both the resource and capital budgets.

Teachers: Pensions

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education, given that three out of four teaching unions that responded to the consultation on the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme are unhappy with the scheme proposals, what further consultations will now take place.

(AQO 3430/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: None of the unions which responded to the consultation are in favour of the principle of increased pension contributions.

I do not agree with the British Government's approach to pension policy.

However, my Department's consultation was not about the principle of delivering the targeted level of savings to the cost of the public sector pension schemes in the north of Ireland, to which the Executive is already committed.

Rather, it was about how the required increases should be structured to provide protection for lower paid teachers and limit the risk of increases in the rate of opt-outs from the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Teachers, like other public servants, are being asked to pay more for their pensions and, regrettably, this will mean a reduction in their take-home pay. There is also a risk that there may be an increase in the number of teachers choosing to opt out of the Scheme.

However, I believe that the contribution increase proposals represent a reasonable and proportionate means of achieving the Executive's objectives of delivering the savings in a way which protects lower paid teachers and limits the risk of increases in the rate of opt-outs from the Scheme.

Extensive consultation has taken place with the teacher unions through the Teachers' Superannuation Consultative Committee, which is the established forum for consultation on matters relating to the Scheme, both prior to and during the formal consultation period which is now closed.

My Department will continue to consult with the teacher unions on pensions matters, including future contributions increases and the wider pension reform agenda.

Schools: Employment

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Education whether there is a contradiction between Clause 10(c) of the Heads of Agreement and Clause 3(1) of the Education Bill, in relation to the employment of teachers and staff.

(AQO 3434/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There is no contradiction. The Education Bill gives effect to both of the key requirements on employment matters within the Heads of Agreement. Firstly, it will establish the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) as the employer of all staff in all grant-aided schools. Secondly, it provides for the delegation of employment functions to schools. This will ensure that boards of governors can take all of the employment decisions within their schools if they wish.

Education Bill: Integrated Education

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how the Education Bill will help deliver his Department's statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education.[R]

(AQO 3435/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education Bill will establish the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). ESA will be the operational delivery organisation for all my Department's policies, including the encouragement and facilitation of integrated education.

I will require ESA to ensure that it has sufficient knowledge and expertise on matters affecting integrated education, and to work closely with the Council for Integrated Education - NICIE - in this regard.

Educational Underachievement

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Education to outline the main factors used when assessing underachievement in working class communities.

(AQO 3436/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My literacy and numeracy strategy, Count, read: succeed, describes underachievement as a situation where performance is below what is expected. The strategy outlines that underachievement can apply at different levels, from the performance of an individual pupil through to performance at a system level.

At individual pupil level, teachers use their professional judgment to assess whether a pupil is underachieving. This assessment may include classroom observation, analysis of formative assessment or use of other data as appropriate. Teachers, with their knowledge of a child and

supported by parents and school leaders, are best placed to identify the need for and most effective means of intervention.

At school and system level, and using a number of evidence sources, my Department and its delivery partners assess potential areas of underachievement. These sources include Key Stage assessments and GCSE data, the findings of school inspection reports and international surveys.

Research evidence tells us that social disadvantage has an impact on achievement and our own data shows major inequalities within our education system.

We still have too many young people who are underachieving, particularly amongst those entitled to free school meals.

Where the need for additional action has been identified steps are being taken to address it: examples include, Achieving Belfast and Bright Futures Derry, Extended and Full Service schools, SureStart and my Education Works campaign.

However, more needs to be done, especially in areas of social deprivation. For example, Delivering Social Change projects will target additional resources towards those at greatest risk of underachievement.

School Transport: Irish-medium Schools

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Education what progress his Department has made in addressing Lord Justice Treacy's verdict in relation to school transport for the Irish Medium sector.

(AQO 3437/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has been giving careful and detailed consideration to a complex judgment. Following this consideration, a number of options have been developed and then assessed in line with departmental policies and legal advice. I am currently considering the options.

The judgment is only in respect of Coláiste Feirste and not the Irish medium sector.

Education and Skills Authority: Board

Mr Maskey asked the Minister of Education how he will ensure that the views and opinions of young people will be represented on the board of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQO 3438/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The views of young people should be heard in relation to all public services, including education.

In relation to the membership of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), the provisions reflect the Heads of Agreement published by the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and were agreed by the Executive.

There is no age qualification for membership of ESA. I would encourage young people to consider applying for appointment to ESA as community members. I would also encourage those bodies that will be given nomination rights to consider how they will use those rights to ensure that the views of young people will be represented.

Schools: Springhill, Belfast

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Education when he plans to announce the funding for a new school at Springhill, Belfast.

(AQO 3439/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Belfast Education and Library Board, in common with other Education and Library Boards, has been developing area plans for schools in their area. I expect these plans to include

options for primary schools in the Greater Shankhill area. Once these plans have been published and consulted upon, I will take investment decisions subject to the availability of capital.

Education: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Education for an update on the recent visit by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

(AQO 3440/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: We are participating for the first time in a major international review by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The review will examine how Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks can deliver improvements for pupils and will involve an in-depth analysis of our education system by independent experts from other OECD countries.

The OECD Directorate of Education is the eminent worldwide source of research and information on effectiveness in education.

We need to learn from other countries. We already benchmark our pupils, we must also benchmark our systems. Our involvement will both help others learn from our experience and critically help us to learn from others.

Following a very successful preliminary visit to meet with key stakeholders, my Department will - later this month - host the main eight day visit by the OECD review team.

I look forward to welcoming the review team and I am delighted that they will have an opportunity to meet with a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, pupils, principals and governors and the wider education research community.

Teachers: Pensions

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Education to outline the potential impact that the proposed increases to employee pension contribution rates will have for local teachers.

(AQO 3441/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: None of the unions which responded to the consultation are in favour of the principle of increased pension contributions.

I do not agree with the British Government's approach to pension policy.

However, my Department's consultation was not about the principle of delivering the targeted level of savings to the cost of the public sector pension schemes in the north of Ireland, to which the Executive is already committed.

Rather, it was about how the required increases should be structured to provide protection for lower paid teachers and limit the risk of increases in the rate of opt-outs from the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Teachers, like other public servants, are being asked to pay more for their pensions and, regrettably, this will mean a reduction in their take-home pay. There is also a risk that there may be an increase in the number of teachers choosing to opt out of the Scheme.

However, I believe that the contribution increase proposals represent a reasonable and proportionate means of achieving the Executive's objectives of delivering the savings in a way which protects lower paid teachers and limits the risk of increases in the rate of opt-outs from the Scheme.

Extensive consultation has taken place with the teacher unions through the Teachers' Superannuation Consultative Committee, which is the established forum for consultation on matters relating to the Scheme, both prior to and during the formal consultation period which is now closed.

My Department will continue to consult with the teacher unions on pensions matters, including future contributions increases and the wider pension reform agenda.

Department for Employment and Learning

Sex Offenders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 18879/11-15, to clarify the position in relation to sex offenders who either fail to disclose their convictions or are subject to a Notification Order banning them from leaving the jurisdiction without police or court consent, specifically where employment agencies are recruiting staff to work abroad.

(AQW 19333/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Further to my answer to AQW 18879/11-15, I would reiterate that there is no specific requirement in the Conduct Regulations, which govern the recruitment sector, to compel a workseeker to disclose a criminal conviction. This applies regardless of the nature of any conviction.

However, a requirement for an employment agency to carry out a criminal record check or Enhanced Access NI check may arise, if the hirer makes it a specification of the post they are seeking to fill, or if such a disclosure is required by law in connection with a particular post.

There are some circumstances in which criminal records checks or Enhanced Access NI checks must be carried out prior to placing workers. Article 13 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order (NI) 2007, for which the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is responsible, requires employment businesses and agencies to ensure that workers who are to engage in “regulated activity” (i.e. with vulnerable adults and children) are not on a barred list. This is done by obtaining an Enhanced Access NI Disclosure certificate. These are required in the case of workers who take up positions in which they will be in contact with vulnerable adults or children. However, any criminal disclosure is required by the nature of the post, and not by the nature of any previous conviction of a workseeker. This legislation only applies to Northern Ireland and to other disclosure schemes operating in the UK.

If a role to be filled does not involve working with vulnerable adults or children, and if the hirer does not make it a stipulation that a clear criminal record is a condition for the role, then the recruitment agency/business has neither a reason nor a legal obligation to seek to obtain a criminal record history for the worker. This remains the case, regardless of the nature of any conviction.

The Department is carrying out a review of the Conduct Regulations as part of its review of employment law. We will consider amending any accompanying guidance to advise employment agencies of best practice when carrying out criminal records checks.

Adults with no Educational Achievements

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what strategies he will be pursuing to achieve departmental targets of reducing the number of adults with no educational achievements.

(AQW 19398/11-15)

Dr Farry: Most of the programmes and services that are funded or delivered by my Department are designed to equip individuals with skills and qualifications that will enable them to find work or to progress within employment and, by so doing, to reduce the number of adults with no educational achievements.

The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland “Success Through Skills – Transforming Futures”, which was published in May 2011, is my Department’s overarching strategy to provide people with economically relevant skills and qualifications. This strategy has identified three main groups of people, namely those entering the labour market, those currently in work, and those who are excluded from the labour market.

Under the strategic direction provided by Success Through Skills, the Department's main programmes include education provided through our universities and further education colleges, Apprenticeship and training programmes, employment programmes such as Steps to Work and the Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS), the Assured Skills programme helping employers to upskill their workforce, the Essential Skills strategy, and recently introduced programmes to deal specifically with youth unemployment such as the Youth Employment Scheme and the NEETs strategy.

My Department has a Programme for Government commitment to deliver 210,000 qualifications at Level 2 and above between 2011/12 and 2015, and we are on schedule to meet this target.

Stranmillis Teacher Training College

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, given his commitment to integrated education, whether he will consolidate teacher training in an enhanced and expanded Stranmillis Teacher Training College.

(AQW 19575/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am fully committed to the availability of high quality Initial Teacher Education that meets the needs of Northern Ireland and which represents good use of public money. To this end, I have commissioned a study of the teacher education infrastructure and the first stage of this work is now almost complete. The first stage examined the financial stability and sustainability of the two university colleges. Stage two of the study will set out options for a more shared and integrated system for the delivery and funding of teacher education.

Stranmillis University College: Chair of the Board of Governors

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning who has been appointed to the interview panel for the appointment of the Chair of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis University College.

(AQW 19655/11-15)

Dr Farry: The following people have been appointed to the interview panel for the appointment of the Chair of the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College: Two senior officials from my Department, Mr Andrew Hamilton, Deputy Secretary and Mrs Nuala Kerr, Director of Higher Education. They will be accompanied by Mrs Stephanie Lowry, an independent panel member appointed by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

This information is included in the Candidate Information Pack available to all interested applicants.

Southern Regional College

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he is in communication with the management at the Southern Regional College regarding their proposed plans to change how teachers are monitored in the classroom for his assessment of the potential damage to the educational experience of students enrolled at the College campuses as a result of any industrial action.

(AQW 19838/11-15)

Dr Farry: All issues relating to the employment of staff in further education colleges are a matter for the colleges' governing bodies, in their capacity as the employing authorities.

Whilst my Department has no role to intervene in these matters, I would urge staff and management sides to work together to reach agreement on this issue. I am hopeful that, through the use of established consultation mechanisms, the need for unnecessary industrial action will be mitigated.

Further and Higher Education: Cross-border Mobility

Ms Ruane asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on his work with the Minister of Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn, to address the barriers to cross-border mobility at undergraduate level.

(AQO 3416/11-15)

Dr Farry: Cross-border and indeed international mobility in higher education bring significant employability benefits for individual students, contribute to a vibrant economy and enrich the experience within individual institutions. Ultimately however, the decision to take up such opportunity rests with the individual student.

I have previously acknowledged, during the debate on this issue in October 2012, that there is scope for increased co-operation, particularly in the border areas and I am fully committed to ensuring that barriers to collaboration and mobility are addressed.

My Department is actively progressing recommendations of the Irish Business and Employers Confederation and the Confederation of British Industry Joint Business Council report.

In relation to the quality and flow of information, this is being progressed under the Graduating to Success and Preparing for Success implementation plans. Examples of progress include: implementation of the Key Information Sets; representation by universities from the Republic of Ireland at the UCAS Higher Education Fair and attendance by our universities at promotional events in the Republic of Ireland; and provision of impartial advice and guidance by my Department's Careers Service on higher education opportunities, including the Republic of Ireland.

As recommended by that report and the independent student finance review chaired by Joanne Stuart, my Department has enacted key changes; from academic year 2013/14, student- support arrangements for students studying in the Republic of Ireland will align with those studying in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Regarding qualifications, I am advised that the Irish Universities Association and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment met in November 2012 and are planning to produce a joint paper highlighting fundamental issues which need to be addressed in the current system.

I met with Minister Quinn twice during the past year and engagement between my officials and officials in the Department of Education and Skills continues in this important area.

ICT Working Group

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the work of the ICT Working Group.

(AQO 3417/11-15)

Dr Farry: I established the ICT Working Group in January 2012, involving employers, colleges, universities and other Departments.

The Action Plan produced by the group sets out the actions required to address the current and future skill needs of the sector. These are grouped under key themes of skills provision, sector attractiveness, and co-ordination and communication.

I recently reconvened the working group to review progress against the actions. Progress has been significant and a wide range of actions are being taken forward.

The Public/Private ICT apprenticeship pilot has seen the public sector, together with private sector employers, develop a recruitment and training model to employ apprentices in the ICT sector and develop their skills through on and off the job training. Thirty two apprentices have been employed in the local ICT sector through this scheme.

A Higher Level ICT Apprenticeship pilot commenced in October 2012 with six apprentices undertaking training through South West College. The aim of this pilot is to help raise the skill levels of apprentices in the workplace and facilitate progression directly to higher education.

Furthermore, a second cohort of the Software Testers' Academy was launched. Nineteen participants from the first cohort have gained employment in the ICT sector. The second cohort has places for 24 participants.

Progress has been made in the university sector. Both Queen's University and the University of Ulster now offer postgraduate MSc courses for non-IT graduates, with over 100 students enrolled.

Progress has also been made in the development of the A level curriculum. CCEA has developed a new 'Software and Systems Development' A level, in conjunction with employers. It is envisaged that the course will be available from September 2013.

Another progress review meeting of the ICT Working Group will be in June 2013.

Youth Employment Scheme

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many young people are engaged in Youth Employment Scheme projects in Mid Ulster.

(AQO 3418/11-15)

Dr Farry: As at 7th February, my Department has secured 50 opportunities for young people under the Youth Employment Scheme in the Mid-Ulster area. Fifteen young people have availed of these opportunities, of which nine have entered full-time employment. 18 young unemployed people have found 6 months paid employment under the First Start initiative.

A very successful Jobs Fair and Advice Forum was held in Dungannon on Friday 7 December 2012, organised by

DEL staff and supported by the local Council. Over 200 jobs were on offer in the retail, manufacturing and agri-foods sectors.

Feedback from all employers has been very positive and the engineering sector has already expressed interest in a further event

A Community Family Support Programme pilot in Cookstown commenced in January 2013 and 17 families have joined the programme.

Under the new Collaboration and Innovation Fund, £0.5 million has been allocated to the South West College, to provide support to 300 unemployed young people in its area, which includes Mid Ulster.

During the last 15 months, 41 unemployed young people from Mid Ulster have received personalised support from the Local Employment Intermediary Service.

These programmes are in addition to the Department's full range of support. From April to December 2012, the Employment Service helped 832 young unemployed people find employment in the Mid-Ulster area: this is 8.5% above target for the period.

On the Youth Employment Scheme generally, at 7th February, 822 employer agreements have been signed and 957 placements secured. 217 young people have been placed, of which 94 have secured full-time employment.

I would again urge all members to encourage businesses in their respective areas to support the Youth Employment Scheme and the various initiatives we are putting in place for unemployed young people. It is also important to encourage young constituents to avail of the opportunities.

Steps to Work: South Antrim

Ms Brown asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have gained employment as a direct result of the Steps to Work programme in South Antrim.

(AQO 3422/11-15)

Dr Farry: The aim of the Steps to Work programme is to assist people who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment.

Between September 2008 and June 2012, the latest date for which data is available, 2,850 participants left the Steps to Work programme in the South Antrim Parliamentary Constituency. Of these 2,850 leavers, a total of 1,125 moved into employment. This figure includes those moving into either unsubsidised or subsidised employment. Of the 1,125 who moved to employment, 1,085 moved into unsubsidised employment. This equates to 38% of the total leavers in the South Antrim constituency.

This is 3% above the Northern Ireland average. The percentage of participants who have been successful in obtaining unsubsidised employment, following participation on the Steps to Work programme, ranges from 28% to 43% by Parliamentary Constituency.

From September 2008 to September 2012, 99,720 participants started the Steps to Work programme. Reflecting the increase in unemployment since the recession began in 2008, the number of starts on the programme has increased year on year from 18,020 in 2009/10 to 29,885 in 2011/12.

The current target for Steps to Work participants moving into sustained employment for 13 weeks or more is 25%. The latest statistical data from September 2008 to March 2012 shows that an overall total of 29% was achieved.

Redundancies

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what efforts have been made to put in place a permanent response unit to deal with redundancies such as those at FG Wilson.

(AQO 3423/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Employment Service has in place effective mechanisms for delivering a full redundancy advice service at very short notice.

In offering redundancy advice services, the Employment Service works with the Social Security Agency, further education colleges, HMRC and other agencies. Should any company choose to avail of the service, their employees will receive information and professional advice about the options and support available. These include employment, training and education opportunities, as well as careers, benefits and taxation advice.

It is my assessment that a permanent response unit would simply duplicate the role of the Employment Service redundancy advice service and would therefore not be justified. The service currently provided is already highly effective, in that it has proven itself to be both flexible and highly responsive to local redundancy situations.

For example, in the case of FG Wilson the redundancy service was offered to the company immediately on receipt of the official notice.

A package of tailored support was put together in consultation with the company's HR management and out-placement provider, Lee Hecht Harrison, which included redundancy clinics for three weeks as well as job and training fairs which were free of charge.

It should be noted that the company confirmed that there were no compulsory redundancies.

In total the company announced 750 redundancies in September 2012. The broad skill sets of the redundant staff, based on the information held by the employer was engineers for research and development; engineers; managers, supervisors, administrators; and, manufacturing operators.

In addition to redundancy advice services offered by the Department, Northern Regional College made course places available to a number of those who were being made redundant.

The college is currently finalising a proposal under the Jobs and Economy Initiative to provide more intensive support to individuals.

Further Education: Irish Language

Ms McCorley asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the work his Department has undertaken to facilitate Further Education being delivered through the medium of the Irish language.
(AQO 3424/11-15)

Dr Farry: All issues relating to curriculum delivery and course provision are a matter for individual further education colleges. Colleges remain prepared to deliver further education courses through the medium of Irish where sufficient demand exists.

In October 2011, following discussions with the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, I wrote to the six Further Education colleges, and asked them to consider contributing to the Líofo initiative.

Four colleges – Belfast Metropolitan College, South West College, South Eastern Regional College, and Southern Regional College have listed their mainstream Irish language provision on the Líofo website.

Outside the statutory further education sector, a pilot has been proposed through my Department's Training for Success programme, in order to accommodate a number of learners who have expressed a preference to undertake their vocational training through the medium of Irish. This will be provided through a sub-contracting arrangement between one of my Department's contracted training suppliers and GaelChursaí, which was formed in February 2011 to provide training and, develop employment opportunities within the Irish medium sector.

Such a pilot will allow my Department to test the delivery model. If it proves successful, then consideration will be given to how best to mainstream such a provision within the Training for Success programme delivery.

Unemployment: East Antrim

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what measures he has introduced to address unemployment in East Antrim following the significant local job losses.
(AQO 3425/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is committed to reducing unemployment across Northern Ireland. Carrickfergus and Larne Jobs & Benefits Offices, which serve East Antrim, offer a range of services and programmes to help jobseekers find employment. Services include job search, help with writing a CV or job application form, help to prepare for interviews, careers guidance, or help with travel costs for job interviews.

In addition a range of contracted schemes such as the Steps to Work and Pathways to Work programmes are offered.

My Department has recently introduced new initiatives to help address youth unemployment, which includes provision in East Antrim.

The Youth Employment Scheme is available to help young people gain experience, acquire new skills and find employment. Also 'First Start', a new strand of the Steps to Work programme, offers waged employment opportunities for unemployed young people, each lasting a minimum of six months.

Under the Collaboration and Innovation Fund, just under £4 million has been allocated to eight organisations, to help 1,500 unemployed young people from greater Belfast and East Antrim to get into further education, employment or training.

Newtownabbey is also one of the new Community Family Support Programme pilot areas. The programme will help prevent intergenerational unemployment and poverty, in ten of the most disadvantaged local families.

Tomorrow, 19th February, my Department will co-host with Ledcom and Larne Borough Council a Jobs and Opportunities Fair in Larne Town Hall. Over 30 organisations will be present to offer jobs and training opportunities to people in Larne. Employers include P&O, Danske Bank, Price Waterhouse Coopers, ASDA and TESCO offering a diverse range of opportunities in a wide range of sectors.

It is worth noting that in the period April to December 2012 the Employment Service helped 1,250 people find employment in East Antrim; 22% above target for the period.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

InvestNI

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what was the cost to Invest NI of each job promoted from California during the period 2009-2012.

(AQW 19251/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Invest NI reports on the basis of the amount of assistance offered to promote jobs. The cost to Invest NI to promote these jobs from Californian based companies during the period 2009-2012 was £14,679 each.

The current method of calculating cost per job has been agreed by the Treasury and is used for delegation and control purposes by the Department of Trade and Industry and all the Development Agencies within the United Kingdom to enable like for like comparisons to be made about the level of assistance being offered to companies.

Crescent Capital Funds

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the investors from outside Northern Ireland in Crescent Capital Funds.

(AQW 19252/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Crescent Capital has managed two venture capital funds.

Crescent Capital I was a £14 million fund which was launched in October 1995 as Hambro Northern Ireland Ventures LP. It was a 10 year limited partnership with a 2 year extension period. The Fund had a broad range of investors from outside Northern Ireland as listed below.

INVESTORS IN CRESCENT CAPITAL I

Partners
Dutch Nordic Insurance Company NV
Walsh Strategic Management Limited
GRE Nominees Ltd
Investec Group Investments (UK) Limited
Haverhill Retirement Board, Massachusetts, US.
Middlesex County Retirement System, Massachusetts, US.
Pensionskassen for Vaerkstedsfunktionaerer i Jernet, Denmark (PVJ)

Partners
State Registered Nurses and District Nurses Pension Fund, Denmark.
Marmara Shipping & Trading Inc
George Moore, Vienna, Virginia, U.S.
Alex Hambro (re: ex Ulster Garden Villages Trust)
Ballylumford Power Pension Scheme / Aerion Funds Management London
Merseyside Superannuation Fund Managers, Liverpool, England
Lancashire County Pension Fund
HamNIV GP Limited (1% share of total commitment)

Crescent Capital II LP was established as a £22.5 million fund under a 10 year limited partnership agreement, with the option to extend the fund by 2 years.

The Fund commenced in May 2005 with three private investors from outside Northern Ireland, as listed below.

INVESTORS IN CRESCENT CAPITAL II

Partners
New York State Pension Fund
The European Investment Fund
Martin Naughton

InvestNI

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what support has been given to the digital and software industries by InvestNI in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19276/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below shows the amount of assistance offered by Invest NI in each of the last 5 financial years to businesses within the digital and software industries.

Invest NI Assistance Offered to Businesses in the Digital & Software Industries (2007-08 to 2011-12)

Year	Assistance Offered £m
2007-08	16.4
2008-09	17.5
2009-10	29.7
2010-11	19.0
2011-12	15.4
Total	98.0

InvestNI

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how additionality and deadweight are taken into account when considering the value for money offered by InvestNI.

(AQW 19367/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI, when assessing the value for money (VfM) of any assisted programme or project, will examine additionality and deadweight. This is a standard feature of the appraisal process and it is a requirement of DFP guidance, which is publicly available on <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/eag>.

Invest NI will use a variety of means to probe the information provided by the applicant in respect of additionality and deadweight. This could be through, for example;

- the examination, monitoring and benchmarking of information, including financial and business plan information, supplied by the applicant,
- direct questioning of the applicant on their business plan and the financing of their plans,
- drawing on the knowledge of Invest NI, where it has experience of dealing with similar applications or has had previous dealings with the applicant,
- consulting other organisations who are experienced in the relevant field of activity, or who have previous experience of the applicant - for example, partner organisations, other funding bodies, banks, and so on.

Furthermore Invest NI and/or DETI economists, as appropriate, examine the information and evidence on additionality/deadweight when an assessment is made of the VfM of Invest NI cases. This should help ensure that Invest NI assisted projects receive the minimum government assistance required to bring them, and their benefits, about.

InvestNI

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the extent to which new jobs created by companies which are supported by InvestNI are counterbalanced by jobs lost since 2008.

(AQW 19372/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Recent research and analysis on job creation carried out by Aston Business School demonstrates the strong performance of Invest NI assisted businesses relative to the rest of the private sector. During the period 2005-2011 Invest NI assisted businesses increase their employment by 17.6% compared to a 7.8% decline in employment by private sector non-assisted businesses.

Whilst this analysis does not specifically relate to the period since 2008, it shows that businesses assisted by Invest NI between 2005 and 2011 created 34,389 jobs. This was offset by some clients reducing their employment by 20,282, resulting in an overall net increase of 14,107 (+17.6%).

Productivity Gap Between Northern Ireland and Great Britain

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of (i) the current productivity gap between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom; (ii) any trend which is evident as regards the productivity gap; and (iii) her targets for reducing the productivity gap.

(AQW 19373/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) Productivity data for UK regions is produced by the Office for National Statistics and this information is publically available, with the latest release published on 3 January 2013 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/productivity/labour-productivity/q3-2012/stb-lprod-q312.html#tab-Regional-labour-productivity>. As highlighted in both the Independent Review of Economic Policy (IREP), and more recently the Evidence Base supporting the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy, the lower labour productivity in Northern Ireland is typically a function of relatively low productivity

in key sectors and a sectoral mix in the economy with an over-representation of lower value added activities.

