

Written Answers to Questions

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Written Answers to Questions

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 2 May 2014

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Use of Social Media

Mr Boylan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given their responsibility for fostering good relations and tackling hate crime, how the use of social media to incite hatred over recent events can be addressed.

(AQO 3121/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): We remain committed to fostering good relations and to tackling issues of hate crime.

Social media has developed very quickly over the last number of years and as such is a largely unregulated area. It is clearly the duty of those using such sites, and the owners of such sites, to ensure they are used in a legal and responsible way.

Educating young people on the responsible use of social media forms an aspect of one of the projects funded under the Contested Spaces Programme. We will look closely at what lessons can be learned from that project and how they might be applied on a wider stage.

Executive Board of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions have taken place between their Department and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to maximise the effectiveness of the Northern Ireland representation on the Executive Board of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety.

(AQW 31636/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety currently represents the Executive on the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS).

We are of the view that DHSSPS is best placed to represent the Executive's interests on the Council given its overall responsibility for child protection and its oversight of the work that Safeguarding Board NI is taking forward on Child Internet Safety.

Attendance by DHSSPS officials helps to ensure that that work is informed by and consistent with policy developments and best practice in the other jurisdictions and we fully support DHSSPS's continued representation. Any discussions which have taken place at official level have served to underline that position.

Civil Service: Gender Balance

Mr McGimpsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the gender balance of senior civil servants within their Department.

(AQO 5824/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The current gender balance of senior civil servants within OFMDFM is 22.7% female and 77.3% male (5 females out of 22 staff).

While slightly below the NICS average for the grade (32.5% at 1 January 2012), this figure tends to fluctuate as senior staff transfer in and out of the Department and has been recorded at higher levels in the past.

It is important to recognise that the senior civil service is a corporate resource for the NICS. At departmental level, given the small numbers of staff involved, the transfer of one or two staff can have a disproportionate impact on the overall position. It is therefore our assessment that the gender balance at senior level within OFMDFM is broadly in line with the rest of the NICS.

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why Northern Ireland does not have representation on the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission.

(AQW 32335/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Welfare Reform Act 2012 amended the Child Poverty Act 2010 to create the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. The Assembly must give its consent for Northern Ireland to be represented on this Commission. This matter is under consideration.

We continue to report against the targets in Child Poverty Act 2010 and are consulted in the development of the UK Child Poverty Strategy.

Super-Injunctions

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether at any time their Department has funded or contributed to the costs of legal proceedings brought in the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland, or elsewhere, involving the prohibition of publicity on the granting of injunctive relief, commonly referred to as super-injunctions.

(AQW 32485/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our Department has not funded or contributed to costs for any such legal proceedings.

Maze/Long Kesh Project: Unspent Funds

Mr Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how much funding was allocated to the Maze/Long Kesh project, including the peace centre; (ii) how much of this funding remains within their departmental budget as a result of the full regeneration project not being pursued; (iii) how much of the unspent funding will be available in their budget for 2014/15; and (iv) how much of the unspent funding was allocated to other Departments for spending in the (a) 2013/14; and (b) 2014/15 financial year.

(AQW 32537/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

- (i) In 2013/14 the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation (MLK DC) was allocated a budget of £7.3m from our Department. £974k has been spent on the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre project primarily made up of EU funding and Heritage Lottery funding. £540k EU funding which had been drawn down has since been repaid.
- (ii) As a result of the full regeneration project not being pursued at present, the remaining Departmental budget the MLK Development Corporation had for 2013/14 was £3.4m.
- (iii) Unspent funding for 2013/14 is not carried forward to the 2014/15 allocation.
- (iv) Our Department surrendered £3.5m to the Department of Finance and Personnel in 2013/14 for their reallocation. The remainder was reallocated within this Department.

Please note, rounding applies to all the figures cited above.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, prior to bringing forward the Reservoirs Bill (NIA 31/11-15), why she did not utilise legislation that is currently in place under Article 297 of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 which enables the making of regulations with respect to the construction, inspection, maintenance and repair of reservoirs and dams.

(AQW 32876/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Article 297 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006 was considered prior to the decision being made by the Executive for my Department to bring forward the Reservoirs Bill. This Article was discounted for two reasons. Firstly, as the 2006 Order deals with the provision of water and sewerage services, it could be argued that Article 297, which provides the Department for Regional Development with powers to bring forward regulations, could only be used to regulate the safety of reservoirs used for water supply purposes. This Article may not have been able to be used to regulate other public sector, private or 3rd sector reservoirs. Secondly, the scope of Article 297 is limited to construction, inspection, maintenance and repair. It does not cover such issues as enforcement, either civil or criminal; emergency powers; powers of entry; or Grant aid. It was therefore considered to be insufficient to enable a comprehensive reservoir safety regime to be introduced in the north.

Department Headquarters in Ballykelly

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much, in financial terms, will the development of Ballykelly cost regarding the relocation of her Department's headquarters.

(AQW 32877/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The estimated cost of development at the former military barracks in Ballykelly to facilitate the construction of my headquarters is approximately £19.9m. This represents new accommodation for 600 workstations and the provision of a new access road to the site.

Management of Single Farm Payment Review of Decisions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the management of Single Farm Payment Review of Decisions at (i) Stage One; and (ii) Stage Two.

(AQW 32897/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has reviewed the management of both Stages of the Review of Decisions process and changes to improve performance have been implemented. In 2013, targets for clearing both Stage 1 and Stage 2 reviews were exceeded and during the period 1 January and 31 December 417 Stage 1 and 82 Stage 2 cases were cleared.

Single Farm Payments Review of Decisions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department has improved the timescales involved in the Single Farm Payments Review of Decisions process.

(AQW 32898/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has reviewed both the resources and systems involved in processing Review of Decisions applications.

As a result of changes made, in 2013, the Stage 1 timescales have reduced to an average of 149 days and the Stage 2 timescales have reduced to an average of 536 days. The total number of days includes weekend, public and privilege holidays.

Single Farm Payments Review of Decisions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the current average waiting times between lodging an appeal and determination at (i) Stage One; and (ii) Stage Two reviews of Single Farm Payments Review of Decisions.

(AQW 32899/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In 2013, the average time between lodging a request for review and final determination is 149 days at Stage 1 and 536 days at Stage 2.

This represents an improvement on the average time taken to clear reviews, which in 2012, averaged 186 calendar days for Stage 1 and 1,383 calendar days for Stage 2. The total number of days includes weekends, public and privilege holidays.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how successful her Department has been in tackling and reducing the incidence rates of bovine TB in cattle.

(AQW 32966/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In the past 16 months TB herd incidence has fallen from 7.46% to 6.34% at 28 February 2014. While there has been a 12.7 % reduction in the number of new herd breakdowns during 2013 when compared with 2012, there has been an even greater 24.1% reduction in the number of animals removed as reactors in the same period. During 2013, there were 1,479 new herd breakdowns and 8,271 animals removed as reactors, which is significantly less than 1,695 new herd breakdowns and 10,897 reactors in 2012.

This reduction demonstrates the effectiveness of my Department's response to TB. However I am not complacent and it is my aim to achieve a sustained and progressive reduction towards the ultimate eradication of TB in cattle here.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the (i) number of cattle slaughtered; and (ii) the money spent on compensation, for bovine TB infection and prevention measures over each year since the eradication programme began.

(AQW 32968/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The eradication programme including the compulsory tuberculin testing of cattle began in 1959. As such a long period is covered the data sources are different and in some places incomplete. Unfortunately no data is available for the first 2 years of the programme.

- (i) The numbers of animals slaughtered were recorded by financial year from 1961/62 to 1993/94, and by calendar year since 1995. See Table 1.

Considerable caution is required in interpreting this data over the long term due to changes in both the programme and the financial environment over time.

In terms of the numbers of cattle slaughtered it is important to recognise that the programme has never been static. It has evolved continuously over this time to adapt to new international requirements, disease patterns and scientific advancements.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF ANIMALS SLAUGHTERED FOR TB CONTROL IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND BETWEEN 1961 AND 2014.

Year	Reactors	Negative in Contacts	Total number slaughtered
1961/62	3,288	12	3,300
1962/63	1,515	15	1,530
1963/64	958	6	964
1964/65	644	4	648
1965/66	417	15	432
1966/67	621	12	633
1967/68	724	243	1,267
1968/69	329	7	336
1969/70	318	4	322
1970/71	229	3	232
1971/72	161	2	163
1972/73	462	0	462
1973/74	616	7	623
1974/75	819	24	843
1975/76	1,264	198	1,462
1976/77	1,430	107	1,537
1977/78	1,448	175	1,623
1978/79	984	118	1,102
1979/80	1,243	31	1,274
1980/81	1,668	425	2,093
1981/82	1,282	320	1,602
1982/83	1,406	337	1,743
1983/84	1,451	164	1,615
1984/85	1,361	275	1,636
1985/86	1,250	177	1,427
1986/87	908	122	1,030
1987/88	1,022	235	1,257
1988/89	1,542	235	1,777
1989/90	n/a	n/a	n/a
1990/91	2,510	281	2,791
1991/92	4,371	611	4,982
1992/93	4,479	763	5,242

Year	Reactors	Negative in Contacts	Total number slaughtered
1993/94	6,115	865	6,980
1995	3650	n/a	n/a
1996	4080	n/a	n/a
1997	5063	n/a	n/a
1998	7188	n/a	n/a
1999	8,604	551	9,155
2000	9,498	437	9,935
2001	8,493	514	9,007
2002	15,028	506	15,534
2003	16,062	259	16,321
2004	15,082	673	15,755
2005	10,479	1208	11,687
2006	9,380	689	10,069
2007	7,299	589	7,888
2008	8,391	611	9,002
2009	8,198	707	8,905
2010	6,404	740	7,144
2011	8,136	484	8,620
2012	10,896	1,394	12,290
2013	8,271	565	8,836

n/a = data not available

Sources:

1961/62 – 1985/86: TB Expenditure Report (DARD internal document)

1986/87 – 1988/89: Annual General Reports of the Department of Agriculture 1987, 1988, 1989

1990/91 – 1993/94: TB Expenditure Report (DARD internal document)

1995– 2013: Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS)

(ii) The compensation paid has been recorded by financial year from 1961/62 to present. See Table 2.

In respect of compensation costs, caution is again required. These costs are subject to both changing relative values in monetary terms and also to change in the individual components that make up these figures. These components alter not only in direct relation to disease levels, but also in reflecting the market value for each animal pertaining at the time of removal.

TABLE 2: MONEY SPENT ON COMPENSATION EACH YEAR BETWEEN 1961/62 AND 2013/14.

Year	Compensation (£)
1961/62	reported as zero
1962/63	5
1963/64	reported as zero
1964/65	35,240
1965/66	25,290
1966/67	38,935
1967/68	55,897
1968/69	24,040
1969/70	25,929
1970/71	19,036
1971/72	14,991
1972/73	54,960
1973/74	89,350
1974/75	98,000
1975/76	170,787
1976/77	332,391
1977/78	426,797
1978/79	370,070
1979/80	394,901
1980/81	663,100
1981/82	558,780
1982/83	692,252
1983/84	661,330
1984/85	642,060
1985/86	576,890
1986/87	399,014
1987/88	538,208
1988/89	856,254
1989/90	n/a
1990/91	n/a
1991/92	n/a
1992/93	n/a
1993/94	n/a

Year	Compensation (£)
1994/95	n/a
1995/96	2,234,388
1996/97	2,262,142
1997/98	2,920,205
1998/99	4,895,826
1999/00	5,776,774
2000/01	7,921,489
2001/02	8,587,921
2002/03	16,255,611
2003/04	15,408,521
2004/05	12,586,405
2005/06	9,225,891
2006/07	7,887,123
2007/08	8,547,534
2008/09	11,192,593
2009/10	9,910,768
2010/11	8,593,038
2011/12	12,910,656
2012/13	16,157,933
2013/14	12,500,762

n/a – data not available

Sources:

1961/62 – 1988/89: Annual General Reports of the Department of Agriculture.

1995/1996 – 2013/14: Animal & Public Health Information System.

Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Programme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the incidence rates of bovine TB for each year since the bovine TB eradication programme began.

(AQW 32969/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The eradication programme including the compulsory tuberculin testing of cattle began in 1959. As such a long period is covered different sources have been required to collate this data. See Table 1. Unfortunately no data is available for the first 2 years of the programme.