- (ii) The productivity gap between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom is longstanding, and economic forecasts published within the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy illustrate the scale of the challenge ahead. IREP recognised that, in the context of regional economic growth, it is important the Executive sufficiently prioritises exports and inward investment and that innovation and R&D are recognised as vital long term drivers of productivity. Committed action over a significant period of time will be required to make significant inroads into the productivity gap.

Although the latest available data suggests that the productivity gap widened during the downturn, 2011 did see some improvement in terms of GVA per filled job – which currently stands at 86.8% of the UK average. The Northern Ireland data is also part of a wider “productivity puzzle” in respect of the productivity data for the UK as a whole, in terms of trends in output, employment and productivity during the downturn. This has recently been analysed in detail by the Office for National Statistics, available to download from <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/elmr/the-productivity-conundrum/explanations-and-preliminary-analysis/art-explanations-and-preliminary-analysis.html>.

- (iii) My Department does not have a target relating to reducing the productivity gap with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Export Sales

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how export sales are measured. **(AQW 19374/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: There are two main sources of official statistics on exports for Northern Ireland.

Regional Trade Statistics for all UK regions are published by HMRC on a quarterly basis, and these are publicly available from <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/statistics/rts/pages/default.aspx>.

NISRA publishes a Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey each year which provides estimates of sales within Northern Ireland, external sales to Great Britain and exports generated by all businesses within the manufacturing industry in Northern Ireland. The latest figures available are for 2011/12 and can be accessed through the DETI website at <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-manufacturing-sales-exports.htm>

The Programme for Government contains commitments on exports, and progress is assessed using the Regional Trade Statistics due to their timeliness and frequency of publication, the enhanced information available on destination countries (which is crucial for the emerging economies target) and also the ability to compare across all UK regions.

InvestNI: Performance Data

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department assesses the quality of InvestNI's performance data. **(AQW 19375/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: My Department's Analytical Services Unit works closely with Invest NI to source and validate its performance data and, only recently, the Unit completed a data linkage project which linked Invest NI data with Business Survey data in an attempt to better understand the performance of Invest NI supported companies. In turn this work, and the outputs from it, was independently validated by Professor Mark Hart of Aston Business School. All this material has been published and is available on the DETI website at <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/deti-stats-index-3/sfa-analysis.htm>.

This work is currently being built upon through an externally commissioned evaluation of Invest NI's programme of Selective Financial Assistance. This too will be published in due course once it is completed around springtime.

Finally it is also worth noting that the Northern Ireland Audit Office, in its report of March 2012, completed an exercise which assessed the robustness of Invest NI data on the number of FDI jobs promoted during 2010, concluding that they found sufficient evidence to substantiate the jobs figures.

Economic Strategy

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the development of a local economic strategy based on devolution of greater and wider controls over fiscal mechanisms in the way the Scottish Government sought to do through the Calman Commission.
(AQW 19379/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive's Economic Strategy is based on an extensive review of global best practice in economic development and on a wide ranging and independent review of economic policy in Northern Ireland.

The Economic Strategy recognises that securing the ability to vary, and significantly lower, the rate of corporation tax would be a major enabler to successfully rebalance the Northern Ireland economy toward greater private sector and value added growth.

Tourist Board Promotion

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the tourist amenities that are being promoted by the Tourist Board; (ii) the marketing budget allocated to promotion; and (iii) the tourism bodies carrying out this work.
(AQW 19402/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) 4,192 tourist amenities are promoted by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board on its consumer website discovernorthernireland.com. In 2012 the website received 3.2 million visitors. This data is also further provided as part of a public data feed to Tourism Ireland and is replicated on their new consumer website www.ireland.com. In 2012 Tourism Ireland's consumer website (www.discoverireland.com) received in the region of 12.7 million visitors
- (ii) The Northern Ireland Tourist Board's promotion & marketing budget for the next 2 years is as follows:

	2013/14: (£)	2014/15: (£)	Total: (£)
Promotion & Marketing:	7,668,000	7,590,000	15,258,000
European Regional Development Fund:	2,300,000	2,300,000	4,600,000
Total:	9,968,000	9,890,000	19,858,000

[Please note this budget includes all NITB's programme activity including development of the visitor experience, the website and database, quality programmes, visitor servicing and marketing. Tourism Ireland will also have a marketing budget allocated to promotion of the island of Ireland in Great Britain & Overseas.]

- (iii) The Northern Ireland Tourist Board is responsible for the promotion of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Tourism Ireland is responsible for the marketing of the Island of Ireland in Great Britain & Overseas.

The following regional tourism partnerships and organisations support their members in providing assistance with tourism product development and in marketing local tourism providers at a regional and international level:

- Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau - www.belfastconventionbureau.com;
- Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Partnership - www.causewaycoastandglens.com;

- Derry Visitor & Convention Bureau - www.derryvisitor.com;
- Fermanagh Lakelands Tourism - www.fermanaghlakelands.com; and
- Flavour of Tyrone - www.flavourof Tyrone.com

Further support is provided by local council authorities and industry associations.

InvestNI: Jobs Promoted

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the impact on the job targets contained in the Programme for Government in light of the latest figures showing that only 75 percent of jobs promoted are actually created.

(AQW 19427/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The job target in the Programme for Government is based on the number of jobs promoted in businesses assisted by Invest NI. Therefore, the conversion ratio between jobs promoted and jobs created will have no impact on this target.

New Business Start-Ups

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline how her Department measures the success of new business start-ups.

(AQW 19431/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The success of local business starts through Invest NI's volume business start programmes are measured through independent Post Programme Evaluations. These Evaluations measure survival rates and employment.

The success of Export Start and Global Start businesses are measured through individual Post Project Evaluations that measure wealth creation (salaries and wages, investment).

Selective Financial Assistance

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how InvestNI will utilise the funds currently spent on Selective Financial Assistance should that method no longer be available as a result of regional aid issues.

(AQW 19432/11-15)

Mrs Foster: While the draft Regional Aid Guidelines for the period 2014-20 indicate that the rates of support to business across much of Europe are likely to be reduced by 5% and that support to large companies may be further restricted, it is important to note that Regional Aid will continue across the EU post 2013 and will therefore be available to businesses in Northern Ireland. Given ongoing consultations between EU member states, it is not yet possible to conclude what the direct impact on Northern Ireland will be.

The Executive acknowledges the importance of Regional Aid and SFA to businesses in Northern Ireland. We have made various representations in Whitehall and in Europe and we are in ongoing, active discussions with the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) in London and with representatives of the European Commission with a view to securing the best possible outcome for Northern Ireland post 2013. Therefore Invest NI will continue to make optimum use of SFA throughout the Regional Aid period 2014-20.

During the last five years the amount of SFA offered to businesses has declined from £54 million to £27 million. In 2011-12 SFA accounted for 30% of the total value of assistance offered, compared with 50% in 2007-08. In line with this decrease in SFA spending there has been a large increase in the amount of other forms of assistance offered by Invest NI. This includes a wide range of assistance in support of innovation, trade, skills and other capability development activities which are vital to driving business competitiveness and economic growth in Northern Ireland.

Shale Gas Forum

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the planned work programme for the shale gas forum and the work that has been carried out to date.

(AQW 19436/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Shale Gas Regulators Forum held its inaugural meeting on 18 October 2012. This meeting centred on agreeing the purpose, objectives, Terms of Reference and roles of Forum members and on sharing of knowledge and information to date.

Going forward, the Forum's work programme will be informed by the activities required to give effect to a robust and efficient shale gas regulatory framework.

Shale Gas Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether (i) the Health and Safety Executive will review the report entitled Chief Medical Officer's Recommendations Concerning Shale Gas Development in New Brunswick by Dr. E Cleary; and (ii) she plans to give any consideration to the public health implications of the proposals to extract shale gas.

(AQW 19438/11-15)

Mrs Foster: HSENI will review the Report in relation to issues within its remit, but I should explain that HSENI has no powers with respect to the wider public health matters.

Farming Accidents

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action is being taken to address farming accidents by the Farm Safety Partnership; and how can Health and Safety Training be accessed by farmers.

(AQW 19495/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Farm Safety Partnership has produced a comprehensive action plan listing the actions the members of the partnership will take to address the situation regarding farming accidents. The action plan can be accessed on the HSENI website -

www.hseni.gov.uk/farm_safety_partnership_for_northern_ireland_november_2012-14.pdf

FarmSafe Awareness training can be accessed by contacting either the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (Cookstown) or Ai Services (Newtownabbey) on the following telephone numbers: 0845 026 7536 or 0845 026 7534 or by emailing options@countryrural.co.uk Training will initially be delivered on 32 Focus Farms throughout Northern Ireland.

Live Cattle Export Business Opportunities

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department is aware of any live cattle export business opportunities to Libya.

(AQW 19556/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There is no certificate in place to allow for the export of live cattle from the UK to Libya. Negotiation of export certificates (EHCS) is undertaken by DEFRA and Industry Partners which include Northern Ireland Representatives.

EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland (2007-2013): Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much funding from the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland (2007-2013) has been (i) allocated; and (ii) spent; and to list the recipients.

(AQW 19566/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Of the €306 million (£266 million at euro fx-rate of 1.15) available to Northern Ireland under the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme, £210 million has been allocated to the Programme Implementing Bodies which are Invest NI, NITB, DETI, DARD and DRD.

To date, £106.8 million has been spent and registered on the EU database.

Further information on the projects and activities funded can be obtained from the Programme website (www.eucompni.gov.uk). A full list of the Programme beneficiaries is also available at <http://www.eugrants-successes.org>

Electricity

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she will take to ensure that there is adequate additional generating capacity for electricity so that there is security of supply for homes and businesses in all weather conditions.

(AQW 19572/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has had a number of meetings with the Regulator and System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) within the context of the SONI All-Island Generation Capacity Statement. These discussions are at an early stage to inform understanding of our respective roles and responsibilities. They will be developed at the appropriate point to examine options that might be required to ensure future adequacy of supply.

My Department is also monitoring developments in relation to options to restore full capacity to the Moyle Interconnector and actions to bring proposals for development of the North/South Interconnector back before the Planning Appeals Committee. Improved interconnection has a vital role to play in relation to long-term security of supply for Northern Ireland.

Electricity Generators

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the (i) generating capacity of each of the electricity generators; and (ii) capacity limits of each of the interconnectors; and (iii) impact that the proposed closure of older generating capacity under European regulations may have on local supply.

(AQW 19573/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I refer the Member to the All-Island Generation Capacity Statement 2013-2022 jointly published by the System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) and EirGrid for the Republic of Ireland, on their websites in January 2013. As electricity system operators in their respective jurisdictions, they are responsible for compiling the data you require.

The document can be obtained through the following link:

http://www.soni.ltd.uk/newsstory.asp?news_id=222

My Department has had a number of meetings with the Utility Regulator and SONI within the context of the All-Island Generation Capacity Statement. These discussions included the examination of options that might be required to ensure future adequacy of generation capacity.

Gas Extension Project

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why the gas extension project is being taken forward independently from any consideration of the potential usage of new pipelines by a company engaged in gas extraction; and why she is not giving consideration to recouping any public expenditure by charging a levy on gas extraction companies making use of the proposed gas transmission.

(AQW 19635/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department's analysis in relation to extending the gas network to towns in the West and North-West has not included potential usage of the new pipelines for the conveyance of locally

extracted gas, nor any commercial issues which might arise, as work in relation to gas extraction is still at an exploratory stage.

Gas Distribution Network

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the percentage of (i) the greater Belfast area that is connected to the gas distribution network; and (ii) those people with access to the distribution network who are supplied with gas.

(AQW 19636/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Phoenix Natural Gas advises that there are some 330,000 properties within its licensed area and, by the end of 2012, gas had been made available to approximately 296,000 or some 90% of premises.

Phoenix also advise that by the end of 2012, for those with access to the gas network, approximately 159,000 or around 53% of properties had been connected to natural gas.

Tamboran's Petroleum Exploration Licence

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 19123/11-15, whether the work programme of the four onshore petroleum licences issued by her Department are part of the terms and conditions of the licences.

(AQW 19638/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the answer I gave to AQW15606/11-15.

Financial Services Authority: Credit Unions

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the policies that the Financial Services Authority requires credit unions to have in place before the 30 September 2013; (ii) the assistance her Department has made available to credit unions to ensure such policies are in place; (iii) how this assistance is provided; and (iv) when the required policies are expected to be in place.

(AQW 19822/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Financial Services Authority as UK regulator is best placed to detail the policies that credit unions are required to have in place at any point in time. My Department has made an offer of financial assistance to the Irish League of Credit Unions and the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions to help meet the costs of providing a service to all credit unions that require guidance and assistance on the transitional arrangements.

Economy: Total Expenditure on Services Framework

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline how the Treasury Total Expenditure on Services Framework is considered in the development of economic strategies.

(AQO 3450/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In developing the NI Economic Strategy, the Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy considered a wide range of information. This included analysis of the extent to which the Executive had allocated funding to support the rebalancing themes identified within the Economic Strategy and comparisons of the level of economic orientated expenditure with other parts of the UK.

A summary of this analysis was contained within the initial consultation on the Executive's Framework for Economic Growth, "Priorities for Sustainable Growth & Prosperity" which was published in January 2011.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan: Retail Policy

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact for the economy of the Environment Minister's intention to change retail policy in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

(AQO 3451/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not carry out assessments of the economic impact of planning decisions taken by the Environment Minister.

In line with the Economic Strategy, I would encourage all Executive Ministers to take decisions which promote investment in the local economy and which support sustainable job creation and economic growth.

Foreign Direct Investment: West Belfast

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department has taken to increase foreign direct investment in West Belfast.

(AQO 3452/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Over the last two financial years Invest NI has facilitated 14 visits by prospective inward investors, in relation to investing in West Belfast.

Last year, Invest NI's CEO Alastair Hamilton and I travelled to the US and met with Caterpillar senior management to specifically discuss the company's future plans in Northern Ireland, securing the 200 new high quality shared services jobs in West Belfast that Minister Farry and I announced last week.

Invest NI holds 190 acres of land in West Belfast and 31 acres are available for further economic development.

Invest NI continues to work closely with stakeholders and both the West Belfast Partnership and Greater Shankill Partnership Boards to review the features and benefits of West Belfast in order to maximise opportunities for future economic growth. In May 2012, Invest NI hosted a stakeholder reception at Belfast Metropolitan College's new e3 facility, as part of its International Overseas Sales Conference which helped Invest NI's overseas representatives to enhance their knowledge and ability to promote the area.

Economy: The Honourable The Irish Society

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what economic benefits the recent event in the Guildhall, London, hosted by the Honourable Irish Society, may have for the whole of the North West.

(AQO 3453/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During a very well-attended investment banquet, prospective investors to Northern Ireland were presented with highly positive and compelling messages about investing in the region and in particular in the North West. Additionally, a pre-dinner seminar delivered by representatives from the North West was targeted directly at investors interested specifically in the North West.

Potential investment opportunities are multi-sectoral and include technology, engineering, financial services and business services. In particular, I welcome the intention of a private sector company to develop a data centre in the North West.

Teams from Invest NI are actively following up to develop and manage opportunities.

Economic Advisory Group

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the work of the Economic Advisory Group.

(AQO 3454/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Economic Advisory Group has been particularly busy over the previous year. The Group intends to publish its annual report in the coming weeks and this will provide a comprehensive breakdown of the Group's work over the year in addition to its forward work programme.

Of particular interest will be the Group's in-depth analysis of business access to finance within Northern Ireland. A report is currently being finalised on this important matter and I expect to receive the Group's recommendations when we next meet on 5th March 2013.

InvestNI: Job Promotion and Creation

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the actions she has taken to rectify any regional disparity in the areas in which jobs are promoted and created by InvestNI. **(AQO 3455/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: Assistance patterns are demand-led by businesses wishing to improve their competitiveness and gain a larger share of international markets. While potential investors are specifically offered a range of options for location, including areas of economic and social disadvantage, the ultimate decision regarding location is one for the company. In the case of established businesses, reinvestment patterns will usually be determined by the existing location of the business.

The 2009 Independent Review of Economic Policy noted the importance of allowing companies the scope to locate where they feel they can operate most profitably and as such, it would be inappropriate for Invest NI to seek to force companies to choose one location over another.

Department of the Environment

Driver and Vehicle Agency: Diesel Emissions Compliance Test

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether the Driver and Vehicle Agency has an obligation to carry out a diesel emissions compliance test as part of the MOT; and whether this is being carried out.

(AQW 17811/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): European roadworthiness directive 2009/40 EC requires metered smoke tests to be conducted on heavy goods vehicles, buses and light goods vehicles, and on cars fitted with diesel engines registered on or after 1 January 1980.

From 1 March 2006, the Driver & Vehicle Agency introduced metered smoke testing into the annual tests for all of the required vehicles. However, for health and safety reasons related to the build-up of fumes in test halls, and on the advice of the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, metered smoke testing for light goods vehicles and cars was subsequently suspended, and they are now subject to visual inspection for smoke emissions.

Buses and heavy goods vehicles fitted with diesel engines continue to be tested fully in compliance with the relevant European directive.

The re-introduction of fully compliant emissions testing for cars and light goods vehicles is being considered in the context of an ongoing strategic review of vehicle testing arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Ministerial Private Office: Running Costs

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost of running his Ministerial Private Office in the last financial year.

(AQW 17864/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The total cost of running the Ministerial Private Office for 2011-12 was £269,832. This cost includes salary costs of £263,311 as well as general administration costs of £6,521, which covers items such as computer consumables, stationary and telephony costs.

Council Area Allotment Plots

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many allotment plots there are in each council area. **(AQW 17890/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: 11 councils have indicated that they provide allotments and a table of the numbers provided by each council in 2012 is given below. In addition, Antrim Council, Down District Council and Newry & Mourne Council are actively supporting community groups and others to make some provision.

District Council	No. of Allotments 2012	District Council	No. of Allotments 2012
Belfast	178	Newtownabbey	26
Carrickfergus	189	North down	18
Castlereagh	6	Strabane	52
Derry	31	Dungannon and Tyrone	14
Larne	8	Magherafelt	27
Lisburn	53	Total	602

Lead Mines at Conlig Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will consider providing protection to the lead mines at Conlig area because of their natural beauty and historical significance. **(AQW 17958/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The former lead workings at Whitespots, which is relatively close to Conlig, have been designated as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) because of its geological importance. Past workings have produced a series of spoil heaps that provide access to mineral rich material which has been brought to the surface as part of the mining process which would otherwise be inaccessible. The spoil heaps contain mineralised rocks with a range of minerals present including some representing the formerly commercially worked metallic ores. This site has the only occurrence in Northern Ireland of the unusual barium zeolite, harmotone.

Built Heritage has long recognised the considerable historic importance of the industrial heritage complex in the townlands of Conlig and Whitespots. Indeed, they were among the first industrial archaeological sites to be given protection through scheduling in Northern Ireland. Today, five key surviving components of the complex are given protection under Article 3 of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995.

Council Invoices

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment to detail, for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2012, (i) the total number of invoices paid; and (ii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt, by each council. **(AQW 18186/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The total number of invoices paid and the total paid within 10 working days of receipt of the supplier's invoice, by each council, for the period 1 April to 31 December 2012, is detailed in the table below.

Council	Total Invoices Paid (1 Apr to 31 Dec 2012)	Total invoices paid within 10 working days (1 Apr - 31 Dec 2012)
Antrim	7,380	1,196
Ards	9,254	4,979
Armagh	7,817	3,197
Ballymena*	7,738	2,794
Ballymoney	4,453	887
Banbridge	4,748	1,096
Belfast	40,990	17,925
Carrickfergus	4,271	1,006
Castlereagh	7,657	2,835
Coleraine	6,667	1,038
Cookstown	4,211	2,590
Craigavon	9,003	1,776
Derry	15,330	5,728
Down	8,261	679
Dungannon & S Tyrone	4,060	2,445
Fermanagh	7,483	2,724
Larne	3,120	1,133
Limavady	5,241	2,127
Lisburn	9,774	3,396
Magherafelt	4,367	2,495
Moyle	2,552	614
Newry & Mourne	9,048	928
Newtownabbey	12,504	6,332
North Down	8,351	4,259
Omagh	4,101	1,806
Strabane	3,373	1,004
Total	202,706	76,061

* Based on Calendar Days

I also attach a table showing the percentage breakdown of 10 day prompt payments for the periods 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 and April – December 2012. Whilst this shows an overall increase, there is still significant room for improvement. I am currently liaising with Councils to ascertain the reasons why the 10 day target is not being achieved, given my view that more can and needs to be

done. I will be looking to overcome any specific system limitations, potentially taking these issues forward as an early reform convergence workstream. I will be writing to Council Chief Executives enclosing both tables and encouraging councils that can achieve the 10 day prompt payment target to do so.

DISTRICT COUNCILS PERCENTAGE OF INVOICES PAID WITHIN 10 DAYS

Council	2009/2010 %	2010/2011 %	2011/2012 %	Apr-Dec 2012 %
Antrim	12	10	6	16
Ards	10	24	64	54
Armagh	11	17	32	41
Ballymena (1)	10	12	30	36
Ballymoney	6	6	6	20
Banbridge	N/A	6	36	23
Belfast	6	9	47	44
Carrickfergus	14	14	14	24
Castlereagh	N/A	N/A	N/A	37
Coleraine(2)	8	8	7(2)	16
Cookstown	53	61	53	62
Craigavon	4	3	6	20
Derry	26	25	29	37
Down	N/A	N/A	7	8
Dungannon & S Tyrone	30	32	39	60
Fermanagh	N/A	16	32	36
Larne	3	7	18	36
Limavady	12	19	10	41
Lisburn	5	9	15	35
Magherafelt	39	46	39	57
Moyle	16	14	17	24
Newry & Mourne	5-10	5-10	5	10
Newtownabbey(1)	20	22	36	51
North Down	N/A	N/A	63	51
Omagh	33	33	34	44
Strabane	12	12	23	30

(1) Based on calendar days

(2) Based on a sample of 419 invoices

N/A Councils have advised that the information is not available

Wind Turbine Applications

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of Spatial Planning Advice Note: SP12/09 Planning Applications for Wind Turbines Sited Near to Trunk Roads, which is used by the Planning Service and Highways Agency in England; (ii) how this advice could be used by the Planning Service and Roads Service when assessing wind turbine applications considering that with PPS18 and best practice guidance as the only substantive requirement for safe location of turbines and roads is for a turbine setback distance of fall over height plus 10 percent from a road.

(AQW 18279/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Spatial Planning Advice Note: SP12/09 has been prepared by the Highways Agency (an Agency of the Department of Transport) and applies only to trunk roads in England.

For micro and small turbines, the advice note recommends a set-back from the nearest highway boundary equal in distance to their height + 10%. For larger commercial turbines it recommends a set-back distance equal to their height + 50 metres. The advice note also states that this set-back distance may be relaxed subject to the findings of a site specific assessment.

The Best Practice Guidance (BPG) that accompanies Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 'Renewable Energy' states that wind turbines should be set back at least fall over distance plus 10% from the edge of any public road. By way of information, the equivalent planning guidance in England is contained in the companion guide to PPS22 'Renewable Energy' which states that it 'may be advisable to achieve a set-back from roads and railways of at least fall over distance in order to achieve maximum safety'.

My colleague, Danny Kennedy MLA, Minister for Regional Development, has confirmed that his Department currently uses the guidance available in PPS18 and the accompanying Best Practice Guidance, which it considers to be adequate. He advised me that details of haulage routes, access, etc as part of the Environment Impact Assessment, along with confirmation about de-icing and shadow flicker, if considered necessary, are requested. He also advised that the set-back of fall over distance plus 10% is also applied and that, although this is seldom an issue, it has been used on a few occasions.

I am, therefore, satisfied that the approach in Northern Ireland and the provisions of PPS 18 adequately address road safety issues.

Elections to Shadow Councils

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether elections to shadow councils will happen by June 2014; and to outline any discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Office on the timing of these elections.

(AQW 18481/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In July 2012, I wrote to the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt. Hon. Owen Paterson MP, requesting that the next set of local government elections be brought forward to 2014. He responded agreeing in principle to this approach.

My Department has been in regular contact with the Northern Ireland Office to ensure that the necessary legislation is in place to allow the next set of local government elections to be held in 2014, providing for a shadow period between polling day and the day on which the new council comes fully into operation.

Motorway Service Stations

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment whether the proposed motorway service stations on the M1 and M2 will be permitted to open 24 hours a day; and whether other retail outlets from which motorists could benefit will also be considered along the motorways.

(AQW 18514/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are no planning restrictions or conditions attached to the current planning permissions for motorway service stations on the M2 that would preclude their use on a 24 hour basis. The M1 MSAs are covered by an agreement under Article 40 of the Planning Order 1991. One of the obligations requires the provision of services 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

As regards retail outlets along motorways, a key planning consideration would be the Department's policy as set out in Planning Policy Statement 3 which precludes direct access for any development proposal onto any motorway or high standard dual carriageway with the possible exception of motorway service areas. This policy is intended to protect the integrity and design standards of the motorway system and help ensure that road safety is maintained.

In the case of retail developments proposed near to the motorway system, but not relying on direct access to it, these are determined on their individual merits taking account of retail planning policy, the provisions of the local development plan and other relevant policy and material considerations, including any representations received.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the Planning Appeals Commission Appeal Decision 2011/AO251 paragraph 6; and whether the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan has been, or will be amended to identify and prepare local policies for those stretches of a Protected Route to be subjected to further access restrictions beyond those set out in Policy AMP3, in respect of the A2 Bangor Road.

(AQW 18646/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Planning Appeals Commission in its appeal decision 2011/AO251 accurately stated that while PPS3 makes provisions for development plans, where appropriate, to identify and prepare local policies for those stretches of a Protected Route to be subject to further access restrictions beyond those set out in Policy AMP 3, draft BMAP does not contain any such local policy. The Commission also noted that there was no objection to the draft plan on that basis.

Given that this issue was not raised as an objection to draft BMAP, the Plan will not be amended to include any such policy.

Planning Applications: Environmental Impact Assessment

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 18153/11-15, what is the average time taken to determine the need for an environmental impact assessment on a planning application; and how does this compare to the average in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 18656/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Regulations 7 and 10 of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, (the EIA regulations), state that the Department shall make a determination of whether a particular development is EIA development within 4 weeks from the date of receipt of the application or such longer period as may be agreed in writing with the applicant.

Records of the date of when a determination is made as to whether a proposal is EIA development are not recorded on the Department's IT system in such a way as to enable the average time taken to be easily identified. However, the EIA Regulations provide the procedures and timescales to be applied for EIA development.

Taxi Service

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what barriers exist to publicans who wish to offer a service that will bring customers home from their licensed premises; and what steps a license holder must take to offer such a service.

(AQW 18900/11-15)

Mr Attwood: If passengers are carried for “hire or reward”, the service would be construed as a taxi service. “Hire or reward” means any payment in cash or kind to enable the passenger to use the service. Payments may be direct or indirect, such as part of an entrance charge to an event. Hire or reward still applies regardless of whether any profits are made from payments received. Since the provision of the service would be closely linked to the use of the public house, it is probable that this service would be construed as a hire or reward service.

In order to provide a taxi service, the vehicle would have to be insured, tested and licensed as a taxi. The driver would also require a taxi driver’s licence and the operator of the service would require a taxi operator’s licence.

Taxi Operator Licensing

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on taxi operator licensing.
(AQW 18980/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Taxi operator licensing was introduced on 1 September 2012 and up to 24 January 2013, 1,908 applications have been received.

A total of 1,712 temporary licences have been issued and, from these, 818 full licences have subsequently been issued. The remainder are being processed as the necessary information is provided by applicants and verified.

Upper Bann Constituency Planning Applications

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the meetings that he has attended since May 2011 regarding planning applications in the Upper Bann constituency that have been submitted to the Planning Service, including (i) the dates of the meetings; and (ii) the appropriate planning references.

(AQW 18988/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since May 2011 I have attended the following meetings for planning applications in the Upper Bann constituency.

Two separate meetings were held on 2 February 2012 and 31 July 2012 to discuss a planning application at Moyallan Road, Portadown, reference Q/2011/0220/O. The processing of this application is ongoing.

A meeting was held on 15 March 2012 to discuss an application for a housing development at Solitude, Lurgan, reference N/2008/0022/F. This application was approved on 30 October 2012.

Court Proceedings

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the reasons for the decision to (i) instigate court proceedings against the four Hill Street Traders in Newry for an alleged breach of planning policy; (ii) withdraw the court proceedings; and to outline the planning policy governing the placement of advertising signage in towns, cities and main arterial routes.

(AQW 18989/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) Craigavon Planning Office received a complaint from a member of the public on the 7 September 2012 in relation to an advertisement banner being displayed over Hill Street Newry. Hill Street is in a Conservation Area where stricter controls apply over the type of advertisement which may be displayed. No application had been received for consent to display the advertisement and officials in Craigavon office decided that it should be removed because they considered that it detracted from the appearance of the Conservation Area.

The Department wrote to the four traders on 11 October 2012 advising them of the breach of planning control and seeking removal of the advertisement within 10 days of the letter as it is

an offence under Article 84(2) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. The letters also highlighted the prospect of court action should the sign remain and set out the possible penalties for such a prosecution. One trader replied but gave no indication when the banner would be removed.

A further site inspection was carried out on 25 October 2012 and the advertisement banner remained in place. The Department then proceeded to issue instructions to its solicitors on 19 November 2012 asking them to initiate summons action against the four traders who were advertising on the banner. The summonses were served at the end of January.

- (ii) I was alerted to issue by a media query and following discussions with the senior planners officials I have taken the decision, with their agreement not to pursue this case and the summonses against the four traders will be withdrawn at the Court hearing on 19 March 2013. The temporary campaign banner was a response by local traders who have a long history of working hard to stimulate economic activity and investment in the historic town centre. Greater weight should therefore be given to the difficult economic conditions experienced by traders, the disruptions in the area while environmental improvements were carried out and the opportunity presented by the completion of the public realm works. I understand that the offending banner has been removed.

My view is that I and my officials should be spending our time going after the worst offenders, be it environmental crime or planning law breaches. I have told senior planners to tell local planners to use common sense and consider these matters in the round before taking formal enforcement action.

- (iii) In determining an application for consent to display an advertisement in towns, cities and main arterial routes the Department assesses proposals against Policy AD1 of Planning Policy Statement 17 (PPS17) Control of Outdoor Advertisements and any other relevant planning policies and other material considerations relevant to it depending on the specifics of the site. This includes the relevant Area Plan and in this case guidance for Newry Conservation Area.

International Passenger Transport

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on international passenger transport following the issuing of guidance in June 2012.

(AQW 19026/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In June 2012 the Department, having obtained extensive legal advice, issued guidance on the licensing requirements to be met by bus operators licensed in another Member State. In providing this guidance I committed that my Department would engage with the European Commission to bring the fullest clarity to this complex area of European law.

The June advice informed operators that a contract for a permanent or frequent or regular service could only be delivered by holders of a Northern Irish operator licence.

The Commission has now provided further advice which has, in turn, been validated by the Department for Transport. The Commission concluded that, depending on the nature of the service, services of up to three year duration could be delivered by an operator licensed in another Member State.

My Department has now issued revised advice and is in the process of informing the industry and all Northern Ireland Departments of the change in position regarding contracting for bus passenger transport.

Motor Vehicle Licensing Centre in Coleraine

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the current position in relation to jobs at the Motor Vehicle Licensing Centre in Coleraine.

(AQW 19109/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am meeting Stephen Hammond, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, on 5 March 2013 to discuss DVLA's proposals for the centralisation of vehicle licensing services in

Swansea. At that meeting I intend to continue to make a robust case for the retention of vehicles licensing services, and the associated jobs, in Northern Ireland

Dog Fouling

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what fines have been imposed for dog fouling, by each Council, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19192/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department requests information on fixed penalty notices issued by district councils after the end of each financial year. Information on the number of fixed penalty notices issued in the district of each district council in each of the last three financial years in respect of the offence of permitting dogs to foul is set out in the following table.

Council	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Antrim BC	1	0	0
Ards BC	10	8	13
Armagh City & DC	1	2	5
Ballymena BC	6	2	9
Ballymoney BC	0	1	0
Banbridge DC	2	0	1
Belfast CC	77	160	92
Carrickfergus BC	0	0	3
Castlereagh BC	n/k	0	0
Coleraine BC	40	33	17
Cookstown DC	3	1	0
Craigavon BC	78	50	38
Derry CC	0	1	3
Down DC	12	10	16
Dungannon & South Tyrone BC	0	0	0
Fermanagh DC	0	0	0
Larne BC	9	3	2
Limavady BC	0	1	0
Lisburn CC	0	2	6
Magherafelt DC	0	1	0
Moyle DC	4	2	1
Newry & Mourne DC	1	5	4
Newtownabbey BC	19	33	17
North Down BC	3	6	1
Omagh DC	2	0	1
Strabane DC	n/k	2	2
Totals	268	323	231

Underground Power Lines

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the planning guidelines for underground power lines and when he expects them to be next reviewed.

(AQW 19474/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Under the provisions of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, the carrying out by statutory operators of any works for the purpose of inspecting, repairing or renewing any pipes, cables or other apparatus does not constitute development and hence does not require planning permission.

In addition, Part 13, Class C (Electricity Undertakings) of Schedule 1 to the Planning (General Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 1993 provides that, except within a site of special archaeological interest, the laying of underground pipes, cables or any other apparatus by electricity undertakers (and the construction of shafts and tunnels reasonably necessary in connection with such pipes, cables or apparatus) is permitted development and does not require the submission of a planning application.

The Department has no immediate plans to review the current planning legislation for underground cables.

Building Rubble: Newly Built Houses

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment what is the legal position for a person who wishes to use building rubble in the formation of lanes around newly built houses.

(AQW 19479/11-15)

Mr Attwood: 'Development' as defined by Article 11 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.

The formation and laying out of accesses to serve new houses is operational development and requires planning permission.

Hazard Response Driving Test

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the hazard response driving test, to detail (i) the pass rate; and (ii) the revenue which has been raised, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19508/11-15)

Mr Attwood: (i) Pass rates

The Official Statistics on theory test pass rates, from the "Compendium of Key Statistics for the Driver and Vehicle Agency 2011/12", which was published on 21 June 2012, are shown in Table 1 below. The 2012/13 statistics are not yet available and have therefore been excluded. The Compendium for 2012/13 is due for publication in June 2013.

TABLE 1. THEORY TEST PASS RATES 2007/08 TO 2011/12

Category	2007/08 %	2008/09 %	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %
Private Car	67.6	66.1	64.4	63.4	61.0
Motorcycle	74.2	77.1	80.9	79.5	76.2
LGV*	66.8	68.4	-	-	-
PCV*	76.5	79.6	-	-	-
LGV Hazard Perception*	-	80.6	79.8	82.7	80.0

Category	2007/08 %	2008/09 %	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %
LGV Multiple Choice*	-	74.3	79.7	78.7	80.0
LGV CPC Module 2***	-	-	68.2	66.3	54.1
LGV CPC Conversion Module 2***	-	-	N/A	100.0	66.7
PCV Hazard Perception*	-	83.9	84.3	83.9	81.7
PCV Multiple Choice*	-	91.3	91.1	84.4	80.6
PCV Module 2**	-	90.6	76.7	69.5	57.0
PCV CPC Conversion Module 2***	-	-	N/A	100.0	66.7

* LGV and PCV tests operated up to 10 March 2009, when they were split into hazard perception and multiple choice tests

** Introduced from 10 September 2008

*** Introduced from 10 September 2009

(ii) Revenue raised

The theory test revenue figures for the last five years, sourced from the published Driver & Vehicle Agency annual accounts, are shown in Table 2 below. The figures are for all categories of theory test. From 2007 to 2009, the theory test categories were car, motorcycle, large goods vehicle and passenger carrying vehicle. For 2009 to 2012, the theory test categories are as previously stated, plus driver certificate of professional competence tests. The 2012/13 revenue figures are not yet available and have therefore been excluded.

TABLE 2. REVENUE FROM THEORY TEST FEES

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
1,476	1,618	1,730	1,710	1,705

0845 Numbers

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has examined the possibility of changing the 0845 numbers to the new 0300 numbers, as used by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

(AQW 19526/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning have provided a 0300 number for the public to contact them through NI Direct since January 2012.

The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) uses 0845 numbers for both its telephone booking facility and customer services enquiry line. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) provides an 0845 number for use by the public as a general contact point.

The DVA telephone booking facility is a contracted out service, with the current contract due for renewal in March 2014, and the Agency intends to consider the option of moving to a 0300 number when the contract is retendered.

Consideration has previously been given to the use of 0300 numbers for the customer services enquiry line. Owing to uncertainty around the future of vehicle licensing services in Northern Ireland, however, a decision has been made to remain with the 0845 number in the meantime.

NIEA has undertaken to consider the comparative costs and benefits of the use of 0845 and 0300 numbers.

Micro Wind Turbine Applications

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what is the average time taken in the Eastern Division to complete the planning process for micro wind turbine applications of 5kw or less.

(AQW 19591/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The information provided in planning applications for wind turbines does not always include the output level of the proposed turbine. It is therefore not possible from the information held on the database to provide validated statistical information in relation to this request.

However, if clarification could be provided on the specific District Council Areas the question is referring to and the timeframe the request covers, e.g. 1 year, 5 years etc. information could be provided on the average time taken to complete the planning process for single wind turbines.

Planning Applications

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment why Planning applications for rural dwellings near wind farms in West Tyrone, which far exceed the 500 metre distance stated in the supplementary guidance, are being refused.

(AQW 19607/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I can confirm that planning applications for new rural dwellings near wind farms in west Tyrone, which are outside the 500metre distance stated in the supplementary guidance of Planning Policy Statement 18, are not being refused permission because of the impact of the turbines upon the new dwellings. New dwellings in the countryside are however required to comply with the requirements of policy PPS 21, Sustainable development in the Countryside. In some cases permission is refused as proposals do not meet these requirements.

Waste Management Groups

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the current position of the Waste Management Groups.

(AQW 19631/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Much of the detailed information pertaining to the waste infrastructure procurements is subject to restrictions imposed by public procurement law and commercial confidentiality requirements. However, I can provide the following summary of the current position of each project.

The North West Region Waste Management Group (NWRWVG) procurement is to provide Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) (140,000 tonnes capacity) and a Gasification plant (80,000 tonnes capacity).

At its meeting on 13 December 2012 the Executive agreed the provision of financial support to the NWRWVG to a maximum of £35 million over fourteen years. This commitment would materialise once the proposed waste infrastructure has been constructed and is operational, which NWRWVG has forecast will happen during 2015/16, subject to council ratification.

Following approval of the NWRWVG Appointment Business Case for its project by DOE and DFP, the members of its Joint Committee decided at their meeting on 19 December to recommend the appointment of a Preferred Bidder to deliver new waste infrastructure for the north-west region to their constituent councils for their consideration. That recommendation is currently progressing through the democratic cycle of council meetings.

On 15 October 2012, SWaMP2008 announced the termination of its long-term waste infrastructure procurement following its decision on the basis of legal advice not to contest a challenge to the legality of its bidder consortium. The Department has requested a Post Project Evaluation from SWaMP2008.

The arc21 procurement involves a two stage process with up front Mechanical Biological Treatment (240,000 tonnes capacity) of Municipal Solid Waste to gain additional recyclate and biologically treat the remaining material to produce a fuel for combustion in a second stage conventional Energy from Waste facility (210,000 tonnes capacity).

arc21 advises that it is in the latter stages of dialogue with its remaining bidder and is working through a range of procurement issues, including affordability, land assembly and planning and permitting. It had previously forecast appointment of a Preferred Bidder in February 2013 but does not now expect that to happen until September 2013.

Waste Management Groups

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment when funding for the Waste Management Groups will expire.

(AQW 19632/11-15)

Mr Attwood: All three Waste Management Groups (WMGs) were formally notified in due time that pre-contract financial support under the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Programme would cease on 31 March 2013, by which time the three WMGs had previously forecast that they would reach financial close. The WMGs were advised at the same time that they should revert to their constituent councils should they require any additional funding to reach financial close in the event of their incurring further slippage beyond 31 March 2013.

ARC21

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the procurement process for ARC21.

(AQW 19633/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Much of the detailed information pertaining to the waste infrastructure procurements is subject to restrictions imposed by public procurement law and commercial confidentiality requirements.

The procurement process for the Waste Infrastructure Programme has not changed since the introduction of the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Programme in 2008. The procurement process is a competitive dialogue.

arc21 has advised that the procurement involves a two stage process with up front Mechanical Biological Treatment (240,000 tonnes capacity) of Municipal Solid Waste to gain additional recyclate and biologically treat the remaining material to produce a fuel for combustion in a second stage conventional Energy from Waste facility (210,000 tonnes capacity).

arc21 advises that it is in the latter stages of dialogue with its remaining bidder and is working through a range of procurement issues, including affordability, land assembly and planning and permitting. It had previously forecast appointment of a Preferred Bidder in February 2013 but does not now expect that to happen until September 2013.

Taxi Operator Licences

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment what steps his Department takes against taxi operators who are found not to have a taxi operator licence.

(AQW 19644/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since the introduction of taxi operator licensing on 1 September 2012, my Department's approach has been aimed primarily at raising awareness of the relevant legal requirements and at assisting operators to become compliant. This has been done mainly by the Driver & Vehicle Agency's enforcement staff, who have been undertaking a series of educational visits to taxi depots and carrying out spot checks on vehicles and drivers at the roadside. During premises visits, operators have received information leaflets and copies of the new taxi operator handbook, which details the requirements and the standards the Department expects of licence holders.

These efforts to promote understanding and awareness will continue. However, where there is evidence that an operator is failing to take the necessary steps to meet legal requirements, appropriate enforcement action is being taken, and to date a number of unlicensed operators have been reported with a view to prosecution.

Enforcement officers have now started a further programme of more rigorous compliance audits at taxi operators' premises, and in these cases enforcement notices will be issued, where required, specifying any remedial action to be taken to ensure compliance, and these will be followed up as necessary with appropriate enforcement action. Of course, I have instructed enforcement to be proportionate and to recognise the difficult trading/economic circumstances that prevail.

Taxi Operator Licences

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have been prosecuted for operating a taxi without a valid licence, since the introduction of the taxi operator licence.

(AQW 19645/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since the introduction of taxi operator licensing on 1 September 2012, a number of taxi operators have been detected operating without operators' licence. These cases are still to progress through the court system.

Taxi Operator Licences

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment what financial impact the introduction of the taxi operator licence has had on the taxi industry.

(AQW 19646/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Taxi operator licensing was introduced in September 2012. To help taxi operators with the cost of obtaining an operator licence, the initial application fee was discounted from £140 to £40 for all applications received within the first two months of the regulations being introduced.

While licensing costs depend on the number of vehicles affiliated to an operator, the cost to an operator with a single taxi, for example, with a five-year licence, is £63 per year.

Taxi operator licensing is one of a number of measures that I will be introducing to improve safety and accessibility, to raise service standards, to clamp down on illegal taxiing and to enable legitimate taxi operators and drivers to make a living from a re-invigorated taxi industry. This is the approach agreed and adopted by the Assembly in passing Taxi legislation. The legislation – if implemented in a proper and proportionate way – will see better customer service, better trading opportunities and better prospects for growth and jobs, particularly with tourism potential. That is why the implementation of the legislation is being managed in a phased way, listening to the traders and reducing upfront costs.

Driving Licence Arrangements

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment what changes he is proposing on driving licence arrangements; and what impact these changes will have on drivers who volunteer on community transport programmes.

(AQW 19649/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (NI) 1996 set out the requirements to be met by volunteer drivers when driving minibuses. My Department is not proposing to make any changes to these Regulations.

My Department is in the process of reviewing the way in which bus operators in Northern Ireland are licensed with a view to creating a modern, fair and safe regime in which bus services are delivered. This will not change the driving licence requirements for volunteer drivers who will be able to continue to volunteer on community transport programmes.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority Jobs in Coleraine

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to protect Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority jobs in Coleraine.

(AQW 19678/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since June 2011, I have been lobbying Ministers at Westminster about the current threat to jobs in Coleraine arising from the proposals by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency for the centralisation of vehicle licensing services in Swansea, and encouraging public representatives from right across the political spectrum to do likewise. I have made the argument for the retention of jobs on an consistent basis, preparing and presenting a dossier to London on the reasons why jobs should be retained (etc.).

I shall also be meeting with Stephen Hammond, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, in London on 5 March 2013 to discuss the matter further, and at that meeting I intend to again make the case for the retention of vehicle licensing services, and the associated jobs, in Northern Ireland.

Monuments or Structures in County Tyrone

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment (i) to list the buildings, monuments or structures in County Tyrone which are under public care; (ii) to detail the annual budget allocated to maintaining these structures; and (iii) to outline the criteria for inclusion on this list.

(AQW 19692/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Details of each element of your question are laid out in the attached Annexes, and provide the current overview of information held by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), within this Department, in respect buildings, monuments or structures that are described and managed as historic monuments in County Tyrone.

The NIEA holds primary records for those historic monuments that it owns or manages in the County. These are often described as 'State Care Monuments'. NIEA also has details about ownership of sites, not in its ownership or management, but which have been protected as Scheduled Monuments. Some of these are in the ownership of local councils, and in that context they could be described as being in public care. A list of all State Care Monuments managed by the Department of the Environment, and an indicative list of Scheduled Monuments in the ownership of local councils in Tyrone, is attached at Annex 1. There are likely to be many more historic monuments in the county that are owned or managed by other government departments, agencies or the local authorities. However, unless these sites have special statutory protections, we cannot say how many, overall, are in public care. Further, as we do not have the full extent of other departments' or agencies' landholdings, we cannot give a definitive list of, for example, those historic monuments that are on land presently used by Forrest Service or local schools.

Costs associated with the maintenance of these sites are usually allocated according to conservation and maintenance need; there is no fixed budget for sites in County Tyrone, and the conservation and maintenance need is considered against the other sites across the North. Routine costs associated with the management of State Care Monuments are usually split between two functional units in the NIEA. Over the past three years, an average of approximately £13k has been spent on the routine management (litter collection, maintenance of boundaries), spread across the 44 State Care Monuments in Tyrone. Not every site has required expenditure, and the condition of the sites is monitored by staff through routine site inspection. During the current financial year we have undertaken conservation work, through our craft workforce, at Benburb Castle, Castle Caulfield, Newtownstewart Castle and Mountjoy Castle. The works at these sites variously related to increasing public access, addressing health and safety concerns, and establishing future conservation needs.

At present there is no active programme of selection of sites to be brought into public ownership and presentation. Non-statutory criteria for the identification of sites for special statutory protection as Scheduled Monuments have been published as Annex B of Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning,

Archaeology and the Built Heritage. Attached to Annex 2 of this letter is an overview of the process by which some of our most important monuments have come into State care. As you will see, over the past 140 years or so, this department has accumulated a significant number of historic monuments for a wide variety of reasons.

Looking forward, I have asked officials to progress the development of proposals for the future presentation of one of the most important historic monuments in the North of Ireland: Tullaghoge Fort. Work is currently under way to complete a significant transfer of land at Tullaghoge from the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development to the Department of the Environment. In partnership with the local council, we are looking forward to presenting this hidden jewel to the wider public. This site has the potential to be a key 'heritage hub' in Mid-Ulster, and is of great significant in the history of these islands. The lands involved comprise a mix of open pasture and historic woodland, as well as the Fort itself. Planning is at an early stage, but there is an obvious need at this site for improved visitor infrastructure. I have been advised by officials that emerging findings from a new feasibility assessment of the site should become available in April 2013.

ANNEX 1

STATE CARE MONUMENTS IN COUNTY TYRONE

Name	Townland	Sites and Monuments Record Number	Irish Grid Reference
Balix Lower Court Tomb: The White Rocks	Balix Lower	TYR 006:006	H48369635
Ballywholan Dual Court Tomb: Carnagat	Ballywholan	TYR 065:002	H56974702
Ballywholan Portal Tomb: Carnfadrig	Ballywholan	TYR 065:003	H55554899
Beaghmore Stone Circles, Cairns and Alignments	Beaghmore	TYR 020:004	H68468424
Berrysfort Standing Stone	Berrysfort	TYR 016:046	H27198382
Churchtown Wedge Tomb: Todd's Den	Churchtown	TYR 016:017	H26858567
Churchtown Portal Tomb: Druid's Altar	Churchtown	TYR 016:018	H26658530
Clogher Hillfort: Rathmore	Clogher Demesne	TYR 058:033	H53875133
Copney Stone Circles	Copney	TYR 027:033	H599780
Cregganconroe Court Tomb	Cregganconroe	TYR 037:012	H66227575
Creggandevsky Court Tomb	Creggandevsky	TYR 037:014	H64607500
Damhcloy Megalithic Structure	Crockatanty	TYR 019:019	H59558806
Glenknock or Cloghogle Portal Tomb: Druid's Altar	Glenknock or Cloghogle	TYR 017:009	H41098796
Grange Standing Stone	Grange	TYR 039:020	H83177477
Grange Standing Stone Pair	Grange	TYR 039:021	H83077514
Killucan Wedge Tomb: Carnanbane	Killucan	TYR 028:006	H68337924
Killucan Long Cairn: Killucan	Killucan	TYR 028:008	H68488012
Knockmany Passage Tomb: Annia's Cove	Knockmany	TYR 059:001	H54695590
Lisky Court Tomb: Giant's Grave	Lisky	TYR 010:006	H35719051
Tattykeel Standing Stone	Tattykeel	TYR 029:022	H74807738

Name	Townland	Sites and Monuments Record Number	Irish Grid Reference
Ardboe Cross and Abbey	Farsnagh; Sessia	TYR 040:003,5	H96677566
Donaghmore Cross	Donaghmore	TYR 046:011	H76886538
Drumgormal Bivallate Rath	Drumgormal	TYR 047:006	H87356984
Dungororan Rath	Dungororan	TYR 046:016	H73876932
Errigal Keerogue Cross and Church	Gort	TYR 059:006	H58545705
Killyliss Rath	Killyliss	TYR 054:004	H75706055
Tullaghoge Fort	Ballymully Glebe	TYR 038:016	H82507430
Harry Avery's Castle	Upper Or New Deerpark	TYR 017:012	H39148522
Magheraglass Church	Magheraglass	TYR 038:001	H74377677
Mountjoy Castle	Magheralamfield, Mountjoy	TYR 047:002	H90116869
Benburb or Wingfield's Castle	Benburb	TYR 061:002	H81475199
Castle Caulfield	Lisnamonaghan, Castlecaufield	TYR 054:001	H75516259
Derryloran Church	Glebe	TYR 038:019	H80427680
Moy Gates and Screen	Moy	TYR 062:009	H85105606
Newtownstewart Castle	Newtownstewart	TYR 017:047	H40208583
Reaskcor Tree-Ring	Reaskcor	TYR 054:002	H74906160
Reaskmore Penal Altar Site	Reaskmore	TYR 054:029	H75405865
Relignaman Women's Graveyard	Carrickmore	TYR 036:022	H60647222
Roughan Castle	Roughan	TYR 046:002	H82316826
Carricknahaltora	Ballywholan	TYR 065:001	H57804547

INDICATIVE LIST OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS IN COUNCIL OWNERSHIP

Council	SMR No.	Site Name	Type	Townland	Grid Ref.
Cookstown D.C.	TYR 039:044	Glebe or Ballyclog Old Church	Church and Graveyard	Glebe	H8660073690
Cookstown D.C.	TYR 029:003	-	Platform Rath	Gortalowry	H8086077370
Cookstown D.C.	TYR 038:047	-	Bronze Age Settlement and Ring Ditch	Loughry	H8139374989

Council	SMR No.	Site Name	Type	Townland	Grid Ref.
Dungannon & South Tyrone B.C.	TYR 054:017	Dungannon Castle or O'Neill's Castle	Castle and House	Drumcoo (Dungannon)	H7990062620
Dungannon & South Tyrone B.C.	TYR 060:012	Carnteel Church	Medieval Parish Church and Graveyard, also site of 13th century battle	Carnteel	H6943054600
Dungannon & South Tyrone B.C.	TYR 060:016	Aghaloo Church	Medieval Church and Graveyard	Rousky	H6633054930
Omagh D.C.	TYR 033:011	Holywell Church	Church, Graveyard and Carved Stone	Lackagh	H3132074250
Omagh D.C.	TYR 050:021	-	Church	Dromore	H3490062750
Omagh D.C.	TYR 051:035	-	Church ruins and Graveyard	Castletown	H4447061430
Omagh D.C.	TYR 026:002	Cappagh Church or Old Church	Church and Graveyard	Dunmullan	H4493080210
Omagh D.C.	TYR 043:036	-	Church and Graveyard	Drumragh (Caldwell)	H4568069800
Strabane D.C.	TYR 005:500	Strabane Canal	Canal	Various	C3594003910
Strabane D.C.	TYR 016:016	Castledearg Castle	Fortified House and Bawn	Castlesessagh	H2605084420
Strabane D.C.	TYR 009:004	Ernaide	Monastery, Church, Graveyard and Cross-carved Stone	Urney Glebe	H3034094910
Strabane D.C.	TYR 017:011	Pigeon Hill	Castle Site (Mound and Foundation)	Croshballinree	H4037085770
Strabane D.C.	TYR 018:012	Corick Abbey	Franciscan Abbey and Graveyard	Corickmore	H4519088170

ANNEX 2

Overview of how buildings, monuments or structures are brought into public care as State Care Monuments

A State Care Monument is a site of archaeological interest under the management of the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), as per Articles 13 to 18 of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. This management can be by virtue of direct ownership or lease of a site or through guardianship, whereby the owner retains tenure but site management is under the control of the Department for public benefit.