Animal incidence figures are available for each year since 1961. Herd incidence figures are not available for the years before 1995 as herd period prevalence was the measure used by DARD from 1969 to 1994. Herd incidence figures have been used since 1995 as this is the international standard for monitoring TB trends.

Considerable caution is required in interpreting this data over the long term due to changes in the Programme that will influence them. It is important to remember that the Programme has never been

static, and has evolved continuously over this time to adapt to new international requirements, disease patterns and scientific advancements.

TABLE 1: HERD AND ANIMAL LEVELS OF BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS IN NORTHERN IRELAND: 1961-2013

Year	Annual animal incidence	Annual herd incidence	Herd period prevalence
1961	0.39	n/a	n/a
1962	0.18	n/a	n/a
1963	0.10	n/a	n/a
1964	0.07	n/a	n/a
1965	0.08	n/a	n/a
1966	0.09	n/a	n/a
1967	0.12	n/a	n/a
1968	0.06	n/a	n/a
1969	0.06	n/a	0.81
1970	0.04	n/a	0.50
1971	0.04	n/a	0.54
1972	0.07	n/a	0.81
1973	0.11	n/a	1.11
1974	0.13	n/a	1.51
1975	0.17	n/a	2.76
1976	0.19	n/a	2.43
1977	0.17	n/a	2.57
1978	0.14	n/a	1.89
1979	0.12	n/a	1.65
1980	0.18	n/a	2.41
1981	0.14	n/a	2.03
1982	0.12	n/a	1.88
1983	0.10	n/a	1.77
1984	0.09	n/a	1.61
1985	0.08	n/a	1.65
1986	0.06	n/a	1.39
1987	0.07	n/a	1.25
1988	0.09	n/a	1.71
1989	0.15	n/a	2.81
1990	0.17	n/a	3.07
1991	0.22	n/a	3.25

Year	Annual animal incidence	Annual herd incidence	Herd period prevalence
1992	0.24	n/a	4.18
1993	0.32	n/a	4.51
1994	0.26	n/a	3.81
1995	0.22	4.09	n/a
1996	0.24	4.07	n/a
1997	0.30	4.27	n/a
1998	0.42	5.47	n/a
1999	0.51	6.39	n/a
2000	0.57	6.84	n/a
2001	0.62	6.82	n/a
2002	0.91	9.92	n/a
2003	0.94	9.56	n/a
2004	0.81	9.17	n/a
2005	0.59	7.22	n/a
2006	0.55	6.23	n/a
2007	0.45	5.35	n/a
2008	0.53	5.58	n/a
2009	0.51	5.61	n/a
2010	0.40	5.12	n/a
2011	0.51	6.00	n/a
2012	0.66	7.32	n/a
2013	0.51	6.44	n/a

n/a = data not available

Sources:

1961-1991: NIAO (1993) Northern Ireland Audit Office. Department of Agriculture: animal health measures. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland. 27 May 1993. HMSO: London.

1992-1994: Progress in the eradication of TB in cattle in Northern Ireland, Table 2 (DARD internal document).

1995- 2013: DARD Veterinary Epidemiology Unit monthly TB statistics. <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/statistics/animal-disease-statistics/statistics-tuberculosis.htm>

Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Programme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for a breakdown of the total cost of the bovine TB eradication programme in each year since it began.

(AQW 32970/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The eradication programme including the compulsory tuberculin testing of cattle began in 1959. As such a long period is covered the data sources are different and in some places incomplete.

The figures available until 1994/95 are limited to the total expenditure and, in most cases, the cost of compensation. See Table 1. The total expenditure is net of carcass salvage payments.

More detailed records are available from 1995/96 to present. See Table 2.

I would recommend caution in the interpretation of Tables 1 and 2 as this covers such an extended time period. Apart from the changing relative value in monetary terms over time, several components of these costs are also variable over time. This includes the continuous development of the programme to adapt to new international requirements, disease patterns and scientific advancements. The compensation element in particular is not only altered in direct relation to disease levels, but also in reflection of the market value for each animal pertaining at the time of removal.

TABLE 1: EXPENDITURE ON THE TB ERADICATION PROGRAMME IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND FROM 1959/60.

Year	Compensation (£)	Total Expenditure (£)
1959/60	n/a	1,650,948
1960/61	n/a	2,204,324
1961/62	reported as zero	1,841,452
1962/63	5	1,662,450
1963/64	reported as zero	1,514,841
1964/65	35,240	1,309,661
1965/66	25,290	686,906
1966/67	38,935	336,806
1967/68	55,897	268,411
1968/69	24,040	292,033
1969/70	25,929	338,446
1970/71	19,036	295,487
1971/72	14,991	266,926
1972/73	54,960	356,034
1973/74	89,350	404,781
1974/75	98,000	697,183
1975/76	170,787	925,840
1976/77	332,391	1,305,487
1977/78	426,797	1,605,223
1978/79	370,070	1,626,160
1979/80	394,901	1,989,497
1980/81	663,100	2,792,848
1981/82	558,780	3,246,508
1982/83	692,252	3,933,655
1983/84	661,330	4,482,225

Year	Compensation (£)	Total Expenditure (£)
1984/85	642,060	4,709,545
1985/86	576,890	5,059,638
1986/87	399,014	4,900,000
1987/88	538,208	5,000,000
1988/89	856,254	5,600,000
1989/90	n/a	7,500,000
1990/91	n/a	8,493,047
1991/92	n/a	9,621,309
1992/93	n/a	10,832,282
1993/94	n/a	13,39,5029
1994/95	n/a	n/a

n/a – figure not available

Sources:

Compensation data: Annual General Reports of the Department of Agriculture.

Total Expenditure data:

1959/60 – 1985/86: TB Expenditure Report (DARD internal document)

1986/87-1989/90: NIAO (1993) Northern Ireland Audit Office. Department of Agriculture: animal health measures. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland. 27 May 1993. HMSO: London.

1990/91 – 1993/94: TB Expenditure Report (DARD internal document)

TABLE 2: BREAKDOWN IN TOTAL COST OF THE BOVINE TB ERADICATION PROGRAMME FROM 1995/96 – 2013/14

Year	VSD Costs	PVP Costs	Compensation	Staff Costs	DARD Funded Research	Haulier Costs	Misc	Tuberculin	Salvage	Total Expenditure
1995/96	117,604	3,626,196	2,234,388	4,927,036	317,410	70,588	32,795	387,346	-1,296,179	10,417,184
1996/97	135,928	3,922,112	2,262,142	4,207,662	331,181	82,643	15,513	318,827	-1,195,081	10,080,927
1997/98	178,950	4,042,605	2,920,205	4,258,372	432,080	111,014	4,319	322,079	-962,458	11,307,166
1998/99	195,677	4,733,137	4,895,826	4,491,549	465,768	145,017	15,613	439,458	-1,070,843	14,311,202
1999/00	193,992	4,865,775	5,776,774	4,983,310	436,845	180,587	84,675	464,063	-1,658,875	15,327,146
2000/01	219,441	5,333,056	7,921,489	4,107,182	376,229	208,927	185,105	439,249	-2,080,344	16,710,334
2001/02	206,417	4,879,726	8,587,921	3,501,933	368,929	211,388	193,065	363,889	-1,763,691	16,549,577
2002/03	260,210	5,876,873	16,255,611	3,474,625	325,957	282,565	579,463	609,754	-5,655,431	22,009,627
2003/04	367,728	6,517,861	15,408,521	4,174,111	405,431	255,414	203,380	698,229	-3,603,560	24,427,115
2004/05	564,899	7,514,183	12,586,405	4,167,069	965,388	242,492	214,122	836,074	-3,298,454	23,792,178
2005/06	845,012	6,285,277	9,225,891	5,424,182	566,196	199,020	231,718	862,766	-2,019,455	21,620,607
2006/07	624,001	6,806,600	7,887,123	6,451,488	567,899	169,578	204,310	989,315	-941,392	22,758,922
2007/08	740,061	6,311,631	8,547,534	4,700,904	526,786	169,918	183,916	793,476	-738,509	21,235,717
2008/09	726,042	5,917,344	11,192,593	5,286,418	349,575	200,280	125,734	969,758	-1,207,629	23,560,115
2009/10	844,369	6,500,752	9,910,768	5,581,846	289,723	135,326	139,734	724,205	-1,079,579	23,047,144
2010/11	1,045,583	6,286,278	8,593,038	5,792,472	457,385	57,527	132,233	558,740	-826,347	22,096,909
2011/12	1,185,654	6,540,225	12,910,656	6,181,800	452,695	71,685	136,491	560,740	-1,381,225	26,658,721
2012/13	1,474,255	7,379,000	16,157,933	6,480,431	289,300	178,169	509,524	560,124	-2,143,760	30,884,976
2013/14	n/a	6,526,762	12,500,762	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Estimate: £25.98m

Source: Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS)

Rural Woodburn Ward

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why parts of the rural Woodburn ward are not included in the maximising access in rural areas scheme.

(AQW 32991/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Maximising Access Rural Areas (MARA) Project uses a NISRA list of all Super Output Areas (SOA's) and the Urban Rural Classification for each assigned from the Statistical Classification of Settlements Report. The MARA Project is active in each of the 286 rural SOA's. This does not include the Woodburn SOA which is classified as Urban but does include Blackhead and Whitehead SOA's in the Carrickfergus Borough Area.

Rural Jobs

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to protect and create jobs in rural areas.

(AQO 6016/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The protection and creation of jobs in rural areas is a key consideration in the delivery of Rural Development programmes by my Department and I am pleased to report that in the period of my Ministerial tenure and that of my predecessor there has been significant success on this front. For example:

The agri-food processing sector is important to the rural economy and my Department has provided financial support to the sector towards capital investment in factory premises and the purchase of plant and equipment through the Processing & Marketing Grant Scheme. Since 2008 we have committed funding of £22m to over 100 projects. This support equates to a minimum investment by the companies of £55m in the rural economy and has helped to sustain jobs and create new employment opportunities.

Under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme, we have so far created over 500 jobs, but more importantly we have helped rural businesses sustain existing jobs through the tough economic downturn. We have provided funding specifically to 820 rural business projects including 487 farm diversification projects. This funding has helped create 158 new rural businesses.

The CAFRE Rural Enterprise Team run bespoke business training programmes for farmers and others from the rural community. To date over 2,000 people have participated in these programmes contributing to the establishment of over 400 new businesses and almost 1,000 new full time and part time jobs, thus adding valuable additional income streams in rural areas.

The Supply Chain programme has, through experienced facilitators and financial support towards study tours, business tools and specialist mentors, assisted 64 groups to date. Of these groups around 25 have developed either new products or introduced new techniques, thus enhancing employment opportunities.

Poultry Litter

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on addressing the issue of poultry litter.

(AQO 6007/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD and DETI are working jointly on a project for the Sustainable Use of Poultry Litter. In December 2012 the departments progressed a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) to develop technology options to treat poultry litter in the north of Ireland.

Nine contracts were awarded for Phase 1 of the SBRI to develop proof of concept and feasibility of technologies. These contracts concluded at the end of November 2013 and the final reports have been reviewed by the cross departmental Project Team.

Over the past 3 years, there have been significant developments in at least three potential technological approaches for the sustainable use of poultry litter. The SBRI funding has helped providers proposing these to overcome technical hurdles, which had previously prevented these technologies from being used at large scale for poultry litter.

Government officials involved in the poultry litter project are currently preparing a support package which aims to fast track the development of the most promising technologies and are engaging with the poultry industry and potential technology providers.

Government is working to identify and support long term sustainable and viable options to deal with poultry litter. It is the responsibility of the poultry industry to commit to implement sustainable solutions for poultry litter and meet its obligations arising from EU Environmental Directives.

Rural Development Programme

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

(AQO 6013/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Considerable progress has been made in developing the proposals for the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme. A public consultation was carried out on DARD's proposals for the future programme between July and October last year. There was considerable interest in the consultation and my department's response has been published on the DARD website. As part of the public consultation we also sought views on the Equality Impact Assessment and the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

A Stakeholder Consultation Group was established in November 2012 to provide a forum for key stakeholders to discuss and influence the development of the next programme. This Stakeholder Group has met six times and my officials will continue to work with this Group to develop the proposals further over the next few months.

My officials will begin informal discussions with the EU Commission later this year on the proposed content of the next programme.