There are 189 individual and groups of State Care Monuments in Northern Ireland, of which 40 are located in County Tyrone.

The first monuments were acquired by the State after the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 when a number of ecclesiastical structures in a ruinous state but worthy of preservation were placed under Government protection in 1880. Subsequently, the majority of State Care Monuments in Northern Ireland have been placed under State management or ownership by virtue of a succession of historic monuments legislation, from Ancient Monuments Protection Act, 1882 through to the current Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. These acquisitions have been through purchase, gift, lease or guardianship agreements.

A significant number of monuments were acquired as a result of major administrative change in the early 1970's. As the county councils were abolished, 44 monuments were statutorily transferred from the county councils to State ownership by the Historic Monument (Transfer) Order (Northern Ireland) 1973. Most of these sites lacked a defined boundary and had no public access arrangements at the time of the transfer and have posed considerable issues to the Department of the Environment and its predecessors since their acquisition. County Tyrone contained a disproportionately high number of such monuments with 20 of the 44 transferred monuments located within the county.

The criteria for future acquisition have not been revisited for some time. Earlier criteria for acquisition of additional State Care Monuments has been discussed, and agreed, in several policy papers presented to the Historic Monuments Council the most recent of which was presented to the Environment and Heritage Service Board in 1998 and were identified as:

- **Quality** – the significance, interest and complexity of the site.
- **Period** – all of the major archaeological and historical epochs require representation. Some periods have fewer monuments, so rarity becomes a factor.
- **Type** – clearly the collection of sites in State Care should contain representatives of most known types of historic monuments. Again, rarity can be a factor.
- **Geographical spread** – we endeavour to maintain a roughly even geographical spread of state care monuments throughout Northern Ireland. This is not easy to achieve because some areas have few monuments while others have a wealth of known remains. There are distinct concentrations of some types of monuments in Northern Ireland, with distributions determined by historic, environmental and other reasons.

The Protocol for the Care of the Government Historic Estate, published in 2012 by the Department of the Environment, is currently being rolled out and Departments are required to provide a list of all their heritage assets by June 2013.

Non-Farming Rural Dwellers

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department is making it easier for non-farming rural dwellers to build a home and live in the countryside.

(AQW 19700/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The policies that accommodate non-farming rural dwellers who wish to build a home and live in the countryside are contained in Planning Policy Statement 21 which deals with sustainable

development in the countryside. It contains considerable development opportunities for non-farmers by providing opportunities for:

- replacement dwellings;
- the conversion and reuse of non-residential buildings as dwellings;
- new dwellings within an existing cluster or ribbon of buildings;
- social and affordable housing schemes;
- development within designated Dispersed Rural Communities; and
- a dwelling to meet compelling personal and domestic circumstances

You will also be aware of my on-going review into the operation of PPS21. Whilst not a fundamental review of its policies, I have been considering the impact of the policy on all those seeking to build a home and live in the countryside, including non-farming families.

In recognition of the continued interest in this issue I met with former members of the Independent Working Group established by the previous Executive to examine the issue of non-farming rural dwellers. I have also met with MLAs, the Ulster Farmers Union, the DARD Minister, rural interest groups and others. The range of views expressed to me to date has been taken into account in considering how PPS 21 is working in practice.

The review into the operation of PPS21 has been lengthy. This has been by design. The reason for this is to 'in real time' and 'in the real world' identify where there were inconsistencies of interpretation or a proper need for flexibility of interpretation. This means that the review has been a working rolling review to aid better practice.

I remain committed to making a statement to the Assembly with the conclusions of the operational review to date. However, I also intend to continue to keep the operation of PPS21 under review going forward. This approach – ongoing review, pre-assessment of applications, training to ensure consistency, proper interpretation to enable proper development – all contribute to the widely agreed view that PPS21 is working better today than 18 months ago.

Collected Recycling Material

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment whether any study comparable to the Quality Action Plan which was conducted by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in respect of the amount of collected recycling material which is unusable, has been conducted in Northern Ireland; and with what result.

(AQW 19725/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Defra Quality Action Plan sets out measures aimed to support a market environment which is capable of promoting high quality recycling and delivering recyclates of sufficient quality to meet the standards of the relevant recycling sectors.

In Northern Ireland we intend to consult on a range of actions to improve and maintain the quality of recyclable materials collected, sorted and presented to the market through a Materials Recycling Facilities (MRF) Code of Practice. There will be proposals to address contamination at the point of collection, introduce mandatory and transparent material quality sampling, carry out a benchmarking exercise on the quality of source segregated materials and introduce a recyclate quality grading system.

The Department acknowledges that the introduction of these new measures would, in particular, have implications for the operators of MRFs, and accordingly a partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment will be completed. Stakeholder comments will also be invited.

Even though this is a plan for Northern Ireland we will be working within the same EU legislative framework as England, Wales and Scotland who are responsible for their own waste policies and delivery. However, all four administrations work closely together on the issue of quality and we will take forward this policy in partnership with them.

Changes to Driving Test

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment to outline (i) the planned changes to the driving test in 2013; and (ii) the rationale for these changes.

(AQW 19734/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has already made changes to the driving test this year through the transposition of the 3rd EU Directive on driving licences (Directive 2006/126/EC) into Northern Ireland law on 19 January 2013. The Directive, which is intended to harmonise common standards for driver training, testing and licensing regimes across the EU, introduced changes to training and testing and the various licence categories for motorcycles and mopeds. In addition to changes affecting motorcycles and mopeds the minimum age for non-professional bus drivers was increased from 21 to 24 and changes were made to the rules around the maximum weights of trailers allowed to be towed by cars and small vans.

Further changes are planned, arising from Directive 2012/36/EU (the Amending Directive), which must be implemented by 31 December 2013. Currently, all vehicles used for driving tests must meet minimum standards, commonly known as "minimum test vehicle standards" which are set out in European and UK legislation. The Directive makes changes to those standards for motorcycles, lorries and buses.

While I have no further plans to make changes to the driving test in 2013, I do intend to introduce a Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill to the Assembly, subject to Executive agreement, by April this year which will have implications for training and testing next year.

The Bill will include the planned introduction of a system of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL), affecting new drivers, which will include changes to driver training and testing and the way drivers gain experience once they pass their practical test. The rationale for these changes is to reduce the rate at which new drivers, particularly young new drivers, are killed and seriously injured, and at which they kill and seriously injure other road users. Depending on legislative progress, operational changes will begin to be seen around April 2014.

The GDL measures include:

- Reducing the age at which young people can start to learn to drive or ride (i.e. obtain a provisional licence) from 17 years of age to 16½.
- Introducing a mandatory 12 month minimum learning period.
- Requiring completion of a 'Learning to Drive' syllabus evidenced by a compulsory student logbook.
- Removing the 45mph speed restriction on learner and restricted drivers and riders, allowing changes to be made to the driving test to include driving on a wider range of roads at up to the posted limits.
- Allowing learner drivers to take lessons on motorways.
- Introducing restrictions on carrying passengers in the six months after a young new driver has passed the test and received a full licence.
- Replacing the current 12 month restricted period by a two year 'new driver' period, during which the new young driver will be subject to a lower drink drive limit and, under the New Drivers Order, will continue to risk revocation of their licence if they accumulate six or more penalty points.
- Replacing R plates by N (for 'New' driver/rider) plates which will have to be carried for two years.
- Introducing remedial courses for new drivers at risk of having their licence revoked because they have accumulated six or more penalty points.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Carlingford Lough Bridge

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in regard to the proposed expenditure of Interreg funds for a bridge over Carlingford Lough, whether (i) the lough is a navigable tidal waterway; (ii) it is used by fishermen to access the mussel beds that lie on the Northern Ireland side; (iii) the proposed bridge will obstruct existing access for fishermen, by virtue of the design of the bridge and it only being capable of opening on 48 hours notice; (iv) the Lough's ancient navigable status will be diminished; (v) any such interference with ancient navigable status requires extinguishment or alteration by statute; and (vi) the necessary legislative steps have been taken, to make lawful the development of a bridge which obstructs a navigable tidal waterway.

(AQW 17378/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): (i) The Newry River, in the vicinity of the proposed bridge, is understood to be a navigable tidal waterway.

- (ii) Mussel beds have been accessed by fishermen on a very ad hoc basis when a worthwhile yield could be obtained. This depends on natural spat fall and environmental conditions. The Mussels (Prohibition of Fishing) Regulations (NI) 2013 came into operation on 8th February 2013. The Regulations revoke and re-enact with amendments, the Mussels (Prohibition of Fishing) Regulations (NI) 1999 and provide DARD with a mechanism to manage and regulate the exploitation of the local mussel seed resource. It shall be an offence to fish for or have on board mussels, otherwise than for direct human consumption, except under the authority of a fish culture licence or a permit granted under sections 11 and 14 respectively of the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 or a seed mussel licence granted under section 4 of the Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967.
- (iii) Fishing vessels known as 'half-deckers' have fished for mussels in Carlingford Lough. Access to fisheries should be a consideration in design and operation of a proposed bridge.
- (iv) & (v) An opening section in the proposed bridge would provide a 20 metre wide channel through which vessels may pass without an overhead obstruction when the bridge is closed to road traffic and open for navigation, otherwise the bridge will introduce an overhead obstruction to navigation. Appropriate arrangements, for example a notice period would be required in relation to opening the bridge for navigation.

As a general principle, obstruction or extinguishment of public rights of navigation requires legislation. The extent, to which any public rights of navigation in Northern Ireland may be obstructed, by the proposed bridge, is being taken account of as part of a detailed consideration of the proposed design.

(vi) Where a person other than DRD proposes to construct a bridge over navigable waters in circumstances to which Article 4 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993 applies, DRD must seek to make an Order under that Order and in accordance with Schedule 8 to the Roads (NI) Order 1993.

Civil Law Reform

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what new legislation is planned under civil law reform.

(AQW 19407/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I am assuming that the reference is to primary legislation which my Department will be bringing forward, rather than to general civil law initiatives.

At present work is ongoing on two Bills. One which will deal with legal complaints and regulation and the other which will give effect to the Northern Ireland Law Commission's recommendations with regard to the reform of land law.

Cancer Deaths

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many deaths in 2011 had a primary cause of (i) breast cancer; and (ii) prostate cancer.

(AQW 19648/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In Northern Ireland in 2011, there were 342 deaths registered where the primary cause of death was malignant neoplasm of the breast.¹

In Northern Ireland in 2011, there were 233 deaths registered where the primary cause of death was malignant neoplasm of the prostate.²

1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code C50

2 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code C61

Peace III Programme Monitoring Committee

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the rationale for the establishment of the Peace III Programme Monitoring Committee, particularly in relation to monitoring the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the programme.

(AQW 19651/11-15)

Mr Wilson: EU Regulations require the establishment of Monitoring Committees to oversee the implementation of Structural Fund Programmes.

The role of the Monitoring Committee in relation to monitoring the effectiveness and quality of programme implementation derives from Articles 65 and 66 of Regulation EC (No) 1083/2006.

Chairperson of the Peace III Programme Monitoring Committee

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel who is the Chairperson of the Peace III Programme Monitoring Committee; and whether there was a conflict of interest identified in relation to monitoring the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the programme.

(AQW 19652/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The PEACE III Programme Monitoring Committee is chaired by the Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), the programme's Managing Authority.

This arrangement is in line with Article 64 of European Council Regulation EC (No) 1083/2006, which states that the Monitoring Committee shall be chaired by a representative of the Member State or the Managing Authority, and does not constitute a conflict of interest. The role of the Chair is primarily to act as a facilitator for committee business.

It is the role of the Monitoring Committee to satisfy itself as to the effectiveness and quality of programme implementation. The Committee operates on a principle of partnership with members drawn from a wide range of sectoral interests. Membership includes representatives from the two Member States, local government, business, trade unions, and the voluntary and community, agri-rural, environment and equality sectors.

Peace III Programme Monitoring Committee

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to identify the members of the Peace III Programme Monitoring Committee.

(AQW 19653/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The current membership of the PEACE III Programme Monitoring Committee is detailed in the table overleaf. Nominating organisations are also shown.

Category	Organisations	Nominating Body	Member	Deputy
Chair	Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)	SEUPB	Pat Colgan	Shaun Henry
Member State Representatives	UK	Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP)	Maura Young	Steve Clements
	Ireland	Department of Finance (DOF)	Gearoid O'Keefe	Catherine Clynes
Regional/Sub-Regional/Local Government interests	Northern Ireland	NILGA	Cllr Charlie Casey (Sinn Fein)	Cllr Thomas O'Connor (Sinn Fein)
			Cllr Lee Reynolds (DUP)	Cllr Gareth McKee (DUP)
			Cllr Sammy Brush (DUP)	Cllr Jenny Palmer (DUP)
			Cllr Mervyn Jones (Alliance)	Cllr John Mathews (Alliance)
	Ireland	Border Regional Authority	Caroline Brady	Olive Hannigan
			Cllr Andrew Boylan	Cllr Danny Brady
		BMW Regional Assembly	Gerry Finn	Kieran Moylan
			Cllr James Daley	Cllr Terry Brennan
Cross Cutting Interests	Equality Organisations	The Equality Authority	Carol Baxter	Cathal Kelly
		The Equality Commission	No nomination has been made	Louise Conlon
	Environmental Organisations	Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC)	John Anderson	Peter Archdale

Category	Organisations	Nominating Body	Member	Deputy
Social & Economic Partners	Voluntary and Community Sector	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)	Cyril Moorhead	No nomination has been made
	Business	Joint Business Council (JBC)	Denis Galway OBE	Reg McCabe
			Brian Callanan (IBEC/CBI)	
	Trade Unions	Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)	Teri Cregan (SIPTU)	Clare Moore
			Pamela Dooley	
			(UNISON)	
Agriculture & Rural Development & Fisheries	Rural Development Council (RDC)	Michael Hughes	Teresa Canavan	
	Irish Rural Link	Martin Smyth	No nomination has been made	
Certifying Authority		SEUPB	Gina McIntyre	Andrew Walker

Inheritance Tax

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of inheritance tax within the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used within the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19665/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No. As stated in Annex B of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, actual outturns for inheritance tax raised in Northern Ireland are produced by HMRC and therefore no estimation is required. Likewise, HMRC also publish this figure for Scotland.

Stamp Duty

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of stamp duty within the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used within the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19666/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No

Net Fiscal Balance Report: National Insurance Contributions

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of National Insurance contributions within the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new

Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used within the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19668/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in the Net Fiscal Balance report, the methodology applied is generally consistent with that designed to produce the Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland (GERS) report, however, there are some instances where there are minor technical variations in how certain specific elements of the individual estimates are derived.

My previous response to AQW 18239/11-15 outlined the methodology used to estimate NI's share of UK national insurance contributions revenue - which is estimated in line with the approach adopted in the GERS report.

There is a very minor technical difference with respect to the national insurance contributions (NICs) revenue estimate. Both NI's and Scotland's share is obtained from a sample of HMRC national insurance data. However, HMRC provides an overall estimate of NI's share, whereas the Scottish estimate is disaggregated by NICs employee and employer class.

I would re-iterate that the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution. At an aggregate level the minor technical variations referred to above are not considered to have any material bearing on the Northern Ireland's net fiscal balance position.

Extensive Travel Mileage

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in relation to a part-funded government post, which includes extensive travel in which mileage has been paid at 40p per mile, (i) why there is a threshold of 10000 miles at 40p after which all mileage is taxed; (ii) whether this constitutes discrimination, either directly or indirectly, of PAYE employees due to the nature of their job entailing extensive mileage to complete their job; and (iii) whether such employees are expected to cover the additional cost at their own expense.

(AQW 19669/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The NICS policy relating to expenses is applicable to NICS staff only and all reimbursement of business mileage is in accordance with HMRC rules. Reimbursement to non NICS staff of business mileage is a matter for the respective employing organisation(s).

- (i) The NICS policy to reimburse business travel at 45p per mile up to the 10,000 mile threshold in any financial year is in line with HMRC guidance. Reimbursement of all business mileage above the 10,000 mile threshold is payable at 25p per mile. All payments are non taxable.
- (ii) I am unable to comment on this as the NICS follows HMRC guidance.
- (iii) If due to the application of the rules, officers can demonstrate that they are seriously out of pocket, consideration will be given to payment of actual vouched expenditure.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: VAT

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of VAT within the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used within the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19696/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in the Net Fiscal Balance report, the methodology applied is generally consistent with that designed to produce the Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland (GERS) report, however, there are some instances where there are minor technical variations in how certain specific elements of the individual estimates are derived.

My previous response to AQW 18240/11-15 outlined the methodology used to estimate NI's share of UK VAT revenue - which is estimated in line with the approach adopted in the GERS report.

There is a minor technical difference with respect to the VAT refunds element of the overall VAT revenue estimate, where my department's report apportions this on the basis of NI's share of UK household VAT expenditure. GERS apportions VAT refunds mainly on the basis of Scotland's share of UK government expenditure on certain VAT-refundable elements of expenditure.

I would re-iterate that the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution. At an aggregate level the minor technical variations referred to above are not considered to have any material bearing on the Northern Ireland's net fiscal balance position.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Tobacco Duty

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of tobacco duty within the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used within the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19697/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Alcohol Duty

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of alcohol duty within the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used within the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19698/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No.

Narrow Water Bridge

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for her assessment of the impact of the construction of the Narrow Water bridge for the economy and tourism sector in South Down.

(AQO 3446/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Narrow Water Bridge project is primarily an infrastructure project with the aims of enhancing connectivity and a reduction in travel times. Tourism benefits associated with the project are deemed secondary.

The project is currently being critically reviewed by DFP and all benefits associated with the project will be considered in this process.

Civil Servant Redundancies

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of civil servants who have (i) been made redundant; and (ii) involuntarily lost their jobs in each year since the implementation of the 2011-15 budget.

(AQW 19713/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The number of civil servants who have (i) been made redundant; and (ii) involuntarily lost their jobs in each year since the implementation of the 2011- 15 budget is provided in the table below:

	2011/12	2012 – to date
(i) number made redundant (voluntary)	151	137
(ii) number involuntarily lost their jobs (compulsory)	Nil	Nil

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Betting and Gambling Duty

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of betting and gambling duty in the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used in the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19717/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Air Passenger Duty

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of Air Passenger Duty in the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used in the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19718/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Insurance Premium Tax

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the out-turn of the proportion of Insurance Premium Tax in the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used in the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 19719/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No.

Northern Ireland Cross-Border Co-Operation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to publish the paper he referred to in the Estimates debate on 11 February 2012 which shows that cross-border co-operation is costing Northern Ireland £11.2m per annum.

(AQW 19724/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I commissioned, as part of ongoing Budget Review Group work, an assessment of the costs and benefits accruing from cross-border co-operation. The summary of this work which concluded in July 2012 has been placed in the Assembly Library.

East Belfast Redundancies

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many confirmed redundancies there were in East Belfast in 2012.

(AQW 19766/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Table 1 below details the number of confirmed redundancies in the Belfast East Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) and Northern Ireland as a whole in 2012.

Please note that under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (amended 8 October 2006) companies are only legally required to provide notification of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees. Also, redundancies do not necessarily equate to job losses, for example, employees who do not qualify for a redundancy package, those on temporary contracts, will not be incorporated into the redundancy figures.

TABLE 1: CONFIRMED REDUNDANCIES FOR BELFAST EAST PCA AND N. IRELAND IN 2012

	2012*
Belfast East PCA	110
NI Total	3,349

* Total Confirmed redundancies notified to DFP Economic and Labour Market Statistics Research Branch to 14th February 2013 and this figure may be revised at a future date.

Allegations of Impropriety

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) what policies are in place to deal with allegations of impropriety made by whistle blowers; and (ii) what forensic audit techniques are in place to ensure investigations are thorough and conclusive.

(AQW 19771/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In line with good practice, my Department has whistleblowing arrangements in place which can be used to raise concerns about alleged wrongdoing or malpractice of any kind in a safe and acceptable way.

The arrangements together with the DFP Whistleblowing Policy are available on the departmental website setting out the principles of safety, confidentiality and anonymity together with the procedures and key contacts for reporting matters of concern and how the Department will deal with whistleblowing allegations.

Depending on the nature of any concerns raised, the DFP Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan may be invoked. This includes the scope for formal investigation and the use of Forensic Accountants/Engineers. In the event of forensic audit techniques being required, DFP will assess the nature of the incident, consider the internal capabilities available and supplement with external expertise as necessary.

Small Businesses Rate Relief in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many companies have (i) applied for; and (ii) been granted small businesses rate relief in North Down since the scheme began.

(AQW 19800/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There is no application procedure for Small Business Rate Relief. Relief is applied automatically by Land & Property Services to all businesses that qualify.

Information on the number of companies that have been granted Small Business Rate Relief since the scheme began is not available at constituency level as data is collated at district council and ward level only. As at 31st January 2013, 1,168 non-domestic properties within the Ards Council area and 941

non-domestic properties within the North Down Council area have benefited from Small Business Rate Relief since the scheme commenced in April 2010.

Vice-Principals and Principals

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has received an outline case from the Department of Education regarding a proposed redundancy or enhancement package for Vice-Principals and Principals.

(AQW 19843/11-15)

Mr Wilson: To date, my department has not received an outline case from the Department of Education regarding a proposed redundancy or enhancement package for Vice-Principals and Principals.

Department Limit on Expenditure

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the current limit in expenditure by a Department on (i) capital; and (ii) revenue expenditure before monies have to be surrendered to a Monitoring Round for re-allocation.

(AQW 19868/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Departments are required to surrender reduced requirements for reallocation through the Executive's monitoring rounds. Reduced requirements are amounts arising from issues such as increased receipts (including unplanned asset sales); services that require less funding than the existing budget provision; and savings from pay or price assumptions.

To provide Ministers with some flexibility in terms of managing their own budgets and incentivise additional asset sales, departments are allowed to retain reduced requirements up to a limit of £1 million. This limit applies equally to capital and resource expenditure. Departments can therefore reallocate internally easements below £1 million in value as long as they are reallocated within the same category of expenditure (i.e. a capital reduced requirement must be reallocated to a capital project).

Chancellor's Autumn Statement: Barnett Consequentials

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what are the Barnett Consequentials, or other budgetary implications for Northern Ireland, arising from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

(AQW 19915/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below shows the total RDEL and CDEL Barnett consequentials resulting from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. The consequentials are unhypothecated with the exception of £3.1m capital in 2013-14 and £8.2m capital in 2014-15 which must be used on loan and equity financial transactions.

TABLE: 2012 AUTUMN STATEMENT BARNETT ALLOCATIONS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

£ millions	2013-14	2014-15
RDEL	2.4	-34.3
CDEL	53.7	76.9

The additional resources should be welcomed, in particular the CDEL additions over the next two years.

In addition to the Barnett consequentials outlined above, I have negotiated a deferment of some £50 million RRI borrowing from 2012-13 to 2014-15 in relation to the funding for the A5 road scheme. As you will be aware the A5 project is currently subject to legal challenge and decisions on profiling of spend cannot be taken by the DRD Minister until the outcome of that legal challenge is known.

This deferment of RRI borrowing allows the Executive to now accommodate the changing profile of A5 spend.

Payment of Rates

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 19346/11-15, what number of retail outlets the (i) 4.1 percent in 2010; and (ii) 4.6 percent in 2012 represents.

(AQW 20016/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As at the end of March 2010 (the earliest year for which comparable information is available) the number of retail outlets that were occupied and were getting a rating exemption as a result of being a charity was 646. As at the end of March 2012 the equivalent figure was 718.

DFP: Underspend

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he is aware of any projected underspend by Departments for this financial year; and what actions he has taken to address this issue.

(AQW 20026/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Each month my department commissions a Forecast Outturn return from all NI departments requesting the expenditure incurred to date and a forecast of spend for the remainder of the year.

The most recent return was received on 8 February 2013 and showed departments forecasting near to full spend for this financial year in non ring-fenced resource DEL. Within capital DEL all departments forecast near to full spend with the exception of DRD on the A5 project and DOJ on the Integrated Training College. The underspends reported on these 2 projects are subject to separate arrangements with HM Treasury and this funding is not available for general reallocation nor will it be lost to NI.