Rural Development Programme: Boundaries

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Belfast hinterlands will be included in the new Rural Development Programme boundaries.

(AQO 6014/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Rural Development Programme is aimed at improving the economic, social and environmental conditions in rural areas throughout the north. It brings together a wide range of support schemes and programmes for the farming, forestry and primary processing sectors, rural enterprise and business development, diversification and rural tourism. I want the next RDP to be a balanced Programme that will improve the competitiveness of farm and agri-food businesses, protect and enhance the environment and countryside and improve the quality of life in our rural communities. The Programme is a key vehicle to support rural communities who often face unique difficulties due to the dispersed nature of rural settlements and their more remote geographic locations which can be a barrier to accessing key services and markets.

Within the existing RDP, areas with a population size of 4,500 or less are deemed to be rural and can therefore avail of support under the Programme. We are looking to ensure that all potential rural areas are included in the next RDP. Whilst Belfast on the whole falls well outside of this definition of rural, there are a number of smaller settlements in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan that may fall within the definition and I have tasked my officials to look at how we could support these settlements.

Lough Neagh

Mrs Cameron asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Lough Neagh Report.

(AQO 6015/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Interdepartmental Working Group was reconvened on an informal basis and officials considered the additional information in the DCAL report and provided me with a revised report and recommendations. I circulated these to Ministerial colleagues on the 2 April 2014 with an Executive paper for consideration at the next Executive meeting.

Beekeepers: Licensing Scheme

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on establishing a licensing scheme and register of bee-keepers.

(AQO 6017/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There is no legislative requirement for beekeepers to be registered and therefore there is no licensing scheme in the north of Ireland. However, my Department does maintain a voluntary register of beekeepers primarily for the purpose of disease control and I would encourage all beekeepers to provide their details if they have not already done so. There are currently some 800 beekeepers recorded.

It is intended that in the longer term the new NI Food Animal Information System (NIFAIS) will include a register of beekeepers. The EU is considering the requirement for a register as part of new animal health law.

Animals: Free Movement

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the progress made towards the free movement of animals throughout the island of Ireland.

(AQO 6018/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Movement of animals between the north and south of Ireland is governed by EU Trade Regulations which aim to prevent the spread of animal disease. A new EU Animal Health Regulation is currently being negotiated in Europe in which the Commission is considering some relaxation of the conditions regarding the movement of animals between Member States in accordance with the assessment of risk. My officials feed into the development of the new Regulations in consultation with DEFRA to ensure our interests are represented during the informal Working Group discussions in Europe, and liaise with officials in DAFM to agree common negotiating positions where possible, including on animal movement Articles.

In addition, Ministers have agreed to an all-island Animal Health and Welfare strategy, the key aim of which is to develop policies which facilitate the free movement of animals on the island of Ireland within current EU Regulations. This aim has the wide support of the industry on the island.

Close co-operation between Departments is essential in developing animal health and welfare policy to ensure compatible and complementary policies are in place. Both Departments are also working closely with their respective industries and key stakeholders.

Cattle: Republic of Ireland Origin

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps she is taking to address the issue of cattle bred in the Republic of Ireland not being able to be sold to slaughterhouses and meat factories in Northern Ireland.

(AQO 6019/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I share your concerns about the current problems in the beef industry. I want to see a strong, profitable red meat sector and that can only be achieved if farmers see a fair return for their

quality and traceable produce. I also want to see free movement of cattle between the north and south of Ireland.

I am aware that meat plants in the north had been planning to make significant changes to the pricing structures for in-spec and out-of-spec cattle from the start of this month. Amongst other things, animals born in the south and subsequently fattened and/or slaughtered in the north, or so-called “nomads”, may be considered out of spec and subject to penalty by the processing industry.

Commercial decisions taken by individual abattoirs are outside DARD's remit. However, given the significant concerns in the farming industry, and my own reservations that farmers were being penalised unfairly on this and other issues, I have already met with representatives of the local processing industry and informed them that they need to re-think these proposed changes. I have also asked the industry to strive for timely and transparent communication with both farming representatives and the wider beef industry, when any changes in specification are being proposed.

In addition, my officials are working with counterparts in the south on a project to develop a north-south data exchange for cattle. That will allow full movement histories for cattle traded between the north and south to be available electronically in both jurisdictions providing the information essential to the effective marketing of all our animals.

I am continuing to monitor the position on “nomad” cattle and discussed this and a range of other issues affecting the beef sector with Minister Coveney at our recent NSMC meeting. We agreed to continue to work together in this area.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

An tUltach: Foras na Gaeilge

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding has been cut from An tUltach by Foras na Gaeilge.

(AQW 32700/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Over the last five years, Foras na Gaeilge funding provided to An tUltach is shown in the table below:

Year	Amount	% Change
2009	£21,026	-
2010	£18,427	12.40%
2011	£18,200	0.90%
2012	£17,108	6.00%
2013	£16,554	3.25%

The reduction in funding provided each year is shown as a percentage of the previous year's total.

Foras na Gaeilge have stated that from 1 July 2014 funding for An tUltach will cease.

Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 29399/11-15, what proposals for activity have resulted from the liaison between departmental officials and their counterparts in Scotland in respect of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games; and to detail the departmental resources available to support such proposals.

(AQW 32820/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Previously I had advised you that my Department was constantly considering opportunities surrounding the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

I am aware that officials from Sport NI, the Sports Institute NI and the NI Commonwealth Games Council have met with the Commonwealth Games Sports to discuss preparation for the Games. At those meetings, a number of sports indicated that they were considering holding training camps prior to travelling to the Games in Glasgow, however, these plans have yet to be confirmed. Sport NI has not committed any resources to these camps outside of potential funding to support preparation of athletes from the north of Ireland for the Games through the Athlete Investment Programme.

Officials from my Department have liaised with Scottish counterparts to explore opportunities for the north of Ireland to become involved in the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme.

A number of choirs from the north of Ireland have signed up for the 'Big Big Sing' which aims to inspire thousands of people across the UK to sing to celebrate the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The Arts Council of NI has provided additional support towards the New Music Biennial which is a Music Foundation initiative and a strand of Culture 2014, the Glasgow Commonwealth Games Cultural Programme.

My Department will continue to consider the wider cultural opportunities around the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Libraries NI Customers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of how the service to Libraries NI customers has been affected during the introduction of the new computer system.

(AQW 32874/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since the new public libraries computer system (e2) began to be introduced in May 2013, Libraries NI (LNI) customers have benefited from enhanced and new services including access to free Wi-Fi, Superfast Broadband, improved public ICT and on-line facilities, better book catalogue programmes and more integrated marketing systems. Self-issue machines have also been put in place in the twenty largest libraries. This has freed up more staff time for customer outreach work.

The introduction of e2 is, of course, a large and complex task which involves the replacement of an existing and outdated ICT system. This work is still on-going and it was always anticipated that customers would experience some disruption during the present implementation period. For example, there was a limited, but essential, temporary shut-down of some LNI on-line customer services in December 2013 to facilitate migration from the old ICT system to the new. Whilst e2 went 'live' successfully in the same month, some customers have experienced initial problems with logging into sections of the new LNI web site. Customers have also been advised that they may encounter some delays as LNI staff become fully familiar with new systems. Whereas the network in some libraries slowed during the change to Wifi in March 2014, over 10,000 connections to the new Wifi service were made in the first month of operation alone. Network speed has, as intended, improved significantly since Wifi was introduced.

I have asked that LNI take all necessary steps to keep customers informed and to address, as promptly as possible, any limited or unforeseen issues where they arise. Once e2 is fully operational in August 2014, I expect customers will experience and enjoy all the benefits of a more advanced, modern and improved public libraries ICT service.

Motorsport Track Facilities

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail any departmental funding provided for motorsport track facilities at (i) Kirkistown; (ii) Bishopscourt; and (iii) Nutts Corner in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 32895/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the last three financial years up to March 2014, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has invested £1,206,500 in motorsport track facilities at Kirkistown, Bishopscourt and Nutts Corner as detailed below:

April 2010 – March 2011	Kirkistown Race Circuit Building Works	£435,500
April 2010 – March 2011	Bishopscourt Race Circuit developments	£385,500
April 2010 – March 2011	Development works at the Nutts Corner Circuit	£385,500

Grounds and Changing Facilities: Clubs

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding has been allocated for improvements to grounds and changing facilities at (i) GAA clubs; (ii) rugby clubs; and (iii) football clubs in each of the last five years, excluding Casement Park, Ravenhill and Windsor Park.

(AQW 32924/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, generally has responsibility for the distribution of funding for sport throughout the north of Ireland. In the last five years up to March 2014, Sport NI has allocated a total of £25,620,367 funding to the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) and the Irish Football Association (IFA) for improvements to grounds and changing facilities, excluding Casement Park, Ravenhill and Windsor Park.

Details of this funding are as follows:

Year	GAA	IRFU	IFA
2009/10	£8,629,208	£192,300	£5,604,329
2010/11	£1,913,636	£87,436	£2,841,685
2011/12	£490,000	£0	£1,637,943
2012/13	£980,000	£0	£245,000
2013/14	£1,448,878	£0	£1,549,952
Total	£13,461,722	£279,736	£11,878,909

In addition, Sport NI has invested £2,684,771 in multi sport facilities during this time, which will also benefit these sports.

2014 Commonwealth Games: Boxers

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what additional steps are being taken to ensure that boxers from Northern Ireland who are participating in the Commonwealth Games are equipped to build on recent professional boxing successes.

(AQW 32955/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for equipping boxers who are participating in the Commonwealth Games rests with the Governing Body of the sport, the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA).

Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, invests, on an annual basis, in governing bodies and the Sports Institute NI for the preparation of athletes for competition through the Athlete Investment Programme. In years in which the Commonwealth Games are held, and in which boxers are preparing for and competing at the games, Sport NI investment contributes to costs associated with preparing and competing at the Games.

Since April 2011, Sport NI has provided £379,109 funding to boxing in respect of the training and competition programmes of boxers, some of whom will be preparing for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Details are as follows:

Year	Programme	Award
2011-12	Athlete Investment Programme	£97,666
2012-13	Athlete Investment Programme	£51,400
2013-14	Athlete Investment Programme	£51,100
	PerformanceFocus	£59,943
2014-15	Athlete Investment Programme	£69,000
	PerformanceFocus	£50,000
Total		£379,109

Ulster-Scots Agency: Funding

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding her Department has allocated to the Ulster-Scots Agency in each of the last five financial years.

(AQW 32982/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The funding allocated to the Ulster-Scots Agency by DCAL over the last five years is shown in the table below:

Year	Total
2013	£1,893,749
2012	£2,022,487
2011	£2,062,067
2010	£2,226,694
2009	£2,304,267

The Agency's financial year equates to the calendar year. The figures shown are the Agency's outturn for each year.

Archaeological Artefacts

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department ensures important archaeological artefacts are stored in an appropriate way.

(AQW 33004/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 lists National Museums as one of three relevant authorities to whom archaeological finds should be reported. When an artefact is deemed significant enough to be accessioned into National Museums' collections it must also be retained in line with the requirements of the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998. Compliance with these requirements are a matter for the Trustees of the organisation.

Other artefacts which are not brought to the attention of National Museums are not state property and outside the remit of my Department. These fall under the control of the Department of the Environment and the NI Environment Agency (NIEA) who have policy and licensing responsibilities for the storage of archaeological artefacts generated since the introduction of Planning Policy Statement 6 in 1999. The NIEA holds details of all the licenses it has issued, which includes standards for the storage and safe retention of archives held by archaeological firms.

Regulations on Coarse Fishing

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the current regulations on coarse fishing in Department maintained waters in relation to catch and release; (ii) when this was last reviewed or updated; and (iii) what amendments have been made following any review or update.

(AQW 33014/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) I can confirm that the Departments' fisheries regulations specify that no more than 1 pike under 4kg may be retained per day and there is a daily bag limit of four coarse fish (except pike). Any additional fish caught must be released unharmed.
- (ii) This regulation was introduced on 15 September 2008 by the former Fisheries Conservancy Board (FCB), which was then responsible for fisheries legislation.
- (iii) DCAL currently has no plans to make any further amendments in respect of coarse bag limits.

Sporting Events

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans she has to continue, and expand, the number of internationally recognised sporting events coming to Northern Ireland.