The reported forecast information to date therefore does not require any intervention at this stage however I will continue to monitor this situation and will take action, if required, to ensure that no resources are lost to NI. You will be aware that the Spring Supplementary Estimates included some headroom to allow for such circumstances.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Health and Social Care Trusts: Locum Consultants

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much each Health and Social Care Trust spent on locum consultants, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19331/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The spend on locum consultants in Health and Social Care Trusts in each of the last three years is set out below:

Year	Belfast HSC Trust ¹	Northern HSC Trust ²	Southern HSC Trust	South-Eastern HSC Trust	Western HSC Trust
2009/2010	£7,500,000	£2,800,000	£3,424,244	£1,121,000	£2,975,000
2010/2011	£7,100,000	£1,100,000	£1,993,277	£571,000	£4,571,000
2011/2012	£10,300,000	£982,000	£1,337,702	£709,000	£2,989,000

- 1 Belfast HSC Trusts systems cannot isolate expenditure on Agency employed locum consultants from expenditure on other Agency employed medical locums. Thus, the figures for Belfast HSC Trust include expenditure in respect of Agency locum junior and middle-ranking doctors.
- 2 Northern HSC Trusts systems isolate expenditure on Agency employed consultants, but do not isolate expenditure on internal locums from normal consultant payroll. Where possible, the Trust will recruit staff directly under Trust terms and conditions as temporary employees to fill the vacancies

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children: Consultation Period

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what impact the consultation period on paediatric services at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children will have on the pressures facing parents of children supported by the service during this time.[R]

(AQW 19462/11-15)

Mr Poots: I assume that Mr Swann is asking about the Health and Social Care Board's consultation on the future commissioning of Paediatric Cardiac Surgery (PCCS) and Interventional Cardiology for the population of Northern Ireland. I have repeatedly stated that my ultimate aim is to ensure a safe and sustainable service for children from Northern Ireland and I reiterate my assurance to parents that the future service model for Paediatric Cardiac Surgery will prioritise the needs of their children. I fully appreciate that parents and children living with congenital cardiac problems may be anxious about any changes in the service and how these might impact on the care provided to them. However, I trust that they will understand why the consultation on the future of this service was needed, the importance which I attach to the input from parents and their representatives to the consultation and my commitment to reach a decision as soon as possible on the future commissioning of this service.

Telemonitoring

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans are in place to introduce Telemonitoring on a wider basis, allowing more patients to benefit from the scheme.

(AQW 19481/11-15)

Mr Poots: Remote monitoring is presently available to patients with respiratory, heart and diabetes long term chronic conditions and for those who have suffered a stroke. The Regional Telemonitoring NI service is delivered by TF3, a consortium of Tunstall Healthcare, Fold Telecare and S3 Group, through a contract with the five Health and Social Care Trusts. Through the contract it is planned to extend the telemonitoring service to approximately 20,000 patients by 2017. During 2012/13 it is estimated that outturn for remotely monitored telehealth services will be in the region of 300,000 monitored patient days (MPD).

During 2013/14, the delivery of telemonitoring services through the contract will widen to include both telehealth and telecare services, each with a separate delivery target set out in the Commissioning Plan Direction. The target for telehealth is 500k MPD and for telecare services is 720k MPD. This represents a significant increase on the current year.

Meat Packaging, Labelling and Traceability

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) who is responsible for investigating issues related to meat packaging and queries regarding labelling and traceability; (ii) when his Department and the Food Standards Agency are informed of such investigations; (iii) what is a reasonable time scale when investigating such issues; and (iv) in addition to the recent case at Freeze Meats in Newry, how many other investigations are taking place regarding labelling and traceability.

(AQW 19510/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Food Standards Agency is the central competent authority for food safety in Northern Ireland and is also responsible for policy relating to general food labelling and food standards. Day to day enforcement of food standards and food labelling are carried out by District Council Environmental Health Officers (EHOs). District Council EHOs carry out routine food standards inspections and interventions on a risk based frequency in accordance with a Framework Agreement between the District Councils and FSA in NI.

DARD is responsible for enforcing the Beef Labelling legislation in abattoirs and approved cutting premises, with District Councils enforcing Beef Labelling legislation at retail level and cold stores on behalf of DARD, along with general food labelling regulations on processed meat products

DARD is also responsible for meat hygiene official controls in approved slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments on behalf of the FSA.

- (ii) If as a result of routine investigations the enforcement officers of the District Council identify a potential food safety incident, they are obliged to inform the Food Standards Agency in accordance with the FSA Incidents Response Protocol as soon as possible. An incident is defined as any event, where based on the information available, there are concerns about actual or suspected threats to the safety or quality of food and/or feed that could require intervention to protect consumer interests.

In regard to Beef Labelling legislation, the principal responsibility for compliance rests with Food Business Operators. DARD undertakes a programme of risk based inspections in abattoirs and approved cutting plants and any non-compliances observed during these inspections are followed up, and appropriate action taken as soon as possible.

- (iii) Incidents are classified as either high, medium or low based on a classification matrix set out in the protocol. All incidents are immediately acted upon by FSA and details cascaded to those required to investigate further. Timescale in relation to investigation of an incident is dependent on complexity and scale of the issue. An incident investigation will not be closed until the FSA is satisfied that all necessary action has been taken to protect consumer interests.
- (iv) The investigation concerning products held in the cold store at Freeza Meats is one strand of a wider investigation concerning labelling and traceability. The other strand of the investigation concerns the discovery of traces of pork DNA in a selection of meat pies labelled as Halal, where the affected product was manufactured by McColgan's Quality Foods in Strabane. Aside from this, there are currently no other specific investigations taking place regarding labelling and traceability in Northern Ireland.

Paediatric Cardiac Surgery

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the review of paediatric cardiac surgery provision, including the options currently under consideration for providing paediatric cardiac surgery.

(AQW 19512/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) on 14 February 2013 approved a framework, or post-consultation document, for the commissioning of paediatric cardiac surgery and interventional cardiology for children in Northern Ireland.

The framework has been submitted to my Department for my consideration. It is my intention to make a decision on the framework shortly. Subject to my approval the framework will then be applied by the HSCB to each of the options outlined in the document, with the aim of identifying a preferred way forward for the provision of services for children with heart disease in Northern Ireland. The preferred way forward will then be submitted to me for consideration and I am aiming to make my final decision on the future arrangements for this service within the coming months.

The post consultation document is available on the HSC Board website:

http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/news/Paediatric_Congenital_Cardiac_Services.html

Paediatric Cardiac Care

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) staffing; and (ii) financial resources which were made available for paediatric cardiac care in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19514/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The number of staff working in paediatric cardiac care in each of the last five years is set out in the table below.

Paediatric Cardiac Care	2008/09 WTE	2009/10 WTE	2010/11 WTE	2011/12 WTE	2012/13 WTE
Cardiology nursing staff	19.32	17.54	16.83	18.89	18.42
Cardiology consultant staff	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Cardiac surgery consultant staff	1.0	1.0*	1.0*	1.0*	2.0*
Consultant cardiac anaesthetists with paediatric specialty	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Cardiac theatre nursing team**	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
Cardiac ICU nursing team**	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0
Perfusion team**	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Cardiac technicians	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

WTE whole time equivalent

* Plus network arrangements with 2.0 wte surgeons from Dublin

** These teams do not provide an exclusive service to paediatric cardiac surgery, as they also provide care to the cardiac surgery adult population

- (ii) The financial resources made available for paediatric care over the last five years is set out below.

Activity carried out in Northern Ireland

Funding for paediatric cardiac care includes funding for paediatric surgery and paediatric cardiology.

The Health and Social Care (HSC) Board has advised that the amount of money allocated by the HSC for paediatric cardiac surgery over the last five years in the Belfast Trust is as follows:

Paediatric Cardiac Surgery

	Total Cost
2007/08	£1,712,608
2008/09	£1,726,555
2009/10	£2,077,196
2010/11	£1,528,297
2011/12	£1,664,244

Specialty cost information is not yet available for the 2012/13 year.

The amount of money allocated by the HSC for paediatric cardiology over the last five years in the Belfast Trust is as follows:

Paediatric Cardiology (includes inpatient, outpatient and daycase)

	Total Cost
2007/08	£2,472,882
2008/09	£2,391,065
2009/10	£2,744,808
2010/11	£2,237,597
2011/12	£2,553,966

Specialty cost information is not yet available for the 2012/13 year.

Other Activity

Information on the costs for paediatric cardiac transfers; paediatric cardiac surgery; and cardiology transfers outside Northern Ireland could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Cancer in East Belfast

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the figures for new incidents of cancer in East Belfast for 2012.

(AQW 19588/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry that an analysis of cancer rates in Northern Ireland indicates that the overall rates of cancer in the East Belfast Assembly constituency area were found to be similar to the Northern Ireland average. That analysis also reveals that when broken down by cancer site, lung cancer rates in the East Belfast constituency were 13.8% higher than the Northern Ireland average for both sexes combined. The majority of lung cancers are attributable to cigarette smoking.

East Belfast Residents

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the risks to East Belfast residents of stroke, hypertension, diabetes, and kidney disease are higher than the Northern Ireland average.

(AQW 19596/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health outcomes are generally worse in the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland when compared with those witnessed in the region generally. Belfast has the highest level of deprivation in Northern Ireland, with some 40% of the most deprived areas being within the Belfast Local Government District. Deprivation translates not only into lower life expectancy, but a greater burden of disease and consequently a greater dependence on health and social care services.

Belfast East Assembly Area does have the highest prevalence in Northern Ireland of certain conditions including Stroke, and has relatively high prevalence of diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease. The prevalence of these conditions is known to increase with age, however, and it should be noted that, from the census figures, Belfast East Assembly Area has the second highest mean age of residents in Northern Ireland and the second highest percentage of population aged 65 years and over.

Reducing inequalities in health is a particular challenge requiring long term co-ordinated effort across government and all sectors, including statutory and the voluntary and community sectors. There are many factors within and beyond individual control which interact to influence our health and wellbeing. Work is being taken forward to develop a new cross-cutting public health strategic framework. 'Fit and Well – Changing Lives' has been published for consultation and is timetabled to be completed in Spring 2013.

Victims of Human Trafficking

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to increase the number of refuge places available for the victims of human trafficking.

(AQW 19611/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to my previous answer to AQW 19151/11-15.

There are no designated places of refuge for victims of human trafficking within the health and social care services. However, if it has been assessed that a place of refuge is required, this will be provided in conjunction with other relevant agencies. Provision will differ depending on the age of the victim and his/her assessed needs.

The Health and Social Care Board and Local Commissioning Groups are responsible for commissioning health and social care services across the region. Annual commissioning plans are based on assessed service requirements, including arrangements to provide appropriate safeguards for vulnerable children and adults, which will include victims of human trafficking.

Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what was the total spend on hospitality by his Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19627/11-15)

Mr Poots: Hospitality spend for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and each of the Department's Arms Length Bodies, in 2011/12, is set out in the table below.

	£'000
DHSSPS	49.1
Belfast HSC Trust	10.0
Northern HSC Trust	12.5
Southern HSC Trust	44.0
South Eastern HSC Trust	17.4
Western HSC Trust	9.0
NI Ambulance Service	2.7
Business Services Organisation	39.4
Health and Social Care Board	51.9
Public Health Agency	44.4
Patient Client Council	15.9
NI Fire & Rescue Service	6.3
NI Practice & Education Council	-
NI Social Care Council	18.6
NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency	0.5
NI Blood Transfusion Service	-
Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority	8.6
NI Medical & Dental Training Agency	4.4
Total	334.7

All organisations across the HSC have comprehensive policies and procedures in respect of hospitality which outline the eligibility and entitlement to hospitality.

Due to the wide ranging operational nature of the Department's ALB's, hospitality may also include expenditure other than that associated with the provision of refreshments, for example room and/or equipment hire.

Drink or Drug Addictions

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available in Belfast for people with drink or drug addictions.

(AQW 19634/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under my Department's New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase Two, the Health & Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency commission alcohol and drug services that are provided across a range of settings in the Belfast area, both by Statutory and Voluntary/Community sectors.

The services available in the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust area typically consist of counselling and support, rehabilitation, advice, liaison, detoxification, relapse therapy, outreach services and a range of individual and group-based psychological treatments, as well as a range of prevention and early intervention programmes.

Details of these services can be found by accessing the following link:

http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/DrugsAlcohol_Directory_BelfastTrust_12_12_1.pdf

Health Service Patient Referrals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 19133/11-15, why it costs less to refer a patient to a neurologist in the independent sector than the Health Service; and (ii) what action he is taking to ensure that the Health Service will be more competitive on this issue than the independent sector.

(AQW 19637/11-15)

Mr Poots: The average cost of referring a patient to a neurologist in the independent sector is lower as the independent sector is generally used only to assess and treat patients categorised as mainstream. Patients who fall outside this category, i.e. patients with complex co-morbidities or with conditions requiring complex care and treatment are not referred to the independent sector or, if referred, are returned to Health and Social Care (HSC). As HSC Trusts are required to address all the needs of all patients referred to them, Trust capacity must therefore be capable of addressing both simple and complex cases and this is reflected in the different funding requirements and average costs.

High Content Sugar Drinks

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to restrict the availability of high content sugar available drinks in vending machines in waiting areas of hospitals.

(AQW 19640/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vending machines on HSC Trust premises offer a variety of choices for visitors and staff as well as patients. The options include low-calorie and sugar-free drinks and bottled water as well as high sugar content drinks. There are currently no plans to restrict these choices.

Measles

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the current incidence of measles, particularly among children; and how this compares with other parts of the UK.

(AQW 19654/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures for 2012 for confirmed cases of measles were:

England:	1900	
Wales:	116	
Scotland:	28	(up to beginning of December)
NI:	9	

In the first six weeks of 2013 there were six cases of measles reported in Northern Ireland. Five of these were children. This figure is provisional and requires validation. Other parts of the UK have not published any figures yet for 2013.

MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) immunisation is the safest and most effective way to prevent measles infection. It is never too late to vaccinate and children and young people of all ages should have two doses of the MMR vaccine to ensure they are protected. It is vitally important to ensure children and young people's vaccinations are up to date, particularly if they are in groups or settings where they may be at risk of getting an infection or, if they are infected, of passing on infection to other vulnerable individuals.

The uptake of MMR vaccine in Northern Ireland is at a sufficiently high level to prevent the measles virus from circulating in the general population. The recent cases of measles have occurred in unvaccinated people. The Public Health Agency has been working to ensure that these unvaccinated children are offered the MMR vaccine. PHA has also been working with local schools in the area to offer vaccination clinics, so that any other child who is unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated receives MMR as required.

Funding of Care for the Elderly

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions his officials have had, or intend to have, with their counterparts in Westminster on changes to the funding of care for the elderly.

(AQW 19656/11-15)

Mr Poots: As social care is a devolved matter, the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt MP, of plans to reform funding arrangements for adult social care in England does not apply to Northern Ireland.

However, recognising the importance of this issue, my Department is currently engaged in an extensive public consultation until 15 March on the discussion document, "Who Cares? The Future of Adult Care and Support in NI". The purpose of the consultation is to hear people's views on key issues including the type of services we want to see in the future, who should provide them, and, crucially, how we should pay for them. Following the consultation my Department will develop proposals for reform, which will include changes to how care and support is funded.

In this context my officials have been in regular contact with their counterparts in England, and the rest of the UK, in relation to reforms in each of those jurisdictions and will continue to liaise closely with them throughout the reform process in Northern Ireland.

Health and Social Care Regional Procurement Board

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 16519/11-15, whether the Health and Social Care Regional Procurement Board intends to move to standard 30 day payment terms from September 2013.

(AQW 19675/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC Regional Procurement Board has been advised that it is necessary to change the terms and conditions of contract in respect of payment earlier than the planned September 2013 date. It has also been advised that this change should take place commensurate with the introduction of the new payment legislation (expected March 2013). However, the UK Government has not yet published its response to the consultation or the draft regulations pertaining to this legislation and therefore, precise terms cannot yet be advised upon.

Standard 30 Day Payment Terms

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 16519/11-15, whether the Health and Social Care Regional Procurement Board sought legal advice prior to its decision in June 2012 to move to standard 30 day payment terms; and the dates on which this advice was sought and received.

(AQW 19676/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC Regional Procurement Board did not seek legal advice in June 2012 prior to taking its decision to change to 30 day payment terms.

Antrim Area Hospital

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the work to upgrade the Antrim Area Hospital will be completed and open to patients.

(AQW 19726/11-15)

Mr Poots: The current phase of works at Antrim Area Hospital will provide a new Emergency Department and 24 Bed Ward.

The new 24 bed ward was completed on 4 February 2013 and the planned operational date is 26 March 2013.

The new Emergency Department is due to be completed on 28 April 2013 and the planned operational date is 26 June 2013

Smoking

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to further reduce the number of people who smoke.

(AQW 19829/11-15)

Mr Poots: Reducing smoking prevalence in Northern Ireland is a key priority for my Department and this is reflected in the ten-year tobacco control strategy which I launched last year. The strategy contains the following three main objectives: preventing people from starting to smoke; supporting smokers to quit; and protecting the population from tobacco-related harm. A comprehensive action plan for the strategy is currently being developed by a multi-sectoral implementation group. This work is being co-ordinated by the Public Health Agency.

My Department is engaged in an ongoing programme of legislative change with regards to tobacco control, the main aim of which is to prevent the uptake of smoking by young people. Sales of tobacco from vending machines were banned from 1 March 2012, and a ban on the display of tobacco products in large shops, introduced from 30 October 2012, will be rolled out to small shops from 1 April 2015.

In the forthcoming months, I also intend to introduce a Bill to the Assembly which will impose tougher sanctions on retailers who persistently sell tobacco products to those under the legal age of sale.

Other legislative options under consideration are the introduction of plain packaging for tobacco products and a ban on smoking in private vehicles. Decisions on these issues will only be made following comprehensive consultation exercises and considered analysis of the responses.

I will also continue to invest in public information campaigns to inform people about the dangers of smoking, and in the further development of smoking cessation services provided in a range of accessible settings.

Care of Older People

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has made any assessment of the costs of non-medical and medical care of older people in a residential care home which the Department considers reasonable; and to outline these costs.

(AQW 19835/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is the duty of the Department to provide or secure the provision of an integrated health and social care system for the people of Northern Ireland. Healthcare, including medical support for clients in residential care or nursing homes is provided free of charge. Healthcare is primarily provided via a client's GP and Health and Social Care Trusts, and is not part of the cost of the care home placement. The cost of such medical support is not currently cost effective to quantify because of the mixture of private and public systems involved. The cost of a residential care home placement includes a combination of personal care, board and accommodation costs.

My Department does not operate a regular or current information collection system concerning the cost breakdown of a package of care delivered in a residential care home i.e. the balance between personal care and accommodation costs. Similarly, it does not operate a regular data collection system which seeks to identify the cost of nursing care in nursing homes.

My Department is currently engaged in an extensive public consultation until 15 March on the discussion document, "Who Cares? The Future of Adult Care and Support in NI". The purpose of the consultation is to hear people's views on key issues including the type of services we want to see in the future, who should provide them, and, crucially, how we should pay for them. Following the consultation my Department will develop proposals for reform, which will include changes to how care and support is funded. This will include up to date analysis of the relevant costs and benefits as required.

State-Run and Privately-Run Elderly Care Homes

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether an assessment has been made of the comparative cost of the care per resident in state-run and privately-run elderly care homes; and to detail the assessment undertaken and its findings.

(AQW 19837/11-15)

Mr Poots: No recent assessment has been commissioned by the Regional Health and Social Care Board ("HSCB") or my Department on the comparative costs of care per resident in state run and privately run nursing and residential care homes. However, in 2007 my Department sponsored a Value For Money study of statutory residential care homes. This study concluded, using costs from 2005, that there were lower costs in the private sector and that the differential arose in part from higher sick absence in the statutory sector, higher overheads in the statutory sector including refurbishment costs due to the condition of buildings, from lower pension contributions in the private sector and from the then higher financing costs of the buildings in the statutory sector. Note that some of these factors may have changed since that time.

This said, true Value for Money is about more than cost considerations, it also must take into account quality, client complexity and whether care needs are being met.

Following the Review of Public Administration, the HSCB is now responsible for operational matters. This includes the commissioning of future studies, as required.

My Department is currently consulting on Who Cares? The Future of Adult Care and Support in Northern Ireland. This document reiterates government policy - to support people to live at home for as long as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Elderly Care

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that house prices in Northern Ireland are lower than in South East England and that the main component in personal wealth is house value, for his assessment of the cap that should be placed on personal savings as a contribution towards elderly care.

(AQW 19839/11-15)

Mr Poots: Social care is a devolved matter and, consequently, the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt MP, of plans to introduce a cap on individual contributions to social care in 2017, does not apply to Northern Ireland.

I recognise, however, that this is an issue about which people feel strongly and that is why I have committed to a three stage process of reform in Northern Ireland. As a first step, my Department is currently engaged in an extensive public consultation until 15 March on the discussion document, "Who Cares? The Future of Adult Care and Support in NI". The purpose of the consultation is to hear people's views on key issues including the type of services we want to see in the future, who should provide them, and, crucially, how we should pay for them.

Once I have had the opportunity to consider the views and opinions of the people of Northern Ireland my Department will develop proposals for reform, which will include changes to how care and support is funded. In so doing, I will be considering in detail how local socio-economic circumstances, demographics, and other local characteristics might influence any proposed changes.

ENT Consultants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of ENT consultants employed by each Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last four years; and (ii) whether, following the introduction of the care in the community pilot scheme at Holywood Arches Health Centre, the number of doctors providing ENT outpatient appointments and/or treatment in the rest of the Health Trusts was reduced, and to provide further details.

(AQW 19848/11-15)

Mr Poots:

HSC Trust	2009	2010	2011	2012
Belfast HSC Trust	8	9	8	8
Northern HSC Trust	6	5	5	5
South Eastern HSC Trust	4	4	3	4
Southern HSC Trust	5	6	8	7
Western HSC Trust	6	6	6	6
Total	29	30	30	30

There has been no reduction in the number of doctors providing ENT services in any HSC Trust as a result of the pilot exercise at Holywood Arches Health Centre.

Meningitis B Vaccine, Bexsero

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to introduce the Meningitis B vaccine, Bexsero, into the routine immunisation system.

(AQW 19858/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vaccination policy in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK is guided by the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert advisory committee that advises the four UK Health Ministers on matters relating to the provision of vaccination and immunisation services. JCVI consider all the available medical and scientific evidence before recommending which vaccines should be offered.

The JCVI has begun an evaluation of the impact and cost-effectiveness of possible meningitis B vaccination strategies. This evaluation requires a complex analysis and final JCVI advice is not expected until later in the year. I will consider the JCVI recommendation when I have received it.

Newtonstewart and Fintona Fire Stations

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to outline his capital spending priorities for the 2013/14 financial year; (ii) for an update on the business cases for Newtonstewart and Fintona fire stations; and (iii) whether he has plans to upgrade these stations from the current Portacabin facilities.

(AQW 19874/11-15)

Mr Poots: In light of the emerging needs of Transforming Your Care, my current capital priorities are kept under constant review. My current capital profile for the remaining 2 years of the current budget period includes:

Project/Programme	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
Capital Budget	224.80	200.50
Major Ongoing Projects	66.96	163.5
Annual Fixed Costs (excl IT)	95.5	29.0
NIFRS	6.0	6.0
ICT	28.20	20.0
Other Approved Schemes	49.04	12.9
Total Allocations in current approved Capital Scenario	245.70	231.4
Surplus/(Over Commitment)	(20.90)	(30.9)

The progression of business cases is set to ensure that approvals are in place in line with proposed expenditure as set out in the capital programme for DHSSPS and its arms length bodies. Given the constraints on my capital budget, the business cases for both Newtownstewart and Fintona Fire Stations have not progressed to approval as they are not sufficiently high up the list of NIFRS priorities to be profiled for expenditure in the current budget period.

Colostomy Bags

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are plans to make patients pay for colostomy bags.

(AQW 19882/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been considering a number of different options aimed at ensuring the efficient use of resources and looking at areas where money can be saved and used to protect front line services and

improve access to certain specialised drugs. The possible introduction of prescription charges or some form of administrative or other fee relating to the receipt of prescriptions is one of the options I have been considering.

Any such proposals, including proposals to introduce exemption categories such as those previously applied to colostomy bags, would be subject to full public consultation.

Southern Health and Social Care Trust: Intensive Home Support Unit

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 16870/11-15, for an update on the changes that have been made to the Intensive Home Support Unit in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust; and what consultation with staff and patients was undertaken prior to any changes.

(AQW 19895/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Trust advise that they are currently reviewing some aspects of Adult Learning Disability Provision in order to enhance service provision across the Trust area. This is part of the ongoing work to develop new initiatives and to make existing services more effective and person centred.

To that end the Intensive Support Team, which only operates in the Armagh /Dungannon area has been reviewed and the decision has been reached to disband this Team and utilise their expertise across the service. Such changes are in keeping with the reform and modernisation of service provision to bring services closer to home, as proposed within Transforming Your Care.

The needs of service users currently receiving input from this Team are presently being reviewed. Their assessed needs will be met through alternative provision.

I am advised that changes have been subject to local consultation.

Crèche and Daycare Facilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of crèche and daycare facilities in the (i) Foyle; (ii) East Londonderry; and (iii) East Antrim constituencies; and how many children are on the waiting lists for each establishment.

(AQW 19944/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details the number of crèche and daycare facilities in the Foyle, East Londonderry and East Antrim constituencies

It is not possible to detail waiting lists for each establishment as this information is not held by HSC Trusts.

Parliamentary Constituency	Day Nurseries	Out of Schools	Crèches	Playgroups	Total
Foyle	13	17	19	20	69
East Londonderry	12	12	8	28	60
East Antrim	12	10	3	20	45

Mental Health Illnesses

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what transition process exists for patients with mental health illnesses who are moving from child to adult services.

(AQW 20007/11-15)

Mr Poots: All Trusts have transitional protocols in place, agreed between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services(CAMHS) and Adult Mental Health Services(AMHS).

The protocols require forward planning and the development of an agreed transitional plan, in advance of any patient moving between these services. Arrangements are specific to the young person and will vary depending on complexity of need. The young person and their family/carers, will be fully involved in decision – making.

Transitional plans identify the worker from AMHS, the process for transfer and any joint working required between CAMHS and AMHS. They are implemented flexibly to ensure a managed process, with continuity of care and appropriate follow up for those patients who need it.

Department of Justice

Prisoner Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Prisoner A, whether the relevant person or agency monitoring this individual following their release received any communication concerning regarding breaches of terms, and whether action was taken.

(AQW 18256/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Data Protection Act 1998 gives individuals certain rights in relation to personal information held on them by public authorities. The information requested cannot be provided as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18386/11-15, (i) when and by whom the Northern Ireland Prison Service was made aware by the Prisoner Ombudsman that she was of the opinion that there was evidence against the officer concerned based on the balance of probabilities; (ii) whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service was aware of the date and content of a press statement from by the Prisoner Ombudsman and whether it had been approved prior to release; and (iii) when the Prisoner Ombudsman briefed the complainant of her findings and whether she informed him that she was intending to release a press statement.