(AQO 6021/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In 2010, the NI Executive agreed that responsibility for events would transfer from DCAL to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI). However, my Department and its arms length bodies work closely with DETI to bring internationally recognised sporting and cultural events to the north of Ireland.

With regard to sporting events, my Department and Sport NI have key roles in the Giro d'Italia "Big Start", which includes participation on the local Steering Committee, the Activation Committee and groups dealing with the cycling legacy, promotion in schools and volunteering. Sport NI is also providing technical expertise to the Race Committee. My Department is also working with DETI, NITB and other key stakeholders to see how we can bring the Rugby World Cup to Ireland in 2023.

With regard to cultural events, my Department has engaged with NITB to secure events such as: 2012 Our Time Our Place, 2013 Derry~Londonderry City of Culture and the forthcoming Game of Thrones exhibition.

Looking ahead, collaborative work between DCAL and DETI will continue –helping to ensure that the north of Ireland continues to benefit from hosting major sporting and cultural events.

Angling: Strangford Lough

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline any plans to develop an infrastructure for angling in the Strangford Lough area.

(AQO 6028/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department's Inland Fisheries Group is responsible for the development of inland fisheries across the North, including lakes and rivers in the vicinity of Strangford Lough.

Angling can deliver social, economic and environmental benefits to local communities. In addition to providing facilities at a number of venues in the Strangford area including Lough Cowey, Lough Money, Quoile river and Portavoe reservoir, which are part of my Department's public angling estate, we have a number of on-going projects in the Strangford area, including improving access for disabled anglers at Lough Money, providing additional fishing stands on the Quoile and slipway improvements at Lough Cowey.

The Member will be aware of the Ards and Down Sea Trout Enhancement Association (ADSEA) project to establish an enhanced sea trout fishery in Strangford Lough. While my Department does not own the

fishing rights on Strangford Lough and it has no remit for sea angling in coastal waters, I am content for my officials to explore how my Department could assist in realising the potential of the Lough.

They have met with ADSEA and local Council representatives on a number of occasions to discuss the project, including the development of the business case and arrangements proposed by ADESA to sell permits to catch sea trout in the Lough.

The ADSEA project also emphasised the importance of improving the habitat of rivers flowing into Strangford Lough. This fitted in well to IFG's broader conservation and protection works and we have recently completed habitat enhancement projects on the Annacloy River and the Quoile and further work is underway on the Enler River. We are also working on plans for other enhancement river projects in the Strangford area.

I have asked my Chief Fisheries Officer to meet with ADSEA to offer further advice on the project and to provide an update on progress made on the enhancement works to rivers in the area.

Riding for the Disabled: Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline what support her Department has provided to the Omagh Riding for the Disabled Association.

(AQO 6029/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Under the Sport Matters Capital and Equipment Programme 2010/11, Omagh Riding for the Disabled Association was awarded £9,024 of exchequer funding from Sport NI to upgrade the flooring in their arena and to purchase equipment.

I visited Omagh Riding for the Disabled on Monday 22 July 2013 and agreed that DCAL would help the Organisation with the preparation of a business case for any future funding that may become available. This is currently progressing.

Sport NI is currently developing a new capital funding programme which is due to be launched later in 2014. I would expect that Omagh RDA may be eligible to apply for funding under this programme.

Irish City of Culture

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline any support she has provided to Derry City Council's bid for the Irish City of Culture.

(AQO 6030/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I understand that a bid for the Irish City of Culture title has been discussed by Derry City Council and it is the Council's responsibility to progress this with the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs.

I will shortly be meeting with the Chief Executive of Derry City Council to discuss the matter.

My Department's role is to support and develop cultural product and activity to support a vibrant cultural sector which aims to promote equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion. I am therefore fully supportive of a bid from Derry City Council for the Irish City of Culture.

Creative Industries: West Tyrone

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline any plans she has to provide a hub for the creative industries in West Tyrone.

(AQO 6031/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: As part of my plans to build on the legacy of City of Culture 2013, I want to support the development of community cultural hubs in Derry and across the North West, including urban and rural areas such as Strabane, Limavady, Coleraine and Dungiven.

Community cultural hubs will provide opportunities for the development of skills and job creation in digital and creative industries and support the delivery of a range of cultural activity focused on promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion.

An initial feasibility study has been undertaken to consider current provision in Derry. More detailed work is to be undertaken to consider gaps which may exist in the wider North West.

DCAL continues to support growth in the Creative Industries across the north, including West Tyrone, through programmes such as the Creative Industries Innovation Fund and the recently piloted Creative Vouchers Programme.

Older People: DCAL Support

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline any services and support available for older people from her Department and its arm's-length bodies.

(AQO 6032/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Research has shown that active engagement in arts, cultural and sporting activities can help the physical, mental, and social well-being of older people. My Department and its Arms Length Bodies provide a wide range of opportunities for older people to engage in culture, arts and leisure activities.

The Arts Council (ACNI) is committed to addressing the needs of older people through improving access and participation in the arts. The ACNI three-year Arts & Older People Programme (AOPP), phase II, was launched in October 2013. This programme, jointly funded by ACNI, Public Health Agency, DCAL and Baring Foundation, aims to increase participation of older people in arts activities and tackle social justice issues facing older people on a day-to-day basis, including isolation and loneliness, health and wellbeing and poverty.

Sport NI, an arm's-length body of DCAL, works closely with a number of key stakeholders to offer opportunities for older people to get involved in sport and physical recreation. My strategy for sport, Sport Matters, recognises that not enough older people participate in sport and has a specific target to address this. A Sport Matters Action Plan outlines the actions being taken to increase participation in sport and physical recreation amongst older people and is publicly available on the DCAL website, along with annual progress reports.

The Live and Learn project is a five year Big Lottery funded project delivered in association with Age NI across all National Museums' sites. Its aim is to increase accessibility and engagement with museums and collections specifically for the over 50s; to tackle social isolation, improve physical and mental wellbeing and provide volunteering roles for older people.

National Museums is also working in partnership with Clanmil Housing Association to run the "Treasure House" project. Older people living in sheltered housing in the North are invited to attend programmes run at National Museums sites, taking part in traditional activities and courses including arts and crafts, local history and traditions, reminiscence, music, dance and drama.

Libraries NI provide a wide range of services for older people such as computing sessions for absolute beginners, reminiscence activities in libraries and residential homes, social group activities in libraries aimed specifically at older people and a home call service for anyone who has significant difficulty in visiting a branch or mobile library.

The NI Screen funded Digital Film Archive (DFA) outreach activity delivers themed presentations based on the content of the archive to a variety of audiences including community and reminiscence groups, historical societies and schools. It is dedicated to working with older persons in the community and outreach events/presentations are delivered in care homes/sheltered housing/historical societies and church groups.

My Department provides concessionary angling licences and permits for anglers over 60. Details of all licences, permits and facilities are advertised on the NI Direct website and in free Angling guides. We

also have a number of Public Angling Estate waters that have enhanced facilities such as hardcore or tarmac pathways and angling stands with handrails etc to encourage greater access to those anglers with a concessionary angling licence and permit.

Angling: Facilities

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the facilities available for anglers with a disability at rivers, waterways and reservoirs under her Department's control.

(AQO 6033/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has developed a significant number of its Public Angling Estate (PAE) waters with facilities to encourage greater participation by anglers with disabilities. These include dedicated disabled car parking, enhanced disabled access paths and purpose designed and built disabled angling stands. The Department publishes a guide to disabled facilities at PAE waters which is issued free to all disabled anglers.

My Department also provides concessionary licenses and permits for disabled anglers who are in receipt of certain benefits, and this enables the holder to fish waters in the PAE at approximately 25 per cent of the full cost.

My officials are promoting a new community outreach programme to increase participation in angling generally and in particular encouraging minority and disadvantaged groups such as those with disabilities.

I am keen to facilitate greater disabled access at all angling waters across the North and my officials are available to meet with angling clubs to offer professional advice on how to enhance facilities on angling waters and in particular to those aimed at disabled anglers.

Department of Education

Academic Underachievement

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what additional measures or strategies are being pursued to combat educational underachievement, particularly among Protestant boys.

(AQW 32739/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): I am determined to tackle educational underachievement wherever it occurs. Despite overall improvements in performance over recent years there still remains too large a gap in performance between pupils from socially disadvantaged areas and those from more affluent areas.

Since coming to office I have continued to implement policies to raise standards and tackle educational underachievement. 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.

I have redistributed school funding to target schools with high numbers of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds under the common funding scheme and injected a further £10 million specifically targeting social deprivation into school budgets from April 2014.

Within schools, the Department is implementing a range of funded programmes targeting educational underachievement. These include the Delivering Social Change programme to employ additional teachers, a literacy and numeracy CPD KS2/3 Project and support to Area Learning Communities to develop effective approaches to improving literacy and numeracy levels amongst disadvantaged pupils

In addition, and in recognition of the importance of influences outside school, I am providing funding to support a range of programmes targeted at socially deprived communities. These include Sure Start, the extended schools and full service provision, the Community Education Initiatives Programme, the

Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry Bright Futures programme and funding to deliver projects to address educational underachievement in the Greater West Belfast.

In September 2012, I launched the 'Education Works' advertising campaign. This is aimed at informing and engaging all parents, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more involved in their child's education.

International reports tell us that we need to have a socially balanced school system to enable all pupils to perform better. However, while some schools persist in the use of academic selection, we will be unable to achieve this.

Evidence also shows that social background is the strongest factor impacting on attainment and I am determined to take action to break this link wherever it exists. There is also an important role to be played by our MLAs, local councillors and those with influence in the community in raising educational awareness and aspiration in socially deprived communities.

Holy Trinity Primary School: Nursery Places

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 31245/11-15, for an update on the progress of Holy Trinity Primary School's application for an additional 26 nursery places for September 2014, given that the statutory objection period ended on 17 February 2014.

(AQW 32746/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The statutory objection period on Development Proposal (DP) 301, which proposes to establish an additional nursery unit at Holy Trinity Primary School, has ended. Two further proposals to establish new 26 place statutory nursery units in Cookstown have also been published. DP 302 was published on 17 February, this proposes the establishment of a new nursery unit at Gaelscoil Eoghain and DP 304 was published on 18 March 2014, this proposes the establishment of a 26 place part time nursery unit at Phoenix Integrated Primary School.

I will have to consider the overall pattern of provision in the area and the cases being put forward for the additional places. In this regard my officials are currently collating all the relevant and pertinent information and comments received, when complete I will make my decision as soon as possible in order to provide clarity for all those affected by the proposals.

Nursery School Places

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to ensure that there are sufficient nursery school places available to families in remote towns and villages.

(AQW 32829/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Executive's Programme for Government includes a commitment to provide a year's funded pre-school education to every family that wants it.

At the end of the 2013/14 pre-school admissions process, 99.8% of target aged children whose parents engaged with the admissions process to the end were offered a funded place in a pre-school setting.

This commitment is delivered on a non-sectoral basis through the Department of Education's Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP). The PSEP is designed as a partnership between statutory and non-statutory providers.

The Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) of each Education and Library Board is responsible for ensuring that there is sufficient pre-school provision in all areas, whether this is a rural or urban setting.

Sufficient funding has been provided by the Department to meet the projected need for pre-school places for the 2014/15 academic year and this will be kept under review as the admissions process progresses.

At the end of Stage 1 of the pre-school admissions process for the 2014/15 academic year, there remained over 1900 pre-school places available to accommodate the 1064 children who had applied but have not yet been offered a funded pre-school place.

Academic Underachievement

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to provide statistics relating to the educational underachievement of Protestant boys from working class communities in North Down; and for his assessment of these figures.

(AQW 32842/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In 2011/12, 67.0% of the 303 Protestant boys leaving school and resident in North Down left school having achieved at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and maths compared to the NI average of 53.5% for all Protestant boys achieving at this level on leaving school.

In 2011/12, fewer than five of the 20 Protestant boys, resident in North Down and entitled to free school meals left school having achieved at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and maths. The NI average was 19.7%, or 116 out of 590 Protestant boys entitled to free school meals achieving at this level.

I am determined to tackle educational underachievement wherever it occurs. Despite overall improvements in performance over recent years there still remains too large a gap in performance between pupils from socially disadvantaged areas and those from more affluent areas.

Since coming to office I have continued to implement policies to raise standards and tackle educational underachievement. 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.

I have redistributed school funding to target schools with high numbers of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds under the common funding scheme and injected a further £10 million specifically targeting social deprivation into school budgets from April 2014.

Alongside this, additional funding has been allocated to specific programmes to target educational underachievement in socially disadvantaged areas. As well as the extended schools funding, these include the Delivering Social Change programme to employ additional teachers, a community education initiatives programme and a literacy and numeracy CPD KS2/3 Project.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board also provide support to schools in this area to improve educational outcomes.

In September 2012, I launched the 'Education Works' advertising campaign. This is aimed at informing and engaging all parents, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more involved in their child's education.

International reports tell us that we need to have a socially balanced school system to enable all pupils to perform better. However, while some schools persist in the use of academic selection, we will be unable to achieve this.

Evidence also shows that social background is the strongest factor impacting on attainment and I am determined to take action to break this link wherever it exists. There is also an important role to be played by our MLAs, local councillors and those with influence in the community in raising educational awareness and aspiration in socially deprived communities.

Mobile Classrooms

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education how mobile classrooms are used when they are returned to the Department, for example following a school rebuild.

(AQW 32944/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Responsibility for mobile classrooms rests with the school authorities. In most cases where mobiles are replaced they are in poor condition and no longer fit for purpose. In these cases they are removed as part of the new build contract. If a condition report indicates that a mobile is suitable for re-use it can be re-located at another site subject to planning/building control and meeting other Departmental policies.

The Department has not considered allowing surplus mobile classrooms for local community use such as essential skills training. The majority of mobile accommodation which is replaced is no longer fit for purpose. Any surplus modular accommodation considered suitable for re-use, is subject to the necessary building/planning controls/Departmental policies and is normally re-located within the schools estate.

Mobile Classrooms

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education whether he has considered allowing surplus mobile classrooms for local community use, such as essential skills training.

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Education and Library Board Staff: Back Pay

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Education why Education and Library Board staff who received a 1 per cent pay increase for 2013 have not received the back pay for the 2013/14 period since the increase was awarded.

(AQW 32992/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Finance Minister approved the 2013/14 pay remit for the main group of Education and Library Board (ELB) staff on 6 February 2014. ELBs are now processing the payment of the incremental arrears and the 2013 National Joint Council 1 per cent pay award. Each ELB is working diligently towards completion of this exercise. All ELB's will have completed this work by July 2014 or sooner, if possible.

Schools: Budget Reductions

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Education why some schools have had a reduction in budget, in spite of previous assurances that no school would lose out under the Common Funding Formula.

(AQO 6034/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Each school is different in terms of pupil numbers and pupil profile and these figures can change from year to year. Although the changes to the Common Funding Scheme have resulted in a relatively small reduction in the budgets of some schools, there are a number of schools that have experienced a fall in the number or type of pupils between the 2012-13 and 2013-2014 school census figures. Such changes will obviously affect their budget allocations. These budget changes are not as a result of the changes I made to the Common Funding Scheme.

When I announced my final decisions on changes to the Common Funding Scheme on 13 March 2014, I also announced that transition payments would be made to those schools whose budget under the

new arrangements is less than the school would have received had the Common Funding Formula (CFF) and budget remained the same as in 2013-14. The transition funding has been put in place to compensate schools which face small reductions as a result of changes to the Common Funding Formula.

Nursery School Places in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many children in North Down have yet to receive a nursery school place.

(AQW 33084/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I would refer the Member to my answer to AQW 32985/11-15 which was tabled by Peter Weir MLA and published in the Official Report on 18 April 2014.

Letters advising of the outcome of the second stage of the pre-school application process will issue on Friday 30 May 2014.

School Refurbishment: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education for an update on the scale of school refurbishment needed in North Down.

(AQO 6041/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The identification and assessment of Minor Works is the responsibility of the school authorities and not the Department.

My Department administers a Minor Capital works programme for non-controlled schools on behalf of the school authorities. Education and Library Boards receive a budget to deliver a programme of Minor Capital works in controlled schools.

For controlled schools in North Down it is the responsibility of the South Eastern Education and Library Board which has advised me that they have not yet concluded the process of setting a Minor Works programme for the controlled sector in 2014/15.

The Department is currently processing Minor Works applications in conjunction with the school authorities for the non controlled sector for 2014/15. The closing date for receipt of these applications was 28 February 2014 and was extended to 25 April 2014.

Port-primary Resources

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education what additional resources he will make available to the Controlled Schools Sector to address the inequality in standards highlighted in the examination performance in post-primary schools in the 2012/2013 academic year.

(AQO 6042/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The variation in performance between controlled and maintained schools occurs in our non-selective sector. In 2012/13, 33.5 % of Year 12 pupils (1,685 out of 5,037 Year pupils) attending non-selective schools in the controlled sector achieved at least five GCSEs A* to C including GCSE English and maths compared to the Catholic maintained sector average of 41% (2,575 out of 6,273 Year 12 pupils).

The Department currently provides over £10m to post-primary schools for the educational attainment element of the CFS.

Reflecting the difference in educational attainment, controlled secondary schools receive more than maintained secondary schools on a per capita basis.

Regardless of the school setting, gaps exist between our most and least deprived pupils.

I am focussed on improving outcomes for all our young people and addressing this inequality.

Within schools, I have implemented a range of funded programmes targeting educational underachievement.

In addition to the £70million of funding allocated directly to schools for targeting social need, I am also providing funding to support programmes targeted at socially and educationally deprived communities.

International reports tell us that we need to have a socially balanced school system to enable all pupils to perform better.

However, while some schools persist in the use of academic selection, we will be unable to achieve this.

There are also wider societal issues to be addressed that education authorities and schools cannot tackle on their own.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Strategic Energy Framework

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what range of renewable technologies, excluding wind energy, are currently being supported and developed under the Strategic Energy Framework; and to detail the percentage of planning approvals for renewable energy technologies in each of the last five years.

(AQW 32403/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): In addition to onshore wind, renewable electricity technologies eligible under the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation are: anaerobic digestion; bioliquids; biomass; energy crops; energy from waste with CHP; gasification (advanced and standard); geopressure; geothermal; hydro; landfill gas; offshore wind; onshore wind; pyrolysis (advanced and standard); sewage gas; solar photovoltaic; tidal; and wave.

Renewable heat technologies eligible under the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive and/or Renewable Heat Premium Payment are: air source heat pumps; biomass; biomethane and biogas combustion; ground source heat pumps (including deep geothermal); and solar thermal.

Whilst the above technologies are eligible for support, not all are necessarily currently being developed.

Percentage planning approval rates for renewable energy technologies are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1 - PERCENTAGE APPROVAL RATE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS BY TECHNOLOGY AND YEAR

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 (up to 28/02/14)
Single wind turbine	94%	84%	81%	82%	87%	88%
Wind farm	91%	82%	100%	83%	69%	91%
Total Wind energy	94%	84%	82%	82%	86%	88%
Hydroelectricity		83%	100%	100%	100%	96%
Solar panels	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%
Biomass/ Anaerobic digester	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	88%
Other	100%		100%	100%	100%	100%
Grand Total	95%	86%	84%	85%	89%	90%

Notes:

- 1 Figures have been provided by the Department of the Environment.
- 2 The per cent of applications approved is based on the number of decisions issued in the same year.
- 3 "Other" includes, Landfill Gases, Waste Incineration and Heat Pumps.

Planning Approvals for Wind Energy Development

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) to detail the percentage of planning approvals for wind energy development; and (ii) for a breakdown of the amount paid in subsidies to the renewable sector, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 32404/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) Planning approval percentage figures for onshore wind applications are provided in Table 1.
- (ii) The Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) is currently the main mechanism for incentivising renewables deployment. NIRO support is provided in the form of Renewables Obligation Certificates (ROCs) issued to generators by Ofgem. As the NIRO is a market-based support mechanism under which certificates are traded, figures in Table 2 below are approximations based on UK-wide methodology. Totals for all three Renewables Obligations (NIRO, Renewables Obligation Scotland and Renewables Obligation England & Wales) are provided in brackets.

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE APPROVAL RATE FOR SINGLE WIND TURBINES AND WIND FARMS BY YEAR

	Single wind turbine	Wind farm	Total wind energy
2008/09	94%	91%	94%
2009/10	84%	82%	84%
2010/11	81%	100%	82%
2011/12	82%	83%	82%
2012/13	87%	69%	86%
2013/14	88%	91%	88%

Notes:

- 1 The percentage of applications approved is based on the number of decisions issued in the same year

Source:

- 2 DOE

**TABLE 2: ROCs ISSUED AND APPROXIMATE VALUE TO RENEWABLES GENERATORS
2008/09 – 2012/13**

Year	ROCs issued (k)	Approximate total value (£k)
2008-09	619 (18,996)	£24,350 (£747,130)
2009-10	800 (21,228)	£32,727 (£868,210)
2010-11	787 (24,885)	£32,017 (£1,012,306)
2011-12	1,239 (34,754)	£52,725 (£1,478,773)
2012-13	1,242 (44,299)	£55,637 (£1,983,697)

Notes:

Source:

- 1 Ofgem RO Annual Reports
- 2 ROCs issued rounded to nearest thousand
- 3 Approximate value of ROCs issued is calculated by multiplying the number of ROCs issued by the buyout price in that year plus 10% (round to nearest £000)

Wind Generator Constraint Payments

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how much was paid in wind generator constraint payments in each month since January 2012.

(AQW 32682/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Generator constraint payments are made by the Single Electricity Market Operator (SEMO). Table 1 below provides an estimate of payments on an all island basis to wind generators for tariff year 2011/12 and 2012/13 inclusive. Determination of precise figures on a monthly basis for generators in Northern Ireland only would require further detailed and lengthy analysis by SEMO.

TABLE 1: ESTIMATE OF CONSTRAINT PAYMENTS TO WIND GENERATORS

Period	Estimate €m
Tariff Year 2011/12	5.6
Tariff Year 2012/13	4.9

Source: SEMO

Strategic Energy Framework

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the range of renewable technologies that are currently being supported and developed under the Strategic Energy Framework.

(AQW 32878/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Renewable electricity technologies eligible under the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation are: anaerobic digestion; bioliquids; biomass; energy crops; energy from waste with CHP; gasification (advanced and standard); geopressure; geothermal; hydro; landfill gas; offshore wind; onshore wind; pyrolysis (advanced and standard); sewage gas; solar photovoltaic; tidal; and wave.

Renewable heat technologies eligible under the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive and/or Renewable Heat Premium Payment are: air source heat pumps; biomass; biomethane and biogas combustion; ground source heat pumps (including deep geothermal); and solar thermal.

Whilst the above technologies are eligible for support, not all are necessarily currently being developed.

Renewable Obligation Certificates

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the total paid for Renewable Obligation Certificates in (i) 2010; (ii) 2011; (iii) 2012; and (iv) 2013; and for a breakdown of each energy type.

(AQW 32879/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Table 1 below, details the approximate value of payments for Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs) issued by technology from 2009/10 to 2012/13. Figures are provided by financial year from 2009/10 to 2012/13 to coincide with the Renewables Obligation year.

TABLE 1: APPROXIMATE VALUE OF PAYMENTS FOR RENEWABLE OBLIGATION CERTIFICATES (ROCS) ISSUED BY TECHNOLOGY FROM 2009/10 TO 2012/13

Generation Technology	Approximate value of ROCs issued per year (£,000)			
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Fuelled	1,165 (157,155)	705 (196,162)	1,503 (255,966)	4,000 (390,633)
Hydro	456 (86,421)	410 (75,388)	595 (115,581)	765 (98,747)
Landfill Gas	1,435 (197,729)	2,457 (203,140)	2,485 (212,888)	2,606 (220,526)
Onshore Wind	29,535 (296,562)	28,266 (312,556)	47,955 (496,192)	47,663 (545,674)
Offshore Wind	0 (111,117)	0 (204,085)	0 (373,805)	0 (702,580)
Solar PV	45 (444)	69 (95)	100 (132)	281 (1,046)
Sewage Gas	0 (18,691)	0 (20,764)	0 (24,101)	0 (24,143)
Tidal Flow	90 (90)	110 (114)	87 (101)	321 (338)
Wave	0 (1)	0 (3)	0 (5)	0 (10)
Totals	32,727 (868,210)	32,017 (1,012,306)	52,725 (1,478,773)	55,637 (1,983,697)

Footnotes:

- 1 Approximate value of ROCs issued calculated by multiplying the number of ROCs issued by the buyout price in that year plus 10% (totals are rounded to the nearest £1,000).
- 2 Figures in brackets are for all three Renewables Obligations across the United Kingdom.
- 3 'Fuelled' includes anaerobic digestion and biomass fuelled generating stations.
- 4 Totals may not add due to rounding.