(AQW 19286/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) In March 2011 the Prisoner Ombudsman notified the Northern Ireland Prison Service that there was evidence against the officer concerned based on the balance of probabilities.
- (ii) & (iii) I understand that the Prisoner Ombudsman's Office wrote directly to the Member on 4 February 2013 confirming that her Office made no public announcements in relation to this investigation.

G4 Summit: Staff Responsibilities

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline the roles and responsibilities of G4S staff during court sittings, and to clarify whether they are permitted to remove persons from the public gallery if they cause a disturbance.

(AQW 19301/11-15)

Mr Ford: The general roles and responsibilities of G4S staff performing Court Orderly duties during court sittings include:

- maintaining security of courtrooms;
- ensuring that items prohibited under the Criminal Justice Act (NI) 1945 that could be used to record court proceedings or take photographs are not introduced or employed in Court;
- ensuring that they comply with instructions issued by the Judiciary including cataloguing items left overnight in the Courtroom;

- calling for all case parties; and
- assisting to clear premises in the event of an emergency and/or an evacuation.

Under the Justice (NI) Act 2004 a court security officer acting in the execution of his duty may use reasonable force to restrain, remove or exclude any person if it is reasonably necessary to do so to enable the business of the court to be carried on without interference or delay, or to maintain order or secure the safety of any person in the building. This should, wherever possible, be done with diplomacy and by applying only the minimum of force.

Prison Officers Dismissed from the Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18443/11-15, how many prison officers have been dismissed due to a disability following long-term sickness caused by prisoner assault, from 12 April 2010 to 31 December 2012.

(AQW 19302/11-15)

Mr Ford: Between 12 April 2010 and 31 December 2012 there have been no prison officers dismissed due to a disability following long-term sickness caused by prisoner assault.

Prison Officers: Recruitment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many prison officers have been employed since the recent round of recruitment and of these how many are (i) on sick-leave of six weeks or more; and (ii) have since resigned, broken down by prison facility.

(AQW 19303/11-15)

Mr Ford: To date the Northern Ireland Prison Service has recruited 199 Custody Prison Officers (CPOs), five of whom have subsequently resigned. However, as less than five CPOs have had a period of sickness absence for the duration stipulated the actual number has been withheld. This is to protect the identity of those concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Prisoners: Essential Skills

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners (i) gained accreditations in essential skills; and (ii) completed offending behaviour programmes, during 2011 and 2012.

(AQW 19304/11-15)

Mr Ford: During 2011 and 2012 the numbers of prisoners completing offending behaviour programmes are as follows:-

1 January – 31 December 2011	1 January - 31 December 2012
153	171

Essential skills within the Prison Service are Literacy, Numeracy, Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

The numbers of accreditations gained by prisoners in essential skills during 2011 and 2012 are as set out below:-

Location	Subject	1 April 2011 - 31 March 2012	1 April 2012 to date
Maghaberry	Literacy	139	80
	Numeracy	83	78
	ICT	91	122
	ESOL	17	29
		330	309
Magilligan	Literacy	293	270
	Numeracy	280	282
	ICT	128	15
	ESOL	35	50
		736	617
Hydebank Wood	Literacy	24	22
	Numeracy	38	14
	ICT	0	35
	ESOL	4	4
		66	75
Overall Total		1132	1001

Note: The 2012 year figures will not be completed until 31 March 2013 in line with the financial year.

Fuel Laundering

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the sentences imposed in respect of each conviction for fuel laundering related offences, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19320/11-15)

Mr Ford: Court sentencing datasets do not distinguish fuel laundering from other oils related crime offences which would be prosecuted under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.

HM Revenue & Customs have confirmed that in the last four financial years, including 2012-13 to date, there have been fines of £9,916, costs of £180, Confiscation Orders of £1,211,211 and a Compensation Order of £500 imposed. In addition, suspended prison sentences totalling 157 months have been given. A total of 200 hours community service was imposed on one defendant and three people also received a Serious Crime Prevention Order in addition to their Confiscation Orders.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18305/11-15 and AQW 17469/11-15, whether he plans to review his answer in light of the Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service and Her Majesty's Prison Service Archiving, Retention and Disposal Policy; and (ii) whether he will provide a copy of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Policy on the subject,

(AQW 19324/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have no plans to review the answers to AQW 18305/11-15 and AQW 17469/11-15. The Northern Ireland Prison Service, as an Agency of the Department of Justice, is only required to comply with the Departmental Retention and Disposal Schedule. A copy of this document has been placed in the Assembly library.

Death in Custody of Colin Bell

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18562/11-15, whether he intends to revise his answer in light of Recommendation 44 of the Northern Ireland Prisoner Ombudsman Report into the Death in Custody of Colin Bell.

(AQW 19334/11-15)

Mr Ford: My answer to AQW/18562/11-15 will remain unchanged given that Recommendation 44 of the Northern Ireland Prisoner Ombudsman's Report into the Death in Custody of Colin Bell pre dated April 2010.

Prisoner Riots: Televisions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18499/11-15, how many televisions have been destroyed as a result of prisoner riots, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19335/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Mandatory Ear Protection

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service provides mandatory ear protection for prison staff and the date this was introduced.

(AQW 19336/11-15)

Mr Ford: Hearing protection is provided in areas that have been assessed and considered necessary under the Control of Noise at Work (NI) Regulations 2006. This includes some workshops, dog kennels and the firing range.

With regards to the firing range, it is understood that ear protection has been provided from at least 1987 when Prison Service staff became responsible for firearms training.

Ethnic Minorities Report on Race and the Criminal Justice System

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice whether he will consider establishing a criminal justice race unit as recommended in the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities Report on Race and the Criminal Justice System.

(AQW 19378/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department is currently considering the findings and recommendations arising from the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) report, 'Race and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland'. My officials will meet with NICEM in the coming weeks to consider the report in more detail.

My initial view is that the recommendation for a race unit does not fully take account of the existing systems, framework and structures within the Department of Justice, including the Departmental Equality Officer post, the Equality and Good Relations Forum, the Diversity Strategy, Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan.

The Department of Justice Equality Scheme 2011-15 sets out the Department's arrangements for fulfilling its Section 75 statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity between the nine categories of people, which includes persons of a different racial group, and to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

In addition to using ECNI's recommended tools for screening and Equality Impact Assessments, the Department undertakes Shared Future Policy Proofing when developing and reviewing its policies. Shared Future Policy Proofing includes all Section 75 groups, on a non-statutory basis.

The Department's Equality Action Plan sets out the key initiatives planned to tackle the inequalities highlighted by an audit of inequalities undertaken by the Department as a result of ECNI's recommendation that all designated public authorities should carry out such an audit.

In terms of structures, two champions at senior civil service level, the Equality Champion and the Diversity Champion, ensure that equality and diversity are central considerations in all aspects of policy and practice within the Department and they report directly to the Departmental Board.

The Diversity Steering Group introduced four staff networks including the Black Ethnic Minority network, 'BEMLINK', which provides a safe environment for members to discuss sensitive workplace issues and raise awareness on black and ethnic minority affairs.

All of these existing systems, frameworks and structures will be taken into consideration in any decision on the NICEM report's recommendation in relation to a dedicated criminal justice race unit.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18149/11-15 and in terms of the Colin Bell disciplinary investigation, to detail (i) the number of night custody officers who were suspended from duty and the start and end dates of suspension; (ii) the cost to the Northern Ireland Prison Service per suspended officer; (iii) the cost to the Northern Ireland Prison Service for all suspended officers; (iv) the cost in the John Deery case and; (v) whether any senior officers were disciplined resulting from the Bell case with offences of gross misconduct but not suspended from duty.

(AQW 19382/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following the disciplinary investigation, 16 Night Custody Officers were suspended from duty with suspension dates ranging from 1 September 2008 to 26 October 2010.

Information regarding the cost to the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) per suspended officer cannot be provided as this would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

The cost to NIPS in relation to all suspended officers was £532,038.47 and in the case of John Deery the cost was £339,167.74.

As less than five Senior Officers were disciplined following the death in custody of Colin Bell, the information cannot be disclosed as to do so would breach the Data Protection Act 1998.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of prison staff suspended by the Northern Ireland Prison Service in each of the last 5 years; (ii) how many times each suspension was reviewed, by what grade and on what time basis; (iii) the number of suspensions that were reported to him and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland during this period as required by Rule 118 (2) of the Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (NI) 1995, as amended; and (iv) in how many suspension cases he and the Secretary of State issued directions to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 19388/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service has suspended a total of 54 members of staff in the five year period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2012. The actual number of suspensions in each year has been withheld. This is to protect the identity of the individuals concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998. The information requested at parts (ii) and (iii) could only be provided with the incurrance of disproportionate costs. In relation to part (iv) I refer the Member to my response to AQW 17089/11-15.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18499/11-15, to detail (i) whether the supplier is based in Northern Ireland; (ii) how often the contract has been put to tender in the last five years; and (iii) when it will be tendered in the future.

(AQW 19389/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service can confirm the contracted supplier is based in Northern Ireland.

The contract has been put out to tender once in the last five years; is due to be re-tendered in 2014; and is expected to be in place by September 2014. The tender process will commence approximately nine months beforehand.

Prisoner Assessment Unit Closure

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in light of concerns raised in the report into the investigation of the closure of the Prisoner Assessment Unit, why senior prison staff/governors permitted night custody officers/staff to carry out duties outside their remit to the point where this became common practice, and whether he will give an assurance that this will not recur when the Prisoner Assessment Unit is reopened.

(AQW 19391/11-15)

Mr Ford: A corporate decision was taken to close the Prisoner Assessment Unit and this decision included ensuring that any improper customs and practices would be addressed. When the Prisoner Assessment Unit reopens newly approved Standard Operating procedures will be put in place.

Prisoners: Illegal or Non-Prescribed Drugs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what percentage of remand prisoners tested positive for illegal or non-prescribed drugs per prison facility, including Hydebank Wood, in 2012.

(AQW 19392/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 18761/11-15.

Prison Facilities

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what is the total capacity of our prison facilities.

(AQW 19417/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are a total of 2391 bed spaces currently available, but this level of occupancy is constrained by the need to keep various categories of prisoners in separate accommodation, and the desirability of avoiding cell sharing where possible.

Fuel Laundering

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice when she last contacted Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in order to quantify the monetary impact of fuel laundering on the Northern Ireland economy.

(AQW 19440/11-15)

Mr Ford: The figures on revenue lost to the UK economy through the use of non United Kingdom duty paid diesel in Northern Ireland are requested from HM Revenue and Customs periodically by my Department. This includes for the Organised Crime Task Force's reports. The Department of Justice also monitors the loss of revenue identified on individual operations.

The most recent figures are available in the HM Revenue and Customs publication "Measuring tax gaps 2012 Tax gap estimates for 2010- 11" which can be viewed at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/tax-gaps/mtg-2012.pdf>

There are, of course, other costs to the Northern Ireland economy associated with fuel laundering, namely the clean up cost in respect of the waste product from laundering plants and the cost to legitimate businesses.

Prisoner at Risk Training

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17869/11-15, to detail (i) why the Northern Ireland Prison Service did not keep records on its training database as to the number of staff who participated in Prisoner at Risk briefing/awareness sessions; (ii) whether Prisoner at Risk Training was compulsory and whether senior management instructed staff to attend such sessions; and (iii) how staff were informed by management that awareness sessions were available throughout the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 19441/11-15)

Mr Ford: At the time of the Prisoner at Risk training, the computer based training management system in place did not offer the facility to record short briefing/awareness sessions.

Awareness sessions were scheduled for all staff but were not mandatory.

Line managers are required to detail staff for training as and when it is scheduled, however, records are not available.

Observation/Safer Custody Cells

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what is the current status in relation to ligature points in observation/safer custody cells.

(AQW 19442/11-15)

Mr Ford: Observation cells in prison establishments have been designed to minimise the opportunity for self-harm, including anti-ligature furniture and fittings.

Northern Ireland Authorities

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18387/11-15, whether he intends to make representations to the UK Border Agency on matters such as this and/or introduce legislation which could prevent such entries to Northern Ireland and reduce the risk to the public.

(AQW 19443/11-15)

Mr Ford: Matters relating to policy and legislation on the control of entry across UK national borders is a matter for the UK Government.

When an individual offender with convictions for sex offences comes to Northern Ireland, the PSNI can apply to the courts for a notification order which requires the person to notify their details to the police. Legislation currently before the Assembly will make this process more effective by removing the need for a court order and making notification a statutory requirement.

Prisoner at Risk Training

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18364/11-15, to detail (i) how many of the 39 volunteer mentors accepted the offer of training; (ii) how many mentors have completed their training to date; and (iii) what the training will entail and its duration.

(AQW 19444/11-15)

Mr Ford: Of the 39 mentors who volunteered to take part in the Northern Ireland Prison Service Mentoring Scheme, a total of 21 staff accepted the offer of training and they have all completed their training.

The training entailed preparatory reading in advance of participating in a half day workshop. The attendees received information, advice and practical guidance on how to be an effective mentor. However, all mentors were provided with written guidance.

Wireless Telegraphy in Prisons

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department plans to introduce legislation making provision for interference with wireless telegraphy in prisons.

(AQW 19487/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department has no plans to introduce legislation to make any further provision for interference with wireless telegraphy in prisons.

Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what was the total spend on hospitality by his Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19494/11-15)

Mr Ford: Hospitality expenditure by the Department of Justice, including its Agencies but not its arm's length bodies, for the financial year 2011/12 was £55,418.97.

Ackah and Deane Report of December 2009

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17980/11-15, whether the PSNI will provide training to adjudicators and to Prison Officers' Association members who are acting as friends, as recommended in the Ackah and Deane Report of December 2009.

(AQW 19546/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Ackah and Deane Report recommended training of staff in the operation of internal disciplinary and grievance procedures. The Police Service of Northern Ireland will train staff working in the Professional Standards Unit in relation to investigative techniques.

UK Border Agency: Maghaberry Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) to detail the number of times that UK Border Agency staff attended Maghaberry Prison to engage with foreign nationals, in each of the last three years; (ii) what was the core purpose of the visits; and (iii) whether such meetings are normally also attended by prison staff.

(AQW 19549/11-15)

Mr Ford: Records have not been kept which detail the number of times UK Border Agency staff attended Maghaberry Prison although they visit Maghaberry annually to hold information sessions with foreign national prisoners.

UK Border Agency also attend the prison to conduct one to one interviews with foreign national prisoners who are being considered for deportation.

Prison staff are present at all meetings.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18562/11-15 and AQW 18760/11-15, to clarify the position given that these answers appear to be at variance over the role of the Prisoner Ombudsman in relation to recommending disciplinary action.

(AQW 19550/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no variance in my replies to questions AQW 18562/11-15 and AQW 18760/11-15.

I have been very clear as to the role of the Prisoner Ombudsman in relation to disciplinary actions. The Prisoner Ombudsman does not make recommendations to the Northern Ireland Prison Service regarding the suspension and/or dismissal of staff. The Prisoner Ombudsman may recommend that the

Northern Ireland Prison Service considers conducting an internal disciplinary investigation into a staff member's actions where the outcome of an investigation would warrant it.

Legal Aid Costs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW15156/11-15, to provide an updated answer in respect of Legal Aid costs in each of the cases against (i) Bernadette McGeary; (ii) Stephen McGeary and (iii) Catherine Mooney.

(AQW 19551/11-15)

Mr Ford: Further to the response to AQW/15156/11-15, committal proceedings for all defendants have now been heard in the magistrates' court and the defendants have been returned for trial to the Crown Court. Each defendant was represented by a solicitor only at the committal hearing. The following fees have been paid to each solicitor in respect of the proceedings at the magistrates' court.

Bernadette McGeary, a total of £1,413.78 (including VAT of £235.63)

Stephen McGeary, a total of £1,142.88 (including VAT of £190.48)

Catherine Mooney, a total of £1,254.10 (including VAT of £209.02)

The Crown Court cases are ongoing and at present there is insufficient information available to establish how each case will proceed. It is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the total legal aid bill at this stage.

Victims of Trafficking

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether there are plans to increase the number of places of refuge available for victims of trafficking.

(AQW 19625/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department funds a support service for potential adult victims of human trafficking. The support service is demand-led and includes the provision of accommodation for potential adult victims in a safe and secure environment. During the term of the contract no difficulty has been experienced in meeting the demand for accommodation for potential adult victims of human trafficking.

I have no plans therefore to increase the number of places of refuge available for those victims.

Courthouses

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many courthouses are currently in operation.

(AQW 19693/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are currently 21 courthouses in operation in Northern Ireland.

PSNI Stations: Resource Group

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice whether he has had any discussions with the Chief Constable, or any of his staff, regarding the grievance arrangements for civilian staff employed by the Resource Group and working in PSNI stations.

(AQW 19729/11-15)

Mr Ford: As Minister of Justice I have frequent discussions with the Chief Constable across a range of issues.

However, the terms and conditions of civilian staff employed by the Resource Group, including the administrative arrangements in place in respect of conduct and accountability for such staff, are operational matters for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board and, as such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment upon employment matters for civilian staff employed by the PSNI.

Police Salaries

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the proposals to reduce police starting salaries to £19,000 in England and Wales and whether he envisages this being implemented in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 19850/11-15)

Mr Ford: The announcement by the Home Secretary regarding pay scales relates to new recruits in England and Wales. I routinely consider developments in policing elsewhere in the UK and their potential implications in the context of Northern Ireland. Any proposals relating to pay scales for the PSNI will be negotiated at Police Negotiating Board in the usual way.

Recommendation 8 of the Ann Owers Report

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Justice, following the results of the trial of the millimetre wave scanner, what alternative trialing will the Prison Service commence to comply with Recommendation 8 of the Ann Owers Report.

(AQW 19942/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service remains committed to seeking a viable, less intrusive alternative to our existing practice of full searching.

Although the recently completed pilot and evaluation of Millimetre Wave technology showed that there were limitations to it as an alternative to full body searching, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) will, if possible, continue to work with suppliers to see if such technology can be improved for application in the prison environment.

NIPS also intends to take forward its Justification Application under the Justification of Practices Involving Ionising Radiation Regulations 2004 in relation to the initial piloting and possible use of Transmission X-ray scanners in Northern Ireland's prisons.

This application is well advanced and it is expected that it will be ready for submission to the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) within the next few weeks. This is a complex and lengthy process that has never been undertaken by a UK prison before so it is not possible, at this stage, to provide a timescale as to when a possible pilot of Transmission X-ray technology can commence.

Department for Regional Development

Water Bills

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number; and (ii) the value of water bills that have been revised following complaints from consumers, in the last two years.

(AQW 19106/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that in the two year period covering 2011 and 2012 (i) 5,765 customers' bills (representing 1.7% of the total bills issued) were revised following complaints from the customer and (ii) the net value of the bill adjustments was £2.80 million (representing 2.1% of total billed income).

Profile of bill adjustments, i.e. increase / decrease, as detailed below:

Adjustment Type	Number of Bills	Number of Bills as % of Total Bills Issued	Adjustment Value £' Million	Adjustment Value as % of Total Billed Income
Bill Increased	931	0.3%	£0.42	0.3%
Bill Decreased	4,834	1.5%	(£3.18)	(2.4%)
Total	5,765	1.7%	(£2.76)	(2.1%)

Bus Shelters in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new bus shelters are planned for the Bangor area over the next year.

(AQW 19351/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The current contract for the provision and maintenance of bus shelters in Northern Ireland, between my Department and Adshel, which was approved whilst Peter Robinson was Minister for Regional Development, has delivered over 1350 new bus shelters since 2001, at no cost to my Department. The current contract does not expire until the end of 2015, however, it does not make provision for any new shelters.

In order to ensure the future provision of bus shelters, my Department is currently working towards the establishment of new contractual arrangements, which are to be in place for 2015.

The current contract has provided 58 shelters in the North Down area and in the interim, requests for shelters will be recorded and when the new contract is in place they will be given priority.

It should be noted that Local Councils can also provide bus shelters, should they wish to do so.

Metro Route in Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total number of passenger journeys for each Metro route in Belfast for the July-September period, for each of the last five years.

(AQW 19356/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below sets out the figures as provided by Translink. It should be noted that some ticket classes are excluded for example School pupil journeys.

	Passenger Journeys (01 July – 31 August)				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
ME Corridor 1 (Antrim Rd)	373,742	389,967	385,282	376,070	386,605
ME Corridor 2 (Shore Rd)	374,775	414,641	413,721	425,220	420,844
ME Corridor 3 (Holywood Rd)	222,198	223,949	221,215	218,858	233,528
ME Corridor 4 (Upp Nards Rd)	489,703	500,082	487,001	490,276	515,164
ME Corridor 5 (Castlereagh Rd)	151,943	147,788	136,874	139,293	142,256
ME Corridor 6 (Cregagh Rd)	199,540	200,718	189,937	193,022	206,545
ME Corridor 7 (Ormeau Rd)	316,438	322,878	320,772	316,787	311,865
ME Corridor 8 (Malone Rd)	174,280	171,139	169,181	164,614	173,325
ME Corridor 9 (Lisburn Rd)	232,801	234,598	227,181	230,973	235,974
ME Corridor 10 (Falls Rd)	467,696	456,617	440,460	453,029	469,085

	Passenger Journeys (01 July – 31 August)				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
ME Corridor 11 (Shankill Rd)	284,292	282,007	262,223	275,937	271,021
ME Corridor 12 (Oldpark Rd)	294,554	287,623	275,149	282,010	269,586
ME Corridor 13 (City Express)	91,348	89,213	82,366	78,813	68,834
Metro Others **	44,065	44,520	49,410	43,198	42,959
Totals	3,717,375	3,765,740	3,660,772	3,688,100	3,747,591

Note: ** Others' relate to Metro services outside the main corridor routes, e.g. Easibus, George Best Belfast City Airport, Park & Ride, dedicated schools

Ulsterbus Route into Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total number of passenger journeys for each Ulsterbus route into Belfast for the July-September period, for each of the last five years.

(AQW 19357/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below sets out the information provided by Translink. However, Translink has advised that the statistics provided below are for Ulsterbus services where passengers alighted within Central Belfast mainly Europa Buscentre or Belfast City centre.

To collate any additional information would involve considerable time and effort at disproportionate cost.

Please note some ticket classes are excluded notably Pupil passes but given the period covered school holiday period numbers for this group would be negligible.

ULSTERBUS PASSENGER JOURNEYS INTO BELFAST 1 JULY – 31 AUGUST

Year	Journeys
2012	601,578
2011	580,157
2010	553,229
2009	606,841
2008	649,055

Trains on the Larne Line

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of train cancellations or changes to express services on weekday mornings since the new timetable was introduced on the Larne line; and (ii) if Translink have plans to add six car train sets to increase capacity at peak times.

(AQW 19439/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that the new timetable was introduced from Sunday 6 January 2013 following extensive consultation with existing users and key stakeholders. It incorporates two express services each weekday morning on the Larne line.

In the period to Friday 8 February the service had been operating for 5 weeks with a total of 50 express services scheduled. During this time one service regrettably had to be cancelled (31 January) due to mechanical problems with the train at Whitehead and one service was terminated (short of Great Victoria Street) at Central Station, due to signalling difficulties.

Translink continue to experience increasing passenger numbers on most morning services between Carrickfergus and Belfast. Translink will continue to monitor passenger loadings on all morning services in line with the commitment set out in the Passenger's Charter. This commitment is that under normal circumstances passengers should not have to stand during off-peak services and during peak operating periods NI Railways will use all available trains so that no passenger should have to stand for more than 20 minutes. Translink continue to monitor passenger loadings to ensure future capacity is deployed where it is most needed. In their view, it is premature for the introduction of six car sets on the Larne line at this time, however, they have indicated that once demand patterns have stabilised and the need for such a provision can more accurately be gauged, this proposal may be given further consideration.

A4 Dual Carriageway: Acceptable Noise Level

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development what the acceptable noise level is on the A4 Dual Carriageway which transverses 15 miles of rural countryside from Moygashel to Ballygawley Roundabout.

(AQW 19445/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Increases in noise levels, arising from the construction of a new road, are considered in respect of both the interior and exterior of residential buildings.

The Noise Insulation Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (NIR) applies to all new, or altered, roads (effective December 1995) and is the legislation intended to ensure that increases in noise levels within the interior of residential buildings, arising from the newly constructed road, should not constitute a nuisance. This legislation also sets an exterior noise level of 68 decibels (dB), as the threshold for determining whether interior noise levels constitute a nuisance. The legislation requires that greater than 1dB of noise must be attributable to the new road.

There are no statutory limits on acceptable exterior noise levels. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), adopted by the four UK Highway Authorities, recommends that when road traffic noise, as a result of a new road, causes an increase in exterior noise level of 3dB in the long term, a detailed noise assessment should be undertaken to establish if mitigation measures should be considered. It should be noted that whilst 3dB is the limit to establish if a detailed assessment is required, a 3db increase in noise level cannot automatically be held as constituting a nuisance. The 3dB increase is not seen as a trigger whereby mitigation measures must be implemented, but is instead a threshold of potential significance from which other factors should also be considered, to determine if the impact would be considered significant. If the impact is deemed to be significant, the practicality of mitigation can be reviewed, to establish if the effect can be ameliorated.

The DMRB sets out, that in the long term, a noise increase of 5-10 dB increase in noise level is considered "moderate", whilst noise increases greater than 10dB are considered to be "major". The Environmental Statement prepared for the A4 dual carriageway, identified 28 properties that, subject to detailed design (possible low noise surfacing etc), could be subjected to greater than 68dB of noise, 11 of which would experience noise increases of greater than 10dB. The DBFO Company responsible for the detailed design and delivery of the new road has confirmed that mitigation measures have been implemented, to ensure that predicted noise levels at all residential buildings are less than 68dB (even at 15 years after opening of the road to account for traffic growth).

Bus Services in Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of passengers who have used bus services in Bangor, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19488/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below sets out the figures as provided by Translink and is based on information pertaining to Bangor Town Services. Journeys originating in Bangor with a destination outside Bangor (and vice-versa) have been excluded. In addition some ticket classes are excluded, e.g. Pupil Passes.