International Data Centre: Derry's One Plan

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the 2011 One Plan's 2/3 year target for the establishment of an international data centre and associated cross border power supply led by the private sector is progressing to timescale.

(AQW 32907/11-15)

Mrs Foster: While there is support across Government for the 2011 "One Plan", it is Ilex, in terms of reporting, and Derry City Council who have ultimate ownership. Any questions relating to progress against targets should therefore be directed to the Council as the Civic leaders.

Public Living in the Vicinity of Petroleum Exploration Boreholes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which agency is responsible for safeguarding the health of the public living in the vicinity of petroleum exploration boreholes, and ensuring that the petroleum exploration activities do not have adverse consequences for their health.
(AQW 32910/11-15)

Mrs Foster: No single agency has complete responsibility for safeguarding the health of the public living in the vicinity of petroleum exploration boreholes although a number of regulatory authorities have a role to play, either directly or indirectly, in health protection in relation to petroleum exploration wells. The Public Health Agency is the major regional organisation for public health protection and the Health & Safety Executive has responsibility for monitoring compliance with health and safety legislation for employees in general, as well as specific regulations for the safe design, drilling operations and completions of boreholes.

In addition to this, other regulatory authorities have responsibilities for pollution prevention and control, waste management, air quality, dust control, noise and lighting, environmental protection, traffic and the protection of the environment, all of which could have a direct or indirect impact on public health in the vicinity of a petroleum exploration borehole. The Model Clauses of a petroleum licence also include a general duty on the Licensee to conform to good oilfield practice and my Department has responsibility for ensuring adherence to these standards.

Department of the Environment

Driver and Vehicle Agency Staff

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment when he expects feedback from his Ministerial colleagues on the assistance they can offer in redeploying Driver and Vehicle Agency staff.
(AQW 32340/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): I wrote to my Ministerial colleagues on 13 March 2014, the day on which the decision to centralise vehicle registration and licensing in Swansea was announced, to seek their support in identifying alternative work that could be located in Coleraine or in any of the other areas impacted by this decision.

In addition, in conjunction with the Finance Minister and with the support of the Executive, I have asked all Ministers and departments to consider what functions could be relocated to the Coleraine site and to agree to the immediate application of controls on the recruitment and promotion of staff until the overall potential surplus of staff has been addressed.

I have also written to the UK Government enquiring as to the full range of options for the relocation of reserved functions to NI, particularly in areas where there is a work backlog. I have requested an urgent response.

I have asked, and am assured, that my NI Ministerial colleagues are giving this matter urgent consideration. I appreciate that the current uncertainty is distressing for the staff in the Driver and Vehicle Agency affected by this decision and I am seeking responses from Ministerial colleagues.

Townscape Heritage Initiative

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the impact on the Townscape Heritage Initiative following the Northern Ireland Housing Executive terminating matched funding for the scheme; and what action he is taking to retrieve the situation.
(AQW 32832/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The aim of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is to secure the long-term future of NI's built heritage by contributing towards expenditure for the promotion, preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of a designated Conservation Area.

THI proposals may benefit from a number of different grants depending upon the eligibility of the project. The total amount of grant a project receives is known as the 'common fund'. The two main players in the common fund are the Heritage Lottery Fund (up to 75% of the grants total) and Planning (up to 25% of the grants total). Other contributors may include NIEA and local councils depending upon the nature of the proposed works.

Each grant is administered by the relevant Department / other contributor to the common fund and is considered on a case by case basis. In 2013/14 my Department allocated £160k of budget for THI Grants. The THI Grant allocated by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive is a matter for the Department for Social Development.

Lough Neagh Special Protection Area: Mineral Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 32086/11-15, whether his Department has granted any planning permissions for onshore operations associated with the unauthorised mineral extraction of sand from Lough Neagh Special Protection Area.

(AQW 32911/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has granted a number of onshore planning permissions associated with sand extraction from Lough Neagh.

The permissions include plant, stockpiles, buildings, car parks, settlement ponds and weighbridges. The permissions (nine in total) date from 1982 until 2005 and relate to four sites.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest: Mourne Area

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment why the request from the Mourne AONB Residents' Action Group, conveyed at a meeting with him on 25 March 2014, for a delay in the designations of Areas of Special Scientific Interest in the Mourne area until they had time adequately to consider the proposals, was ignored.

(AQW 32919/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The request from the Mournes Action Group, conveyed at the meeting on 25 March 2014, was not ignored by the Department in designating the Areas of Special Scientific Interest in the Mourne area. The process of designation was outlined to this group on several occasions and senior staff were present at these meetings.

Following the legislative process for designating ASSIs, the Department was obliged to complete the process to designation within the set time frame. The process has now moved into the consultation stage whereby any objections or concerns can be represented to the Department for consideration before the designation is confirmed. The consultation period has been notified to all landowners and stakeholders and all responses will be considered in line with legislative process.

Taxi Operator Licences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 31608/11-15, who informed the Driver and Vehicle Agency that the company in question had an operating centre at Ravenhill prior to the issuing of an operator licence on 19 June 2013.

(AQW 32920/11-15)

Mr Durkan: An application was made by Fonacab to have an operating centre at Ravenhill Rugby ground included in their taxi operator licence. The application included the required declarations and, in line with procedures, the application was granted. Procedures do not require the inspection of operating centres upon application.

Noise Pollution: Quarries

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of whether existing powers for local government are sufficient to enforce the regulations on noise pollution on quarries.

(AQW 32934/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are no noise pollution regulations applying to quarries in Northern Ireland. There are, however, other regimes which deal with noise from quarries, namely planning permission conditions and statutory nuisance enforcement by district councils under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Statutory Nuisance

Noise emanating from quarries can be investigated by district councils under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to determine if the noise constitutes a statutory nuisance.

If the district council environmental health officer finds that a statutory nuisance exists, or is likely to occur or reoccur, the district council can serve the operator with an abatement notice. An abatement notice can require the operator to:

- stop causing a nuisance or impose restrictions on their operations to prevent any further occurrence;
- carry out works or take other steps to restrict or remove the nuisance.

An abatement notice is a legal document and if an operator does not comply with it they could be prosecuted.

Operators have a defence of “Best Practicable Means” (BPM) in such cases. BPM is a defence under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and it will be for a court to determine having regard to the local conditions and circumstances, current state of technical knowledge, financial implications, operation, and the design and maintenance of buildings and machinery.

Planning controls

All Minerals Planning applications are assessed against the Mineral Policies as laid out within “A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland” (PSRNI) (published 1993) to ensure the strongest environmental protection. Consultation is also carried out as appropriate to ensure that environmental considerations (including noise) are taken into account.

The PSRNI has been consolidated and transferred into the draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (published 4 February 2014).

This draft Policy Statement is currently out for consultation and this provides a further opportunity to take into account comments on the full range of issues associated with minerals development. The SPPS consultation closes on 29 April 2014 and responses can be made electronically at www.planningni.gov.uk/spps

Review of Permissible Operations in Quarries

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will consider a review of permissible operations in quarries with a view to strengthening the environmental protection powers of local government.

(AQW 32935/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Environmental impacts from quarries can be controlled through planning conditions, Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) Permitting or where they constitute a statutory nuisance under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

PPC Permitting

Quarries undertaking crushing, grinding, drying or roadstone-coating activities require a permit under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013. These permits are regulated by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and contain conditions to prevent, or where that is not possible, reduce emissions from the activities into the air.

Statutory Nuisance

A nuisance emanating from quarries can be investigated by district councils under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2011 to determine if the nuisance constitutes a statutory nuisance.

If the district council environmental health officer finds that a statutory nuisance exists, or is likely to occur or recur, the district council can serve the operator with an abatement notice. An abatement notice can require the operator:

- to stop causing a nuisance or impose restrictions on their operations to prevent any further occurrence; and
- to carry out works or take other steps to restrict or remove the nuisance.

An abatement notice is a legal document and if an operator does not comply with it they could be prosecuted.

Operators have a defence of “Best Practicable Means” (BPM) in such cases. BPM is a defence under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2011 and it will be for a court to determine having regard to the local conditions and circumstances, current state of technical knowledge, financial implications, operation, and the design and maintenance of buildings and machinery.

Planning

Planning policy for minerals is one of the extant policies within “A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland” (PSRNI) (published 1993) that has been consolidated and transferred into the draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) (published 4 February 2014). When issuing a decision notice DOE Planning will ensure the proposal complies with all of the relevant material considerations, including Planning Policy Statements. All minerals planning applications are assessed against the Mineral Policies as laid out within the PSRNI to ensure the strongest environmental protection. Consultation is also carried out as appropriate to ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account.

The Review of Old Mineral Permissions (ROMPS) which aims to ensure that all quarries in NI have planning conditions that comply with modern environmental standards has yet to commence, however, once ROMPS is carried out it will consider the appropriate conditions that should be attached to quarries to ensure the strongest environmental protection.

The consultation on the draft SPPS provides a further opportunity to take into account comments on the full range of issues associated with minerals development. The SPPS consultation closes on 29 April 2014 and responses can be made electronically at www.planningni.gov.uk/spps.

Licensed Quarries

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of the Environment how many licensed quarries operate outside normal business hours of 8am to 6pm on Monday to Friday, broken down by council area.

(AQW 32937/11-15)

Mr Durkan: While my Department does not hold this information, any identified breach of planning control, including quarries operating outside their conditioned working hours will be investigated.

My officials will work in conjunction with the local Council office, who under The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011, are furnished with the powers to deal with noise from premises which

may be considered prejudicial to health or a nuisance. If a Council concludes that a noise nuisance exists, an abatement notice under section 65 of the 2011 Act can be served.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to undertake an independent review of the working effectiveness of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

(AQW 32954/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have previously announced a 'root and branch' review of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). As I have stated previously, I am determined to see NIEA build on its previous success, tackle its problems and challenges and deliver in ways that drive better environmental outcomes and stronger economic outcomes in tandem.

This review comprised the findings by Mr Chris Mills in his independent review into waste management and the work I directed the Chief Executive of NIEA to undertake to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of NIEA.

This work has been completed and the Chief Executive of NIEA is now implementing a series of fundamental changes at NIEA to meet my direction for an improved customer focus, regulatory reform and partnership work. These include four new Operating Principles, the creation of NIEA Client Managers, some structural change at NIEA, the negotiation of voluntary Prosperity Agreements and legislative and operational reforms to the regulations that NIEA administers. I will soon be publishing more information about these reforms.

Single Tier Taxi System: Consultations

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many consultations have been carried out on the single tier taxi system; (ii) of these, how many are (a) completed; and (b) under way; (iii) for a breakdown of the title of each consultation and the dates of launch and closure; and (iv) to detail the cost of each consultation to date with a projected overall total, including consultations that have yet to be completed.

(AQW 32974/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There have been four consultations carried out in which proposals for a single tier system have been included, two prior to the introduction of the Taxis Act (NI) 2008 and two since the Act received Royal Assent. All are completed and the details are set out below. It is not possible to provide figures of the overall costs associated with these consultations.

1 The Regulations of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

Launch date - 21 March 2005

Closure date - 25 June 2005

2 Proposal for a draft Order in Council The Taxis (NI) Order 2006

Launch date - 15 August 2006

Closure date - 7 November 2006

3 Taxi Licence and Powers of Seizure

Launch date - 4 July 2011

Closure date - 30 September 2011

4 Single Tier Taxi Licensing Consultation

Launch date - 8 May 2013

Closure date - 5 June 2013

There are no plans to consult further on this issue and no further costs, therefore, are projected.

Lough Neagh Special Protection Area: Sand Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 32334/11-15, to set out the European Directives, and the specific Articles in those Directives, that are at risk of being breached by the unauthorised sand extraction in Lough Neagh Special Protection Area.

(AQW 32997/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Proceedings for breaches against a Member State are a matter for the European Commission. I am unaware of any consideration of such proceedings by the Commission in respect of Lough Neagh Special protection Area.