Year	Passenger journeys
2011/12	510,103
2010/11	522,071
2009/10	597,204
2008/09	687,715
2007/08	618,442

Bangor to Belfast Train and Bus Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of passengers using the Bangor to Belfast (i) train service; and (ii) bus service, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19489/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below sets out the figures as provided by Translink and is based on passengers using Bangor as the boarding stage and Belfast as the alighting stage, and vice-versa. The statistics do not include passengers boarding/alighting at intermediate stops. In addition some ticket classes are excluded, e.g. Pupil Passes.

ULSTERBUS

Year	Passenger Journeys		
	Boarding Bangor	Alighting Bangor	Total
2011/12	505,221	646,052	1,151,273
2010/11	509,255	632,980	1,142,235
2009/10	532,752	671,171	1,203,923
2008/09	565,715	756,055	1,321,769
2007/08	626,787	677,170	1,303,957

NIR

Year	Passenger Journeys		
	Boarding Bangor	Alighting Bangor	Total
2011/12	883,671	489,913	1,373,583
2010/11	853,473	475,459	1,328,932
2009/10	859,541	467,585	1,327,126
2008/09	888,513	434,149	1,322,662
2007/08	851,180	412,170	1,263,350

Enterprise Rail Service

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department plans to address the falling passenger numbers using the Enterprise Rail Service.

(AQW 19501/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that passenger numbers on the Enterprise service are increasing. In the year to date (April 2012 to January 2013 inclusive) passenger numbers are over 700,000, 14.2% higher than the same period in the previous year.

As regards longer term investment, in January, I launched a public consultation on what should be the priorities for future capital expenditure in our railways network. This included an option for enhancement of the cross-border line and the Enterprise service. I look forward to receiving views.

DSD: Capital Spend

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail his Department's capital spend since May 2011, broken down by constituency area.

(AQW 19516/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Neither my Department nor its arm's-length bodies, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) and Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC), maintain detailed analysis of spend on a parliamentary constituency basis. However, where reasonable and without disproportionate cost, business areas have reviewed expenditure records to identify any key areas of spend in each constituency. This information is set out below.

Roads Service

Roads Service has invested around £260 million on major capital schemes in the period from May 2011 to December 2012.

Roads Service does maintain an analysis of its expenditure on a full financial year basis by council area. This analysis is only produced after the end of each financial year. The table below details the capital expenditure in the period 2011-12.

District Council	Capital Year 11/12
Antrim	4,361
Coleraine	4,254
Limavady	4,003
Moyle	1,568
Ballymoney	2,425
Londonderry	11,099
Ballymena	5,387
Larne	5,913
Belfast	11,890
Castlereagh	1,573
Newtownabbey	3,535
Carrickfergus	2,457
North Down	3,145
Lisburn	4,934
Ards	5,405
Armagh	11,828

District Council	Capital Year 11/12
Newry & Mourne	7,380
Banbridge	4,451
Craigavon	6,273
Down	4,899
Magherafelt	3,216
Omagh	18,939
Strabane	4,969
Cookstown	3,778
Fermanagh	12,405
Dungannon	7,573
Overall Total	157,660

Roads Service does not simply split its total budget for capital expenditure on roads across all the district council areas. Major road improvements are prioritised on a countrywide basis taking account of a broad range of criteria such as strategic planning policy, traffic flow, number of accidents, potential travel save times, environmental impact, accessibility and value for money. While the actual spend on a major works scheme may be within one district council area, the benefits of such schemes are not confined to the district council, constituency or county in which they are located.

Roads Service is currently engaged in numerous individual schemes, and while it is not possible to specify these individually Roads Service does provide progress reports to District Councils bi-annually. A link to the council reports can be found at:

http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

The 2012-2013 Spring Reports to council detail the outcomes achieved in the 2011-2012 financial year, and scheduled future activities. Autumn reports to council outline progress to date, and projected activities in future years.

Roads Service is currently engaged in taking forward major strategic investment in the roads network by providing dual carriageways on sections of the A5 between Londonderry and Strabane and Omagh and Ballygawley, on the A8 between Belfast and Larne and at Shore Road, Greenisland.

Transport

The Department has invested around £138 million on public transport schemes in the period from May 2011 to December 2012.

My Department has provided and will continue to provide capital funding for public transport services and initiatives, including the new buses and trains. The entire Translink network benefits from the impact of the New Trains project and the new Goldline vehicles and provision of Wi-Fi on both Goldline vehicles and trains.

The following table lists those projects that have a projected cost greater than £5m and provides details of expenditure for those projects during 2011-12 and up to December 2012.

Transport Projects	Constituency	2011-12 Spend £m	2012-13 Spend to December £m
Purchase of 35 Goldlines	All	7.487	0.312
Purchase of 30 Metro Double Decks	Belfast region	3.509	1.007
Purchase of 14 Double Decks	Belfast region	1.748	0.872
Clean Urban Transport – 39 Goldlines	All		9.064
Clean Urban Transport – 14 Double Deck	Belfast Region		2.620
Building Services Upgrade	All	0.689	0.377
New Trains	All	50.721	0.721
Adelaide Train Care Facility	South Belfast	16.753	1.012
Platform Extensions	All	4.790	0.628
Class 3000 Overhaul Programme	All	2.239	1.580
Enterprise Phase 3 Overhaul	Newry & Armagh, Lagan Valley and Upper Bann	0.044	0.034
Coleraine to Londonderry Track Safety Improvements	East Londonderry and Foyle	3.343	1.335
Coleraine to Londonderry Track Renewals Phase 1	East Londonderry and Foyle	3.802	13.381
Coleraine to Londonderry Track Renewals Phase 2	East Londonderry and Foyle	0.075	0.427
West Lisburn Halt Park and Ride	Lagan Valley	0.004	0.010
Newry Railway Station	Newry & Armagh	0.476	0.0

Northern Ireland Water (NIW)

My Department provides funding for NIW's capital works programme. NIW has invested around £240 million on major capital schemes in the period from May 2011 to December 2012. Details of investment in individual projects, where total project costs are greater than £5 million, are set out in the table below. Expenditure on minor capital projects is not included as it could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Northern Ireland Water	Constituency	2011-12 Spend £m	2012-13 Spend to December £m
Tardree Zone Watermain Improvementss	North & East Antrim	1.112	0.776
Moyola Zone Watermain Improvements	Mid Ulster	2.555	0.743

Northern Ireland Water	Constituency	2011-12 Spend £m	2012-13 Spend to December £m
Ballydougan to Newry Main Link Reinforcement	Newry & Armagh, South Down, Upper Bann	5.859	4.121
Strule Intake For Derg Water Treatment Works	West Tyrone	1.506	3.430
Newtownabbey Zone Watermain Improvements Phase 2	East Antrim and South Antrim	1.420	1.769
Ballintemple Zone Watermain Improvements	Newry and Armagh	3.296	3.730
Lough Ross Zone Watermain Improvements	Newry and Armagh	4.671	0.166
Newry watermain improvements Phase 2	Newry and Armagh, South Down	1.346	2.709
Whitehead, Ballystruder & Ballycarry Rationalisation	East Antrim	6.574	0
Keady Wastewater Treatment Works	Newry and Armagh	2.249	0.601
Benone Area Sewerage	East Londonderry	1.337	4.525
Newtownbreda Wastewater Treatment Works	South Belfast	2.054	0.137
Ballyhalbert Wastewater Treatment Works Interim Solution	Strangford	0.687	3.686
Ballynahinch Wastewater Treatment Works	South Down	0.538	2.523
Newcastle Wastewater Treatment Works	South Down	1.638	5.745
Newry Wastewater Treatment Works Extension	Newry and Armagh	2.265	2.470

Noise Levels

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development to what extent noise levels have increased since the A4 was upgraded to a dual carriageway.

(AQW 19552/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his related Assembly Written Question (AQW 19445/11-15 refers) on this issue.

Removal of Street Lighting

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the rationale behind Roads Service's removal of street lighting in the Galliagh area of Derry.

(AQW 19898/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is currently in the process of carrying out street lighting improvements in the Galliagh area of Londonderry, specifically at Ederowen Park, Brookdale Park and Gallaigh Park.

All existing lighting is currently being replaced, with the exception of the lighting on rear pathways, which is being removed in accordance with current Roads Service policy in relation to street lighting provision.

Department for Social Development

Employment Support Allowances

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of (i) Employment Support Allowances appeals since the introduction of the new benefit; and (ii) successful appeals, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 19061/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The information cannot be provided in the format sought. The Appeals Service (TAS) arranges for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) appeals to be heard at venues throughout Northern Ireland. The selection of venues for appeal hearings is determined by the postal district within which the appellant resides. The data is only available by appeal hearing venue. Furthermore, any appeal lodged with the Social Security Agency is subject to reconsideration and may therefore not progress to TAS. Appeals may not be dealt with in the same year that they are received.

The Chairman of the Tribunal records whether the decision made on appeal was either more or less advantageous than a previous decision. A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award be made. A less advantageous decision may reduce the allowance or make no change to the original determination.

The following tables detail the number of ESA appeals received by TAS since the introduction of the benefit on 27 October 2008 up to 31 December 2012 (Table 1); while the number of ESA appeals that have received a final determination/outcome and how many were successful is set out in Table 2. Although a small number of ESA appeals were received in the 2008/09 financial year, none were determined until the 2009/10 year.

Table 1. ESA Appeals Received (By Financial Year / Tribunal District)

Tribunal District	27/10/08 - 31/03/09	01/04/09 - 31/03/10	01/04/10 - 31/03/11	01/04/11 - 31/03/12	01/04/12 - 31/12/12
Armagh	0	123	174	195	184
Ballymena	1	209	327	484	606
Ballymoney	0	60	78	95	115
Banbridge	0	62	112	147	162
Belfast	4	1153	1796	2692	2686
Coleraine	1	177	262	336	308
Cookstown	1	77	101	93	132
Craigavon	3	306	420	549	563
Downpatrick	1	130	177	318	282
Dungannon	1	137	248	295	329
Enniskillen	0	140	277	339	244

Tribunal District	27/10/08 - 31/03/09	01/04/09 - 31/03/10	01/04/10 - 31/03/11	01/04/11 - 31/03/12	01/04/12 - 31/12/12
Limavady	0	91	93	140	171
Londonderry	0	231	371	560	658
Magherafelt	1	110	171	186	192
Newry	1	237	335	442	538
Newtownards	2	171	301	442	441
Omagh	2	136	202	296	261
Strabane	0	58	93	164	173
Total	18	3608	5538	7773	8045

TABLE 2. ESA APPEALS - OUTCOME DECISIONS (BY FINANCIAL YEAR / TRIBUNAL DISTRICT)

Tribunal District	1st April 2009 - 31st March 2010		1st April 2010 - 31st March 2011		1st April 2011 - 31st March 2012		1st April 2012 - 31st December 2012	
	Final Outcome	More Advantageous	Final Outcome	More Advantageous	Final Outcome	More Advantageous	Final Outcome	More Advantageous
Armagh	44	8	178	45	150	43	174	55
Ballymena	85	23	313	82	398	116	458	141
Ballymoney	22	6	79	21	72	35	75	22
Banbridge	15	5	113	29	114	29	117	32
Belfast	492	121	1732	471	2054	705	2154	690
Coleraine	88	24	223	49	259	67	224	66
Cookstown	33	10	98	36	88	25	106	35
Craigavon	123	40	333	107	479	163	438	144
Downpatrick	57	21	173	53	224	66	213	73
Dungannon	55	19	183	44	292	105	217	62
Enniskillen	45	10	210	74	292	129	209	76
Limavady	32	12	107	46	120	60	123	41
Londonderry	90	33	312	136	505	235	430	180
Magherafelt	45	12	131	24	189	59	138	45
Newry	64	20	343	84	369	89	276	85
Newtownards	76	28	270	84	324	106	353	120
Omagh	67	23	148	45	270	112	187	73
Strabane	24	9	89	31	119	49	159	68
Grand Total	1457	424	5035	1461	6318	2193	6051	2008

Employment Support Allowance

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what is the (i) target; and (ii) average actual time for appeals of Employment Support Allowance cases from the date of submission to a tribunal decision being made.

(AQW 19279/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are a number of distinct processes involved in the handling of any appeal, including Employment and Support Allowance appeals. The first stage is that handled by the Social Security Agency and extends from receipt of an appeal until a submission is made to The Appeals Service. The Social Security Agency's 2012/13 actual average clearance time target for Employment and Support Allowance appeals is 45 days.

The second stage is that handled by The Appeals Service and starts from its receipt of an appeal submission from the Agency. The Appeals Service has an administrative target relating to the listing of an appeal, which is that the first hearing will be within eight weeks of its receipt of an appeal submission. This target does not include the period from hearing to decision being made, which is the responsibility of independent judicial office holders. The average performance by The Appeals Service against its 8 week target for the period April to December 2012 was 9 weeks.

There is no composite target covering all stages, however The Appeals Service also measures the average time from its receipt of an appeal submission to the date a Notice of Decision is produced for issue to the appellant. The average performance in relation to Employment and Support Allowance appeals for the period April to December 2012 was 13 weeks. It is also worth noting that Employment and Support Allowance payments continue to be paid at the assessment rate pending the outcome of the appeal.

Benefits

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the opportunities or schemes available for people who are living on benefits to enter either full-time or part-time education without losing their full benefit entitlement.

(AQW 19330/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The means-tested Education Maintenance Allowance scheme is targeted at students, aged 16 years to 19 years, from lower income families, who wish to continue their studies, post-compulsory school age. Students who are deemed "independent", for the purposes of assessing household income, including students in care, and living in their own/rented accommodation and receiving income support, can avail of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme in Northern Ireland.

Further Education colleges offer a range of part-time further education courses, suitable to develop the job prospects and life chances of those in receipt of benefits. Concessionary fees are available for these courses, on a means-tested basis, which reflects learners' ability to pay.

Whether or not a claimant can retain their entitlement to benefit while undertaking a course of study is determined by the type of benefit they are receiving and whether the course of study is classed as full or part-time by the relevant educational establishment. The course of study being undertaken must be at a recognised educational establishment and it is the classification of the course by that establishment, rather than the number of hours that the person actually attends it, which will determine the effect on their benefit.

Rent Arrears

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what was the (i) highest; (ii) lowest; and (iii) average level of rent arrears in 2012.

(AQW 19347/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The position at 30 December 2012 is as follows: In relation to (i) the highest individual level of rent arrears was £20,800; (ii) the lowest level of individual rent arrears was 1p; and (iii) the average level of Housing Executive rent arrears was £467.78.

Note: The majority of large rent arrears were not caused by the non payment of rent but historically were due to tenants receiving Housing Benefit that they were not entitled to, which created a Housing Benefit overpayment.

Social Houses

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister for Social Development how many of the social houses built during the last five years were allocated to members of the (i) Protestant; and (ii) Roman Catholic community. **(AQW 19411/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The table below, provided by the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations, details the allocation of 'self contained' social houses built in the last five years to members of the (i) Protestant; and (ii) Roman Catholic community: -

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Total
Protestant	276	289	319	493	267	1644
Roman Catholic	577	651	753	657	723	3361

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Asset Transfer

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to seek Executive approval for Northern Ireland specific legislation on Asset Transfer to ensure parity with the rest of the UK. **(AQW 19451/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The need for new legislation to support Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland is being considered by a cross-Departmental Steering Group, supported by research and analysis and early consultation with key stakeholders.

There are important lessons to be learned from policy and practice elsewhere and my officials will ensure that the policy development process in Northern Ireland is informed by that experience.

The Steering Group will make recommendations for policy options in Northern Ireland which may have implications for legislation. The ultimate decision on whether or not legislation is necessary will rest with the Executive.

Asset Transfer

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development when he will complete his Programme for Government commitment on Asset Transfer and consult publicly on a new policy. **(AQW 19452/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The development of a policy framework to support Community Asset Transfer will contribute to the overall Programme for Government commitment to "invest in social enterprise growth to increase sustainability in the broad community sector".

A cross-departmental steering group, led by DSD, is currently considering options and developing policy proposals. I expect this steering group to bring forward proposals in April which I will share with my Executive colleagues before seeking wider views through a process of public consultation.

Asset Transfer

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development how many times the cross-departmental committee on Asset Transfer has met; and when it will report.

(AQW 19453/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The community asset transfer policy framework steering group has met twice with further meetings planned in March and April. I expect the steering group to bring forward proposals in April.

Carnegie UK Trust

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the Carnegie UK Trust research on The Enabling State; and whether he plans to follow its advice on Asset Transfer.

(AQW 19454/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Community Asset Transfer was identified in the Concordat between the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Northern Ireland Government as a means of achieving a range of community development outcomes.

The Carnegie UK Trust discussion paper identifies that the community management of assets can be a means of growing capacity and harnessing local ambition and potential. I consider that this supports the rationale for identifying Community Asset Transfer in the Programme for Government as a means of investing in social enterprise to increase sustainability in the broad community sector.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation-funded report "Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland has formed an important part of the evidence base for a Northern Ireland policy framework for Community Asset Transfer and I would expect the report to inform the work of the cross-departmental steering group which I have established to develop policy proposals.

Community Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development when he will publish a strategy on Community Asset Transfer to comply with his Programme for Government commitment .

(AQW 19456/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The development of a policy framework to support Community Asset Transfer has been identified by my Department as a means of achieving the Programme for Government commitment to "invest in social enterprise growth to increase sustainability in the broad community sector".

A cross-departmental steering group, led by DSD, is currently considering options and developing policy proposals. I expect this steering group to bring forward proposals in April which I will share with my Executive colleagues prior to seeking wider views through a process of public consultation.

Joseph Rowntree Trust

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has met the Joseph Rowntree Trust to discuss its research on Asset Transfer in the UK.

(AQW 19457/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have not met with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) although my officials attended the launch of the JRF-funded report "Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland" and have on previous occasions met with the authors of this report.

The findings and conclusions from this research form an important part of the evidence base for a Northern Ireland policy framework for Community Asset Transfer and I would expect the report to inform the work of the cross-departmental steering group which I have established to develop policy proposals.

Asset Transfer: Regeneration

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the use of Asset Transfer in regeneration; and how he will guard against liability transfer.

(AQW 19458/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Community Asset Transfer has been identified in the Programme for Government as a means of investing in social enterprise to increase sustainability in the broad community sector.

Risk management is an important part of Community Asset Transfer and extensive guidance has been developed elsewhere in the UK which will be useful to inform policy and practice in Northern Ireland.

The transfer of individual assets will in all cases need to be supported by an appropriate business case which would demonstrate sustainability. Community Asset Transfer can take different forms and will vary from case to case. The nature of the asset, the proposed plans for the asset and the capacity of the receiving organisation would all be important factors in ensuring the viability of the plan and transfer.

Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the responses on Asset Transfer that he has received from each Executive Department; and to publish the asset map arising.

(AQW 19459/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I invited all my Executive Colleagues to nominate officials to join a steering group to oversee the process of developing a policy framework for Community Asset Transfer. A steering group has been established with broad representation and is currently considering options and developing proposals. The steering group includes a representative from the Strategic Investment Board's Asset Management Unit which was established by the Executive with a remit to develop and deliver:

- a region-wide Asset Management Strategy
- departmental Asset Management Plans
- mandating ePIMS (electronic Property Information Mapping System) as a central asset database

However, the remit of the steering group itself is not to consider individual assets. The work of the steering group will result in policy proposals and will not generate an 'asset map'.

Community Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development what representations he has received on Community Asset Transfer.

(AQW 19460/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has been aware for some time of the support from the voluntary and community sector for the development of Community Asset Transfer.

My officials have already engaged with a range of stakeholders from central and local government and the third sector and conducted a number of policy development workshops in November 2012 to explore specific issues and support the work of the Steering Group.

My department is also working with the Development Trusts Northern Ireland (DTNI) as a key delivery partner to support the implementation of Community Asset Transfer policy. DTNI will engage separately with stakeholders to inform recommendations to the steering group on aspects of implementation and will also deliver a programme of awareness raising and training on Community Asset Transfer beginning next year.

I intend to commence consultation publicly on policy proposals before the summer recess.

Window Replacement Schemes: Hinges

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development what action he is taking to address concerns on the provision of hinges for window replacement schemes.

(AQW 19467/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Member is referring to the specification of hinges currently used by the Housing Executive and their plans to change the specification. I have met with industry representatives and my officials attended a meeting held between the manufacturers of the reversible hinged window and the Chief Executive and Chairman of the Housing Executive on the 5 February. I understand that the meeting was constructive and both parties explained their position. The Housing Executive explained the rationale behind its revised specification and the procurement strategy in respect of window replacement.

This is entirely an operational matter for the Housing Executive and neither I nor Departmental officials have any approval role if the Housing Executive decide to change a specification. In relation to the procurement for the window replacement requirements, the Housing Executive hope to commence this with an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice later this month.

Housing Associations

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of staff employed by (i) Apex Housing Association; (ii) Trinity Housing; (iii) Fold Housing; (iv) Clanmill Housing; (v) Ulidia Housing; (vi) Helm Housing; and (vii) Oaklee Housing, broken down by (a) grade; and (b) salary.

(AQW 19502/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department does not hold any information about the number of employees in any Housing Associations or their grade or salary.

Social Housing Proposals

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many departmental staff will be employed to oversee the new social housing proposals, broken down by grade; and what is the projected annual cost of staffing.

(AQW 19504/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is too early to say at this stage of the programme how many of my departmental staff will be utilised for the Social Housing Reform, my departmental officials are in the process of scoping the resources necessary to deliver the programme.

Currently there are 7 of my departmental staff employed on the delivery of the Social Housing Reform Programme in both a full-time and part-time basis. I have included a chart below detailing the breakdown of staffing by grade and the total annual cost for all staff involved in the programme.

Staff Grade	Number of Staff	Annual Total Cost 2012/2013
G3 (2 days per week)	1	
G5 (3 days per week)	1	
G6	1	
DP	2	
S0	1	
EOII	1	
Total	7	£354,000

Housing Executive: Rinmore and Creggan

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the rent increases for each of the 55 houses in the Rinmore and Creggan areas which transferred from the Housing Executive in the last 18 months.

(AQW 19505/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There was a total of 55 houses in Rinmore Drive, Creggan that transferred from the NIHE to Apex Housing Association. Of the 55 properties, 14 have had improvements completed with the rent charge increasing accordingly, 4 are currently undergoing improvements and the rent charge has not changed at this stage. Improvements to the remaining 37 properties have not yet commenced and the rent charge has also not changed.

The table below details the properties that have had improvements carried out with the amount charged in rent shown before and after improvements

RINMORE DRIVE

Reimproved Properties

No.	Improved Property Current Rent Charge £	Umimproved Previous Rent Charge £	
1	73.60	54.39	charges increased 04/06/12
3	71.76	54.39	charges increased 04/06/12
5	69.92	54.39	charges increased 04/06/12
7	71.76	54.39	charges increased 04/06/12
9	71.76	54.39	charges increased 11/06/12
11	71.76	54.39	charges increased 11/06/12
13	71.76	54.39	charges increased 29/10/12
15	71.76	54.39	charges increased 29/10/12
17	69.92	54.39	charges increased 29/10/12
19			
21	71.76	54.39	charges increased 29/10/12
23			
25	69.92	54.39	charges increased 05/11/12
27	69.92	54.39	charges increased 05/11/12
29	71.76	54.39	charges increased 19/11/12
31	71.76	54.39	charges increased 19/11/12

Reimprovement works not yet complete

No.	Current Rent Charge £	Previous Rent Charge £	
33	54.39	54.39	no increase in charge since 31/10/11
35	54.39	54.39	no increase in charge since 31/10/11
37	54.39	54.39	no increase in charge since 31/10/11
39	54.39	54.39	no increase in charge since 31/10/11

Note: the rent charge on the unimproved units was set by the Housing Executive in 2011/12 and will not be increased until the reimprovement works are completed.

Housing Benefit

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether the award of housing benefit will increase to match the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's rent increase in April 2013.

(AQW 19520/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that as the legislation on under-occupation in the social rented sector is unlikely to be in place from April 2013, any increase in Housing Executive rents in April will be matched by a corresponding increase in Housing Benefit.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development when he last met the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to discuss measuring poverty, future labour markets, the impact of welfare reform; and what was the outcome of the meeting.

(AQW 19525/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have not met with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) to discuss measuring poverty, future labour markets or the impact of welfare reform.

However, my officials, along with colleagues from other Departments, have met with JRF in relation to the development of the longer term approach to the Delivering Social Change (DSC) Framework. This Framework, as you are no doubt aware, has been established by the Executive to achieve a sustained reduction in poverty and disadvantage, and, as such, encompasses the issues you have raised in your question.

Officials will continue to keep in contact with JRF to exchange ideas and information as the work on DSC progresses.

Community Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development when he will respond to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation publication by Queen's University Belfast on Asset Transfer.

(AQW 19528/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is not seeking formal responses to the report. However officials of my Department attended the launch of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation-funded report "Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland" and have on previous occasions met with the authors of this report.

The findings and conclusions from this research will be part of the evidence base for a Northern Ireland policy framework for Community Asset Transfer and I would expect the report to inform the work of the cross-departmental steering group which I have established to develop policy proposals.

Community Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development when he will finalise his consultative paper on Asset Transfer for consultation.

(AQW 19529/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A cross-departmental steering group, led by DSD, is currently considering options and developing policy proposals to support Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland. I expect this steering group to bring forward proposals in April which I will share with my Executive colleagues prior to seeking wider views through a process of public consultation.

Community Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has made a decision on whether a stronger legislative framework is required to underpin his forthcoming community Asset Transfer strategy.

(AQW 19530/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The need for new legislation to support Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland is being considered by a cross-Departmental Steering Group, supported by research and analysis and early consultation with key stakeholders.

I am aware that legislation forms part of the enabling framework for Community Asset Transfer in the rest of the UK and there are important lessons to be learned from policy and practice elsewhere. My officials will ensure that the policy development process in Northern Ireland is informed by that experience.

The Steering Group will make recommendations for policy options in Northern Ireland which may have implications for legislation.

Community Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development when he will seek Executive approval for a policy on Community Asset Transfer.

(AQW 19531/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A cross-departmental steering group, led by DSD, is currently considering options and developing policy proposals to support Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland. I expect this steering group to bring forward proposals in April which I will share with my Executive colleagues before seeking wider views through a process of public consultation.

Formal Executive approval of proposals will be sought following public consultation, when I have had the opportunity to consider the views and comments of stakeholders.

Community Asset Transfer

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the potential for guidelines and policies alone to change the culture of the public sector on Asset Transfer.

(AQW 19532/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A cross-departmental steering group, led by DSD, is currently considering options and developing policy proposals. The need for new legislation to support Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland is being considered by a cross-Departmental Steering Group, supported by research and analysis and early consultation with key stakeholders.

In seeking to create a more enabling environment for Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland the steering group will be aiming to address current barriers to implementation, to raise the profile of Asset Transfer as an option and to increase capacity and skills within the public sector. The need for legislation will form part of this work.

In keeping with the general advice from the Office of the Legislative Counsel, legislation will be considered only where it is necessary in order to achieve outcomes which cannot be achieved by other means.

Northern Ireland Gambling Operators Licence

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development what are the potential consequences of Northern Ireland not requiring remote gambling operators to obtain a licence, given the requirements in the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 19533/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the rest of the United Kingdom, remote gambling operators are only required to obtain a licence from the Gambling Commission if they are based in Great Britain. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport is currently consulting on an amendment to the law so that all remote gambling operators supplying consumers in Great Britain - regardless of where they are based - will be required to have a license.

In the Republic of Ireland, there is currently no requirement for remote gambling operators, whether based in the jurisdiction or targeting its consumers, to obtain a licence. Work on legislation, which will introduce a new regulatory and licensing regime, is currently underway and my Department is monitoring the progress of this.

In Northern Ireland, it is currently the case that remote gambling operators, based in the jurisdiction or targeting its consumers, are not required to obtain a licence. I am currently discussing this issue with the relevant DCMS Minister and the outcome of these discussions, along with the outcome of work currently being carried out by the European Commission will inform how online gambling, including its operators, will be regulated within Northern Ireland. If appropriate, provisions in respect of this will be included within the proposed Betting, Gaming Lotteries and Amusements Bill.

Northern Ireland Gambling Operators Licence

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of his Department's Review of Gambling, what concerns he has about Northern Ireland being the only part of the UK that will not require remote gambling operators to obtain a licence.

(AQW 19534/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I would refer the member to the answer previously supplied to AQW 19533/11-15.

Protection of Consumers who Bet Online

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development what provision his Department is considering for the protection of consumers who bet online.

(AQW 19535/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I would refer the member to the answer previously supplied to AQW 19415/11-15.

Community Asset Transfer

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development what training and capability-building his Department will provide to voluntary and community organisations on Asset Transfer and building better capacity.

(AQW 19536/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department is funding the Development Trusts Northern Ireland as a key delivery partner to support the implementation of Community Asset Transfer policy. They will advise on the level of both monetary and non-monetary support required to facilitate successful Community Asset Transfer and will develop and deliver resources tailored to Northern Ireland circumstances. This will include awareness raising, practical advice, training and active support for a number of demonstration projects.

Housing Executive's Housing Stock

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what is the total value of the Housing Executive's housing stock.

(AQW 19537/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that at 31 March 2012 the total value of their housing stock was £3,335,134,000. However, it should be noted this is not the value that could be realised from transferring the stock as social housing.

Departmental Warm Home Projects

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what length of warranty is given on boilers fitted to homes under departmental warm home projects, such as those fitted by Eaga.

(AQW 19585/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Warm Homes Scheme is delivered on behalf of the Department for Social Development by Bryson Charitable Group and H&A Mechanical Services. Both Scheme Managers offer a 2 year warranty on their boilers, as required by the Technical Specification section of the contract documents. They also offer a 1 year warranty on the heating installations.

EAGA offered a 2 year warranty on the workmanship on their heating installations during The Warm Homes Scheme between 1st June 2001 and 30th June 2009.

Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the rationale for removing the requirement that all new social housing is built to a minimum of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3; and what impact this will have on fuel poverty.

(AQW 19592/11-15)

Mr McCausland: From this financial year, my Department has removed the mandatory requirement that all new social housing should be built to at least Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, in favour of improved building regulations which came into operation in October 2012.

Some aspects of the Code placed unnecessary prescriptive specifications on housing associations that in some cases added considerably to construction costs and stifled innovation. The new building regulations now cover those elements of the Code that the Department considers essential, in particular those relating to thermal efficiencies and carbon reductions. Both are required to bear down on fuel poverty which is a key issue for my Department.

Part F - 'conservation of fuel and power' - of the new building regulations represent thermal efficiencies and carbon reductions of 25% over and above the previous 2006 levels. Critically, these new levels are broadly comparable to those in Level 3 of the Code, so that the impact on fuel poverty is maintained.

The position now is that standards for social housing have been harmonised with those for private housing development.

Whilst building to Level 3 is no longer mandatory, I have retained the option to build to this specification and additional grant is available for those housing associations who wish to do so.

Disabled Facilities Grant: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of applications for Disabled Facilities Grant in the North Down area since 2010; (ii) the number that were rejected; (iii) the number accepted; and (iv) the number awaiting a decision.

(AQW 19610/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applications in the North Down Council area for the period 1 April 2010 to 31 January 2013, 188 were received. Of these; 63 were cancelled, 42 were approved and 83 are pending.

*The Housing Executive has advised that a DFG is a mandatory grant which is means tested and is available for works recommended by an Occupational Therapist. If it has been cancelled, it is at the applicant's request only. They also advise they do not reject DFG applications; however applicants must go through a Test of Resources before proceeding.

Economic Regeneration Projects in the North Down Constituency

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the economic regeneration projects funded in each Neighbourhood Renewal Area of North Down, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19615/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There is one Neighbourhood Renewal Area in North Down - the Kilcooley Neighbourhood in Bangor. Details of the economic regeneration projects, that have been funded over the last three years are as follows:

Project name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Kilcooley Healthy Living Centre Social Economy Project	£0.00	£0.00	£95,159.12
Kilcooley Women's Centre Step - Training and job preparation Project	£45,369.00	£44,289.32	£45,100.32

Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development what was the total spend on hospitality by his Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19630/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total spend on hospitality in my Department in the 2011-12 financial year was £23,374.97

Assessment Process for Benefits

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will consider any changes to the medical assessment process for benefits in light of the comments made by the Chair of the Westminster Public Accounts Committee, that the view of the Department of Works and Pensions that appeals against decisions of medical assessments for benefit entitlement are an inherent part of the process was an unduly complacent view.

(AQW 19650/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Work Capability Assessment process has been developed with the support of healthcare professionals and the involvement of a number of different charities. In accordance with the legislative requirement set out in Section 10 of the Welfare Reform Act (Northern Ireland) 2007, has to date conducted three reviews of the Work Capability Assessment process, the latest of which was laid before the Assembly in November 2012. A further independent review is planned for 2013.

Improvements made to date include the recent changes to the cancer descriptors, changes to forms, changes to training for Health Care Professionals, introduction of increased customer contact through pre-disallowance calls and the introduction of Mental Health Function Champions.

The right to appeal is a legislative requirement for the majority of social security benefits, including Employment and Support Allowance, and therefore an inherent part of resolving any dispute between an individual and my Department about their entitlement to a social security benefit.

Voluntary Sector: Delivery Support Arrangements

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to engage formally with the volunteering sector as part of his review of delivery support arrangements.

(AQW 19680/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In order to successfully implement Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy I am committed to ensuring that there is effective infrastructure support for volunteering. My officials are presently developing options for this infrastructure support for my consideration. Officials will be meeting with existing providers during February to discuss any proposed new arrangements which I expect to be put in place later this year. Until then existing funding arrangements will be rolled forward to ensure the continued support for volunteering.

Voluntary Sector: Delivery Support Arrangements

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the timeframe to which his Department is working to in the review of delivery support arrangements for the voluntary sector.

(AQW 19681/11-15)

Mr McCausland: New Regional Infrastructure Support arrangements came into effect from October 2012. Under the new arrangements generic infrastructure support will be provided to the Voluntary and Community Sector by a consortium comprising NICVA, Community Evaluation Northern Ireland, Rural Community Network and CO3. Support will also be provided for the faith sector through Churches Community Work Alliance and for the voluntary advice sector through a consortium comprising of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Advice NI and the Law Centre.

Interim support is being provided for volunteering and for women in disadvantaged and rural areas until new arrangements are developed. I expect the new arrangements in these areas to be put in place later this year.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many agency staff were employed in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in each month of the last two years.

(AQW 19704/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the number of agency staff employed by them, by month, in the last two years is shown in the table below:

Month	2011/12	2012/13
April	49	123
May	59	151
June	69	143
July	64	138
August	66	143
September	78	147
October	77	184
November	79	233
December	88	249
January	96	296
February	112	-

Month	2011/12	2012/13
March	116	-

The Housing Executive employ Agency staff due to significant urgent resourcing needs which arose for issues such as;

- the need for Technical staff to meet the demands of an increase in their Planned Maintenance programme;
- the need for Housing Maintenance Officers and administrative staff to meet an increase in work arising from the introduction of new Response Maintenance Contracts; and
- the ongoing need to resource the administration of Housing Benefit.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Policy: Agency Staff

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the Northern Ireland Housing Executive policy regarding the use of agency staff.
(AQW 19705/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that where a resourcing need arises of an urgent, short term, temporary or unknown duration, at entry level grade or for specific specialist posts, they will seek to meet that need either through a temporary employment contract or through engaging the services of an agency worker. Where these circumstances arise, agency workers are managed within the provisions of the agency workers regulations.

Regional Housing Body

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what is the estimated cost of (i) transferring the Housing Executive's housing stock to the Housing Associations; and (ii) the establishment of a new Regional Housing Body, including any redundancies which may arise.
(AQW 19708/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My proposals are a high level vision and provide a strategic direction of travel which the Executive has agreed to explore. Going forward, as part of the detailed design phase, the cost of the proposed new structures will be explored. This will involve further analysis including financial consideration, economic appraisals and engagement with key stakeholders.

Therefore, at this early stage, I am unable to provide an estimated cost for transferring the Housing Executive stock and the establishment of a new Regional Housing Body.

Assessment of Empty Dwellings

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has carried out an assessment of empty dwellings, including the number, quality and value of the stock.
(AQW 19709/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A pilot exercise to test the effectiveness and cost of various interventions was carried out in the Fortwilliam and Upper Newtownards Road areas of Belfast. This pilot showed that there is a lack of accurate information about the number of empty homes. My officials are currently preparing a new Empty Homes Strategy and are working with colleagues in the Department of Finance and Personnel to address this shortfall.

Schemes for Empty Dwellings

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has considered introducing a compulsory purchase scheme or compulsory possession scheme to bring empty dwellings back into use.

(AQW 19710/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has a variety of powers that it can use in relation to empty homes. These range from the issue of a repair notice (Article 41 of the 1981 Housing order) to having the power to take possession of unoccupied houses (Article 60 of the 1981 Housing Order).

One of the aims of the Empty Homes Strategy and action plan which is currently being developed will be to look at the effectiveness of the current legislation and if required bring forward proposals for legislative change.

DSD: Civil Servants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of civil servants in his Department, and the public sector organisations funded by his Department, who have (i) been made redundant; and (ii) involuntarily lost their jobs in each of the last two years.

(AQW 19711/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No civil servants have been made redundant in my Department during the 2010/11 or 2011/12 financial years. Although no staff were made compulsorily redundant in the public sector organisations funded by my Department, in 2010/11 two staff in the Housing Executive volunteered for redundancy and were released.

During the 2010/11 financial year a total of 40 civil servants in my Department were dismissed. In addition, a total of 32 staff were dismissed from the Housing Executive.

During the 2011/12 financial year a total of 25 civil servants in my Department were dismissed. In addition, a total of 27 staff were dismissed from the Housing Executive and Ilex.

Alcohol Licensing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how many responses to the consultation on alcohol licensing are advocating closing times for pubs and clubs beyond 2.00am.

(AQW 19715/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The public consultation on "Proposed changes to the law regulating the sale and supply of alcohol in Northern Ireland" attracted wide interest within the community with over 2500 responses received. The vast majority of responses were from members of the public, with 140 responses received from organisations, including drinks industry groups, retailers, health bodies, local alcohol advice services, councils, political parties, charities and faith groups.

It is important that officials carefully consider the various views on the wide range of proposals in the consultation, including the proposal to introduce occasional late opening which will extend late opening hours to 2.00am.

Due to the high response to the consultation it is taking longer than normal for officials to finalise a draft report on the outcome of the consultation. I have asked for a draft report to be with me by the end of February and it will be discussed with the Social Development Committee before I decide the way forward.

When the report is finalised I will arrange for a copy to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Temporary Accommodation

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in North Down are registered as living in temporary accommodation.

(AQW 19722/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the table below details the number of households placed in temporary accommodation by the Housing Executive in response to their homelessness duties in their Bangor District Office area at 12 February 2013.

Household type	NIHE Hostel	Voluntary Sector Hostel	Private Sector	Total
Singles	2	8	10	20
Families	4	2	13	19
Total	6	10	23	39

It is important to note that there are other self referral hostels in Bangor which the Housing Executive would not be aware of.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in North Down have been in receipt of Disability Living Allowance in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 19723/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the number of Disability Living Allowance recipients in North Down in each year from August 2003 to August 2012.

Year	*DLA Recipients
Aug-03	4,110
Aug-04	4,360
Aug-05	4,540
Aug-06	4,710
Aug-07	4,860
Aug-08	4,930
Aug-09	5,030
Aug-10	5,220
Aug-11	5,340
Aug-12	5,540

* The figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority

Heating Upgrade Schemes

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the heating upgrade schemes that the Housing Executive has planned for the Derry City Council area in 2013/14; and whether funding has been secured for all the planned schemes.

(AQW 19752/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- Benevenagh, Blighs Gardens/Lane 86 dwellings
- Ederowen/Elaghmore 62 dwellings
- Waterside Heating 75 dwellings
(addresses to be confirmed)

Funding is in place for these schemes, however the Waterside heating scheme has a current Date of Possession (DOP) of March 2014 and is unlikely to account for significant expenditure in 2013/14, unless it can be advanced within the programme.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Benefit Claimants

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to account for the difference in the number of housing benefit claimants between The Mount area of East Belfast, which had 1380 claimants in June 2012, and the Gilnahirk area of East Belfast, which had 40 claimants in June 2012.

(AQW 19769/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive does not hold information on the number of Housing Benefit claimants on the geographic basis set out in the question. They advise that The Mount is part of their East Belfast District which has a total of 7,627 Housing Benefit claimants; and Gilnahirk is part of their Castlereagh District which has a total of 4,109 Housing Benefit claimants.

The Housing Executive further advises that, in general terms, differences between the levels of Housing Benefit uptake in different areas depends on a number of factors including population levels, housing density, housing tenure types and income levels

Benefit Claimants

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the impact of Welfare Reform on the level of benefit claimants, given that in April 2012 40.3 percent of all constituents, aged 16 years and over, in East Belfast were claiming at least one social security benefit.

(AQW 19770/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Welfare reform will simplify and streamline the current benefits' system introducing 'Universal Credit' as a single working age benefit to replace Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and income-related Employment and Support Allowance. Personal Independence Payment will replace Disability Living Allowance for working age people.

The impact on the level of benefit claimants will not be fully known until Universal Credit is implemented, however it is expected that due to the claim process being simplified with a single claim being made to one organisation, Universal Credit may improve benefit take-up compared to the current levels and taking account of the existing range of benefits. Each person will be assessed, taking account of individual circumstances and as now, awards will be made on the basis of entitlement.

Entitlement e.g. to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), will be based on how a person's condition affects their daily life, not the underlying condition itself as this may impact differently from person to person. This new benefit will have a better balance to take into account the needs of those with

mental health, intellectual, cognitive and developmental impairments. Through greater use of evidence, periodic review and reassessment the intention is that the new benefit will enable a more accurate assessment of an individual's ongoing entitlement to make sure support is reaching those who need it most.

The impact on the level of benefit claimants for those currently in receipt of DLA and who might in the future have entitlement to PIP is not yet fully known however it is intended that the first of two planned independent reviews of the PIP assessment will be completed by the end of 2014. This will allow for any findings to be considered, and any necessary changes made before the majority of Disability Living Allowance recipients begin to be reassessed from October 2015.

Maintenance Schemes

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) kitchen; (ii) window; and (iii) external cyclical maintenance schemes that have been carried out in (a) the Shankill ward; (ii) the Glencairn ward; (iii) the Highfield ward; and (iv) North Belfast, in each of the last three years and this year to date; and the cost of each scheme.

(AQW 19773/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency or by Council Ward. However, the table below details all planned maintenance schemes for the Housing Executive's Shankill and North Belfast District Office areas in each of the last three years and the current financial year, including the estimated cost of each scheme.

Year	Scheme Type	Scheme Name	Estimated Cost
2009/10	North Belfast		
	Ext Cyclic Maint	Fairhill/Waveney	£446,504
	Ext Cyclic Maint	Mount Vernon/Ross House	£252,200
	Kitchens	Brookfield/Butler/Elmfield	£488,165
	Kitchens	Glenrosa	£350,743
	Kitchens	Ballybone Phase 1/2	£351,969
	Kitchens	Midland/Duncairn Phase 2	£169,845
	Kitchens	Ashfield Court	£363,156
	Kitchens	The Bone Phase 3	£330,104
	Shankill		
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Agnes/Berlin Streets	£972,969
2010/11	North Belfast		
	Ext Cyclic Maint	Graymount/Parkmount/ Downview	£490,356
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Jamaica/Havanna	£276,323
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	White City Ph1 Windows	£243,999
	Kitchens	Skegoniel Kitchens	£281,084
	Shankill		
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Berlin/Cambrai	£778,771
	Kitchens	West Circular	£313,948

Year	Scheme Type	Scheme Name	Estimated Cost
	Kitchens	Ainsworth	£302,952
	Kitchens	Lawnbrook / Upper Shankill	£556,969
2011/12	North Belfast		
	Double Glazing	Mountcollyer Windows	£63,005
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	White City Ph 2 Windows	£392,000
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Queen Victoria Garden Flats	£61,526
	Kitchens	Bruslee/Pinkerton	£451,569
	Kitchens	Silverstream/Ballysillan	£750,333
	Shankill		
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Glencairn Windows	£282,270
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Highfield Windows	£514,017
	Kitchens	Huss/Ashmore	£263,488
	Kitchens	Mid Shankill Phase 1	£277,298
	Kitchens	Lower Shankill	£498,463
2012/13	North Belfast		
	Double Glazing	Fairyknowe	£185,789
	Double Glazing	New Lodge Upper	£213,943
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	New Lodge Upper	£138,700
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Midland/Lower Duncairn	£121,959
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Lower Ligoniel/Glenbank	£223,384
	Kitchens	Tyndale/Silverstream	£656,229
	Kitchens	New Lodge Ex URA	£258,162
	Kitchens	Shore Crescent	£319,830
	Kitchens	White City	£678,438
	Shankill		
	Double Glazing	Woodvale/Donaldson	£298,108
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Woodvale/Twaddell	£289,688
	Ext Cyclic Maint.	Lower Shankill	£352,261
	Kitchens	Mid Shankill Phase 2	£490,621
	Kitchens	Mid Shankill Phase 3	£704,371
	Kitchens	Mid Shankill 4 Tudor	£323,897

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Executive Properties: Cavity Walls

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many Northern Ireland Housing Executive homes in Harpurs Hill and the Heights areas of Coleraine do not have cavity walls and are therefore prevented from getting cavity wall insulation.

(AQW 19785/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that their records indicate that they have 126 properties in Harpurs Hill and 62 properties in The Heights which do not have cavity walls.

Housing Allocation

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, if the proposed break up of the Housing Executive proceeds, who would have responsibility for allocating housing.

(AQW 19832/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Under the proposed new structures for social housing, the Regional Housing Body would be responsible for the administration of the social allocations policy and the independent assessment of need.

Housing Executive

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the impact of the proposed break up of the Housing Executive on its staff.

(AQW 19833/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My proposals for new housing structures are about providing a better service for tenants, better quality housing and also a structure and a sustainable system that ensures good value for money for the taxpayer. This is not about cutting back or saving money and is not about cutting jobs.

We are at the early stage of a major project and there is still much work to be done with the design of the new Social Housing structures. It is not possible to be precise about the impacts on staff at this early stage, but there can be no doubt, that the reform of Social Housing structures will have implications for existing staff within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

However, it is important to stress that the functions that are currently carried out by the Housing Executive are functions which will still have to be carried out, grants will still have to be awarded, properties will still have to be managed; all of those different functions will still take place under the new structures and it will require staff to do so. I want to stress that this is a restructuring process: the vast majority of staff in the Housing Executive will continue to deliver the services they currently deliver, albeit within a different organisation.

My Department and I remain committed to working closely with the NIHE Board, Housing Executive Staff and NIPSA throughout this process. Indeed, shortly after the issue of my written statement, departmental officials held an initial meeting with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Director of Personnel & Management Services to address primary staff concerns and to agree to work jointly to allay staff anxieties. Both the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and DSD officials will continue to engage with NIPSA as the representative of the vast majority of staff in the Housing Executive on the new structures.

Housing Executive Properties: Cavity Walls

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) number; and (ii) location of housing executive properties in the Lagan Valley constituency that do not have cavity walls.

(AQW 19840/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the Housing Executive's

records indicate the following numbers and locations within its Lisburn and Banbridge District office areas that do not have cavity walls:

- 17 Aluminium Bungalows at Barley Hill, Lisburn
- 406 No Fines dwellings in Old Warren estate, Lisburn
- 141 Orlit dwellings in Knockmore estate, Lisburn
- 19 Aluminium Bungalows at Huntly, Banbridge
- 3 Aluminium Bungalows at Kiltarriff, Rathfriland
- 10 Aluminium Bungalows at Dunbarton, Woodlands
- 3 No Fines dwellings at Bodell Place, Seapatrick, Banbridge
- 3 Orlit dwellings at Dromara Road, Drone Hill Road and Killysorrell Road
- 14 Cross wall dwellings at Parkhill, Dromore *
- 8 Cross wall dwellings at Highfield gardens, Banbridge *
- 3 Cross wall dwellings at Maryville Park/Crescent, Banbridge *

* Cross wall dwellings can be cavity or non-cavity but the Housing Executive's records does not hold this information

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the options available to constituents to make payments to the Child Maintenance Enforcement Division (CMED); and whether CMED can compel people, who have a good payment history, to pay using a specific method.

(AQW 19844/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The most effective method of paying child maintenance is through a family based arrangement and the Child Maintenance Service promotes and supports parents to do this through the Child maintenance Choices Service.

When a family based arrangement is not possible an application is made to the statutory scheme. The preferred method of collection is then 'Maintenance Direct', whereby the child maintenance payments once assessed, are made directly to the parent with care by the non-resident parent.

Where this method of payment is not possible, the Child Maintenance Service has the legislative authority to select the most appropriate method of collection in any given circumstances. The use of direct debit or deductions from earnings orders provide the greatest level of assurance for the parent with care as these methods of collection are more automated and usually more compliant than other arrangements.

Jobs and Benefits Office

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people living in the (i) Andersonstown Jobs & Benefits Office; (ii) North Belfast Jobs & Benefits Office; (iii) Falls Road Jobs & Benefits Office; (iv) Shaftesbury Square Jobs & Benefits Office; (v) Hollywood Road Jobs & Benefits Office; (vi) Shankill Jobs & Benefits Office; (vii) Knockbreda Jobs & Benefits Office; (viii) Foyle Jobs & Benefits Office; and (ix) Lisnagelvin Jobs & Benefits Office catchment areas.

(AQW 19954/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available. The reason for this is that the boundaries of the Jobs & Benefits Offices do not overlap with any administrative geographies for which population figures are available.

Pay-As-You-Go Oil Scheme

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the pilot Pay-As-You-Go oil scheme; and whether this scheme is to be extended throughout Northern Ireland.

(AQW 19958/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has been working with Kingspan Renewables and Carillion Energy Services on a pilot Pay as You Go for Oil system. The pilot commenced in February 2012 and the participants included Housing Executive tenants, householders who had been assisted through the Warm Homes Scheme and private referrals. The homes were in Dungannon, Coalisland, Newcastle and Camlough. The technology was installed in 17 low income households with the aim of testing the technology and the process. Carillion completed an evaluation of the pilot and the Housing Executive also completed an evaluation. The convenience of using the Pay as You Go for Oil system was highlighted as a major benefit. However, the results of the pilot survey were disappointing regarding the proportion of participants benefiting from lower oil costs.

There are two crucial issues around the cost and delivery of introducing a Pay as You Go Oil system into the Department's mainstream energy efficiency improvement schemes:

- costs associated with production and administration of the Pay as You Go Oil scheme; and
- who will supply the oil to the customer.

Departmental economists have serious concerns about the feasibility of the Pay as You Go Oil scheme from a cost/benefit perspective. I have considered all of the information available from the pilot and the opinion of the Departmental economists I have concluded that it is not feasible to introduce the Pay as You Go Oil scheme into my Department's energy efficiency improvements schemes.

Welfare Reform Legislation: Victims of the Troubles

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development whether special provision will be made for victims of the Troubles in the Welfare Reform legislation; and whether consideration is being given to having a disregard and compensation payment similar to that for the victims of the 2005 London bombings.

(AQW 19960/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The compensation payments made to the victims of the 2005 London bombings are disregarded for the purposes of income-related benefits and this will continue under Universal Credit which will replace the income-related benefits for working age people. These payments are disregarded for income-related benefit purposes as they are from a charitable source.

Payments to victims of the Troubles are made by the Victims and Survivors Service, based on individual assessed needs and the provision of high-quality services to meet those needs. The Victims and Survivors Service is currently set up as a company limited by guarantee and payments made from it cannot be disregarded for income-related benefit purposes as they are not from a charitable source.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether there are exemptions in the Welfare Reform Bill for members of (i) the armed forces; and (ii) the PSNI; and to detail any such exemptions.

(AQW 20085/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Welfare Reform Bill is an enabling Bill and the detail, including exemptions, will be in the Regulations. Regulations will be brought to the Social Development Committee for scrutiny in due course.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 22 February 2013

(AQW 18266/11-15)

The adopted version of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) will set out the Department's conclusions on the number of new houses required for each council area. I am currently working closely with officials to finalise the plan policies and proposals. The Department is currently assessing the recommendations contained within the Planning Appeals Commission's (PAC) reports which were produced following the Public Inquiry.

It would be inappropriate to release the figures you requested ahead of the publication of the adopted plan, but I did publish the PAC report on BMAP in 2012 as I believed it was necessary and reasonable for people to see its recommendations.



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