Archaeological Artefacts

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment how many archaeological artefacts have been recovered in each of the last ten years; and how these discoveries are monitored.

(AQW 33002/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I attach (at Appendix 1) a table that details the number of archaeological excavations licensed by my Department over the past 10 years. The vast majority of archaeological artefacts recovered over the past 10 years have come from such excavations. These excavations have been licensed under the provisions of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995, and a report on the conduct of the excavations is a requirement of the archaeological licence. An 'absolute list' of the number of artefacts arising from these excavations does not presently exist, but lists of finds are usually included within the reports submitted in compliance with licence requirements. These reports are logged within the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) for archive purposes. This is part of a larger historic environment records archive called the Monuments and Buildings Record, and it is accessible to the public.

There is, however, a statutory requirement for archaeological artefacts to be reported within 14 days of finding an object; in practice this has tended to be observed in respect of 'chance' discoveries that are usually reported to a museum. There is a gap in terms of reporting of artefacts retrieved from pre-planned excavations, and I am advised by officials that work is underway to bridge this gap (as part of works to address wider issues around the conduct of archaeological works and archaeological archives).

In the past 10 years there have been some 2,131 excavation licences issued by my Department. While estimates of the overall total of artefacts could be offered, this will not produce an accurate reflection of the nature, condition or relevance of the artefacts themselves, or of the sites from which they were recovered. For example, some sites produce very few artefacts, but may be rich in terms of buried structural, human, or environmental remains. At other sites, thousands of fragments of flint have been recovered, which may form the only evidence of human activity several thousands of years ago. In other circumstances a range of artefact types, materials and ages are represented, such as at the Drumclay Crannóg in County Fermanagh, where some 5,500 artefacts were recovered.

The current storage facilities for many, if not most, of the archaeological artefacts recovered in the past 10 years and beyond is not appropriate, since very few are stored in any accredited facility. This is an issue that is widely recognised. In view of this, a Joint Working Group was established, composed of officials from my Department and from the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure, along with representatives of National Museums NI. This Joint Working Group has brought forward recommendations around addressing this issue, and my officials have briefed me about potential solutions. This is not an issue for my Department alone to resolve. Indeed, it is an issue for most, if not all of the Departments within the Executive. Nearly 14% of all licences issued in the past 10 years were for projects directly conducted by other government departments or their agencies. While this is a small number in terms of the overall number of licences granted, these were, by and large, the most significant archaeological projects, including roads schemes (including the Drumclay Crannóg works) and other infrastructure projects.

I will be writing to the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure to discuss this and associated matters, so that the recommendations of the Joint Working Group can be brought to a wider forum.

Appendix 1

ARCHAEOLOGICAL LICENSES ISSUED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE HISTORIC MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTS (NI) ORDER 1995 OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS

Year (April-March)	Number of Licences Issued
2004-05	175
2005-06	209
2006-07	332
2007-08	261
2008-09	206
2009-10	235
2010-11	184
2011-12	131
2012-13	197
2013-14	204
Total	2134

Archaeological Artefacts

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment for her assessment of the current storage facilities for archaeological artefacts.

(AQW 33003/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I attach (at Appendix 1) a table that details the number of archaeological excavations licensed by my Department over the past 10 years. The vast majority of archaeological artefacts recovered over the past 10 years have come from such excavations. These excavations have been licensed under the provisions of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995, and a report on the conduct of the excavations is a requirement of the archaeological licence. An 'absolute list' of the number of artefacts arising from these excavations does not presently exist, but lists of finds are usually included within the reports submitted in compliance with licence requirements. These reports are logged within the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) for archive purposes. This is part of a larger historic environment records archive called the Monuments and Buildings Record, and it is accessible to the public.

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circumstances a range of artefact types, materials and ages are represented, such as at the Drumclay Crannóg in County Fermanagh, where some 5,500 artefacts were recovered.

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Department of Finance and Personnel

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within his Department; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31728/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The table below provides the information requested.

Year	Sum of Period	Count of Employees*
2008/2009	£791,468.85	52
2009/2010	£810,489.86	50
2010/2011	£872,100.33	52
2011/2012	£830,337.03	52
2012/2013	£858,920.53	48
Grand Total	£4,163,316.60	254

* as the number of employees fluctuates throughout the year, the figures given relate to the number of employees in March in each financial year.

Defamation Law Reform

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the ability of the Northern Ireland Law Commission to adequately address the issue of defamation law reform while operating with a single commissioner.

(AQW 32939/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: At the outset the Northern Ireland Law Commission determined that its review projects would be assigned to a lead Commissioner, who is then assisted by legal researchers. The defamation review project is being handled in the customary way. The Commission has also engaged the services of Professor Andrew Scott, who co-authors “Gatley on Libel and Slander” and I look forward to receiving the review team’s recommendations in due course.

Developers: Domestic Proprieties

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the impact of current developers exclusion from rates qualifying criteria on developers who constructed domestic proprieties after 1 April 2012.

(AQW 32950/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The standard 12 month initial exclusion from the rating of empty homes for newly built houses will allow plenty of time for speculatively built houses to sell (or let) if they are competitively priced in today’s improving market. In effect, it currently affords a rate free period of 15 months, if account is taken of the normal 12 week allowance granted under the completion notice arrangements.

The exclusion applies to house builders with properties which first appeared on the valuation list after 1 April 2012 and have never been occupied. 1,311 houses and apartments are currently eligible for it. Land & Property Services (LPS) does not monitor cases when the exemption expires but LPS has advised that it would be a rare occurrence for a house builder to fall liable to empty rates after this period has elapsed.

I currently have no plans to extend the exclusion beyond 12 months, which is much more generous than other parts of the UK where it is only 3 months under the Council Tax system.

Registered Marriages

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many marriages are currently registered.

(AQW 32964/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: On 27 March 2011 (Census Day), there were 737,427 married people in Northern Ireland.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Health Care Providers

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 28948/11-15, for a breakdown of each health care provider, including how much money each received. **(AQW 29912/11-15)**

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Pursuant to AQW 28948/11-15, a breakdown of the spend by each health care provider and the amounts paid to each in 2011/12 and 2012/13 is set out in the table below.

Independent Sector Provider	Total	
	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000
352 Medical	19,675	30,990
All Clear	355	189
Allery Solutions	36	312
Alliance Medical	698	294
Anaplastology	37	51
Belquin	0	32
Blackrock Dublin	323	2,598
Bloomfield	22	20
BMI Health Care	0	120
Bons secur	0	25
Cathedral	864	2,148
EEG Ireland	119	484
Fitzwilliam	349	2,717
Forwilliam Dental	55	51
Guys & St Thomas	1,077	0
Hillsborough	398	1,157
Mater Dublin	3,463	655
Medinet	1,839	2,113
Neurology NI	135	65
Northern EEG	128	378
NWIC	7,365	13,160
Orthoderm	974	758
Rheum Consulting NI	0	231
Royal National Ortho	132	550
Spires	2,273	900
Sports Surgery clinic Dublin	726	2,265

Independent Sector Provider	Total	
	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000
St Francis Health Village	0	1,069
U I C	222	1,037
VFM	0	93
Windsor Medical	0	16
Total	£41,264	£64,480

Health Treatment Outside Northern Ireland

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what considerations are given to patients who must pay insurance to travel outside Northern Ireland to receive health treatment that has been locally commissioned.

(AQW 32886/11-15)

Mr Poots: I assume this question refers to patients travelling for treatment following approval for an Extra Contractual Referral (ECR) and that the reference to insurance means travel insurance.

Where patients have been approved for assessment and/or treatment under the ECR process, the Health and Social Care Board will fund treatment, travel, accommodation and subsistence costs. In line with other commissioners elsewhere in the UK the Health and Social Care Board does not fund travel insurance costs

Care Workers: Wages

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all care workers in each Health and Social Care Trust were paid the correct wages at the correct time for the month of March 2014.

(AQW 32887/11-15)

Mr Poots: All Domiciliary Care workers employed in the Northern, Southern, Western and South Eastern HSC Trusts received their basic pay on time for the month of March 2014. For the Belfast HSC Trust, a problem occurred relating to the payment of a number of its Domiciliary Care workers. The Trust identified the issue before the March payday and immediately worked to resolve the issue and minimise disruption to these staff. As a result, these Domiciliary Care workers received their full wages one day late – on 28 March 2014 instead of 27 March 2014.

Delays also occurred across several trusts in March 2014 for the payments of overtime, travel claims and other allowances. The trusts have worked to rectify these problems and as a result, all Domiciliary Care workers have now received their correct pay.

Notwithstanding this, I am extremely concerned that some staff did not receive their pay correctly. I have therefore instructed all trusts to continue to take all necessary steps to redress any loss experienced by staff and to ensure that lessons are learned for the future. In addition to this, my Department has approved further expert support for HSC payroll functions over the coming months. This will provide additional resource to help with the familiarisation of the new HRPTS system and will also help staff develop solutions to staff queries.

Myalgic Encephalopathy: North Down

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what support is available for people in North Down diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalopathy.

(AQW 32908/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern and Social Care Trust do not have a specialist ME service. Services to patients are provided on the basis of assessed need on an individual case by case basis. If individuals require assistance with personal care they will be offered a community care assessment and appropriate services to meet individual need. In individual circumstances, services such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy have been provided as per NICE guidance.

As a first step in the development of a regional network of expertise in CFS/ME, the Health & Social Care Board has established a pilot condition management programme in the Northern Trust for those patients with a moderate to severe condition. The service also aims to support GPs and primary care to manage patients with mild – moderate symptoms. The remaining Trusts are involved in the current planning of the service regionally as expertise and evidence from the pilot, and the existing CFS/ME rehabilitation and condition management service provided by the Belfast Trust, are shared.

Myalgic Encephalopathy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department recognises Myalgic Encephalopathy as an illness.

(AQW 32909/11-15)

Mr Poots: In 2008, my Department endorsed current National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) – CG 53. The guidance states that: “Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)/myalgic encephalomyelitis (or encephalopathy) (ME) is a relatively common illness”. The guidance provides good practice guidelines for services for patients with ME / CFS across both primary and secondary care and was issued to the Health and Social Care sector.

January Monitoring Round

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the amount of money allocated to the Western Health and Social Care Trust in the January Monitoring Round.

(AQW 32930/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following the January monitoring round allocation, the HSCB worked very closely with the Local Commissioning Groups and the Trusts to ensure that allocations were made in order to best address local priorities in the interest of patients and clients and reflecting the principles of capitation and equity.

As a result of this exercise, the Western Health and Social Care Trust was allocated £4.7m to alleviate significant pressures by directly helping patients, elderly people and children receive the treatment, care packages and services they required more efficiently.

Budget and Projected Spending

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the budget; and (ii) the projected spending in each Health and Social Care Trust in 2014/15.

(AQW 32931/11-15)

Mr Poots: The budget and projected spending in each Health and Social Care Trust in 2014/15 is set out in the table below:

HSC Trust	Budget £m	Projected Spend £m
Belfast	1,147	1,174
Northern	567	591
South Eastern	476	489

HSC Trust	Budget £m	Projected Spend £m
Southern	492	520
Western	490	516
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service	62	62

* Source: HSCB

These are opening positions and subject to change.

Emergency Department in Antrim Area Hospital

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the performance of the Emergency Department in Antrim Area Hospital in February 2014 when 164 patients had to wait more than twelve hours to be admitted and only 63 per cent of patients attending were seen in four hours against the target of 95 per cent.

(AQW 32977/11-15)

Mr Poots: Emergency department performance is subject to fluctuating pressures and increasing demand. The emergency department in Antrim Area Hospital has seen an increase in attendances and admissions in 2013/14 compared to the previous year, with attendances up by around 2% and non-elective admissions up by 5.6%. Improved performance in waiting times was sustained for much of 2013 but has declined over the winter months. I was disappointed by the provisional emergency department waiting time statistics for February 2014 and I look to the Health and Social Care Board to continue to work with the Trust to sustain the improvement achieved last year. I find it unacceptable that anyone should have to wait for long periods in our emergency departments.

Emergency Department in Antrim Area Hospital

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his statement to the Assembly in December 2012 that it was both possible and desirable that twelve hour waits in Emergency Departments would be eliminated in the short term marries with the performance of Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department in February 2014 when 164 patients had to wait more than twelve hours to be admitted and 63 per cent of all patients attending were seen in four hours against the target of 95 per cent.

(AQW 32978/11-15)

Mr Poots: Emergency department performance is subject to fluctuating pressures and increasing demand. The emergency department in Antrim Area Hospital has seen an increase in attendances and admissions in 2013/14 compared to the previous year, with attendances up by around 2% and non-elective admissions up by 5.6%. Improved performance in waiting times was sustained for much of 2013 but has declined over the winter months. I was disappointed by the provisional emergency department waiting time statistics for February 2014 and I look to the Health and Social Care Board to continue to work with the Trust to sustain the improvement achieved last year. I find it unacceptable that anyone should have to wait for long periods in our emergency departments.

Pay Raise for Nurses

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposed 1 per cent pay raise for nurses; and whether increments will affect the distribution of this payment.

(AQW 32993/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am currently considering the NHS Pay Review Body 28th Report recommendation of a 1% increase to all Agenda for Change pay points from 1 April 2014 and the implication on health and social care services.

I plan to provide a formal response to the pay review body in due course.

People Diagnosed with Diabetes

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) specialist diabetes nurses; and (ii) people diagnosed with diabetes; and what proposals there are to ensure that there will be sufficient specialist nurses available to support people diagnosed with diabetes in the future and minimise the risk of health complications.

(AQW 32994/11-15)

Mr Poots: (i)The number of specialist diabetes nurses by HSC Trust is presented in the table below:

HSC Trust	Headcount	Whole time equivalent
Belfast	18	15.9
Northern	14	11.7
South Eastern	11	9.0
Southern	10	8.2
Western	5	3.5
Northern Ireland	58	48.3

In addition, there are three paediatric diabetic nurse specialists in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, two are in post and one is currently being recruited.

Note: These figures have been provided directly by HSC Trusts and have not been verified by the Department.

- (ii) At 31March 2013 there were 79,072 GP-registered patients aged 17 and over with diabetes mellitus (Type 1 or Type 2) in Northern Ireland. This information is sourced from the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF) of the General Medical Services contract. As care of children with diabetes mellitus is generally under the control of specialists and not general practitioners they are not included in the QOF register. Information on the number of children with diabetes is not currently available centrally.
- (iii) To ensure that there will be sufficient specialist nurses available to support people being diagnosed with diabetes in the future, my Department has a Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Review underway and it will identify a series of recommendations and actions to ensure that there is an adequate supply of nurses and midwives (including specialist diabetic nurses) to meet the demand of services and to support patients and clients no matter what their disease group.

Muckamore Abbey: Resettlement Policy

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he is aware of any deaths following the removal of patients from Muckamore Abbey as part of its resettlement policy.

(AQW 33005/11-15)

Mr Poots: No patient is 'removed' from Muckamore - all community placements are sensitively planned in order to provide betterment for each individual patient. No community placement is considered suitable unless the multi-disciplinary clinical team, in discussion with the patient and their family, is satisfied that it can meet the individual and often complex needs of each patient, including their medical needs; and the timescale for discharge is agreed accordingly.

Following discharge from Muckamore Abbey Hospital, responsibility for health and social care support and services transfers to the former patient's new local Health and Social Care Trust.

Staff within all Health and Social Care Trusts are acutely aware of the needs of the learning disability population, many of whom regrettably have underlying medical conditions and complex health needs.

Unfortunately, a number of patients both within the hospital and those discharged to the community die each year.

Residents of Muckamore Abbey

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any residents of Muckamore Abbey have been resettled against their will.

(AQW 33006/11-15)

Mr Poots: There have been no patients of Muckamore Abbey Hospital resettled against their will.

Alcohol and Drug Related Inpatient Admissions

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many alcohol and drug related inpatient admissions have occurred in each Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 33013/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of admissions¹ to hospitals within Northern Ireland for alcohol and drug-related conditions in each of the last three years² are tabled below by HSC Trust.

HSC Trusts	Drug and Alcohol Admissions		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast	4,734	4,914	5,245
South Eastern	3,072	2,988	3,018
Northern	1,857	1,616	1,697
Southern	2,898	2,636	2,828
Western	2,772	3,071	2,913
Northern Ireland	15,333	15,225	15,701

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

Notes:

1 Admissions are estimated using discharge episodes.

2 2012/13 is the most up to date finalised dataset.

Minimum Pricing for Alcohol

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Republic of Ireland on the issue of minimum pricing for alcohol.

(AQW 33022/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have discussed the issue of alcohol pricing with Dr James Reilly TD, Minister for Health in the Republic of Ireland, on a number of occasions including at the North South Alcohol Conference on 26 January 2012. Officials also discuss these issues on a regular basis and this has led to the joint commissioning of research on the impact of minimum unit pricing in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Minimum Pricing for Alcohol

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Scotland on the issue of minimum pricing for alcohol.

(AQW 33023/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 13 March 2014 I met with Alex Neil MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Scotland and Michael Matheson MSP, Minister for Public Health Scotland to discuss relevant health matters, including the issue of alcohol retail pricing. These matters have also been discussed on an ongoing basis, at both an official and Ministerial level, at the British Irish Council Substance Misuse Sectoral Group.

Department of Justice

Research into Prostitution

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Justice which company or individuals have been awarded the contract to undertake research into prostitution.

(AQW 32967/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The contract for research into prostitution in Northern Ireland has been awarded, through Department of Finance and Personnel tendering procedures, to Queen's University Belfast. Professor Peter Shirlow is the Principal Investigator and has overall responsibility for the project. Dr Susann Huschke is the lead researcher. The project team also includes Dr Dirk Schubotz and Dr Eilís Ward.

Department for Regional Development

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to Penalty Charge Notices issued to motorists in Florence Place, to detail (i) how many have been incorrectly issued; (ii) the number of refunds issued; (iii) the total revenue generated; (iv) the total amount refunded; and (v) the amount that has not been refunded.

(AQW 31293/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):

483 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were incorrectly issued in Florence Place and, in line with my Department's PCN appeal procedures, refunds amounting to £8,490 were issued in respect of 225 PCNs.

In addition, I asked my officials to seek permission from the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) to obtain vehicle keeper information for the purpose of refunding all of the PCN's incorrectly issued in Florence Place.

Permission was granted for this as a special exercise and the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with DVA has also been amended.

As a result, 216 letters were issued to customers on 23 April 2014 and, to date, twelve responses have been received. These refunds, and any other responses received, will be actioned as soon as possible.

NI Water Reservoirs

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the reservoirs that NI Water has put up for sale in the North Down and Ards area are applicable for the Department of Social Development's community asset transfer scheme; and what consideration he has given to this issue.

(AQW 32996/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Once the Social Development Minister's proposals on Community Asset Transfer have been approved by the Executive, NI Water will be able to consider community transfer for its surplus reservoirs in the North Down and Ards area.

Department for Social Development

Housing Stress

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development how many (i) Protestants; and (ii) Catholics in Belfast are (a) on the housing list; and (b) in housing stress.

(AQW 32502/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive has advised that applicants applying for social housing are asked to indicate a response to a religion question on behalf of his/her household. Based on that, the Housing Executive has provided the information for the four Belfast Parliamentary Constituencies in the table attached, which reflects the position as at 31 December 2013. This is the latest information available.

	Catholics	Protestants	Mixed/ None/Other	Refused/ Undisclosed
Total number of applicants	5,556	4,739	1,430	1,625
Number of applicants in housing stress (30 points or more)	3,803	2,392	733	820

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Social Houses: Belfast Estates

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development how many social houses are being built in each Belfast estate in each of the next three years, with estates to be listed in order of housing need.

(AQW 32503/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not assess housing need at estate level, as the geography and available database is considered inappropriate and too small to reflect housing market areas.

The Housing Executive undertakes housing needs assessment annually, across all 26 district council areas and reports this at Council level using identified Housing Need Assessment geographies. The purpose of housing need assessment is to examine supply and demand, identify where gaps exist and project what is required over a five year period within the Housing Need Assessment area.

The Social Housing Development Programme is a three year planned programme that aims to address housing need in a fair and equitable manner, right across Northern Ireland. The difference between the Housing Needs Assessment and the Social Housing Development Programme is captured by the unmet housing need prospectus, which helps direct housing associations in their search for sites to address unmet need.

The table attached set out the information in relation to Belfast and highlights the relevant Housing Need Assessment areas and the corresponding five year projected need for each area. The tables also assign the Common Landlord Areas that are located within each Housing Assessment Need area, as well as the New Build schemes that are either on site or in the Social Housing Development 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.

NB: Land supply for social housing remains critical in areas of high housing need within Belfast. The Housing Executive has supported social housing schemes outside the Belfast City Council boundary in an effort to address high housing need.

Housing Need Assment Area (HNA)	Projected Housing Need for (HNA)	Common Landlord Areas (CLAs) within each HNA	Scheme Name	Units	Prog Year
West Middle	1412	Andersonstown	LIBRARY SITE	4	Currently being built
		Andersonstown	SOCIAL SECURITY SITE	25	Currently being built
		Andersonstown	167 ANDERSONSTOWN ROAD	11	Currently being built
		Andersonstown	LENADOON FLATS Phase 1	9	Currently being built
		Andersonstown	COLIN GLEN	67	2014/15
		Andersonstown	CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE	69	2014/15
		Andersonstown	VISTEON FACTORY (Phases 1&2)	197	2014/15
		Andersonstown	LENADOON FLATS Phase 2	18	2015/16
		Andersonstown	SUFFOLK ROAD	14	2016/17
		Andersonstown	FINAGHY ROAD NORTH	70	2016/17
		Hannahstown	HANNAHSTOWN Phase 1A	92	2014/15
		Hannahstown	HANNAHSTOWN Phase 1B	80	2015/16
		Hannahstown	HANNAHSTOWN Phase 1C	80	2016/17
		Turf Lodge	NORGLEN PARADE	1	2014/15
		Turf Lodge	GLENMONA Phase 1	80	2014/15

Housing Need Assment Area (HNA)	Projected Housing Need for (HNA)	Common Landlord Areas (CLAs) within each HNA	Scheme Name	Units	Prog Year
		Turf Lodge	2A MONAGH GROVE	14	2015/16
		Turf Lodge	St. GERARDS: Upper Springfield Road	40	2015/16
		Turf Lodge	GLENMONA Phase 2	80	2016/17
North Belfast 1	1145	Ardoyne	JAMAICA INN SITE	26	2015/16
		Ardoyne	BROOKFIELD MILL Phase 2	30	2016/17
		Carlisle-New Lodge	UPPER NEW LODGE Phase 1	35	2014/15
		Carlisle-New Lodge	NORTH QUEEN STREET: PSNI	26	2014/15
		Carlisle-New Lodge	UPPER NEW LODGE Phase 2	35	2015/16
		Carlisle-New Lodge	UPPER NEW LODGE Phase 3	16	2016/17
		Cavehill Antrim Road	17 Brucevale Park	12	Currently being built
		Cavehill	GIRDWOOD PHASE 1	60	Currently being built
		Cavehill	KINNAIRD TERRACE	15	Currently being built
		Cavehill	79 ANTRIM ROAD /2 BELLEVUE PARK	4	2014/15
		Cavehill	87 SALISBURY AVENUE	4	2014/15
		Cavehill	118-120 ANTRIM ROAD	6	2014/15
		Cliftonville	10 OLD PARK TERRACE	13	2016/17

Housing Need Assment Area (HNA)	Projected Housing Need for (HNA)	Common Landlord Areas (CLAs) within each HNA	Scheme Name	Units	Prog Year
		Glandore	ALEXANDRA PARK AVENUE	38	Currently being built
		Newington	PARKSIDE URA	36	Currently being built
		Newington	THE GLEN LIMESTONE ROAD	32	Currently being built
		Newington	PARKSIDE U.R.A. Ph. 2:Trinity	16	2014/15
		Newington	LIMESTONE ROAD	2	2014/15
		Oldpark	11-13 GRACEHILL COURT	16	2016/17
		Torrens	Former PSNI site	16	Currently being built
		Torrens	TORRENS PLAY-PARK:BCC	5	2014/15
		Upper Ligoniel	WOLFHILL-LIGONIEL	17	2015/16
West Inner	899	Ballymurphy	St. BERNADETTE'S: GLENALINA	27	2014/15
		Divis Complex	DEVONSHIRE TRADAS Ph.3 Albert Court	11	Currently being built
		Hamil Street-John Street	DURHAM STREET: Blood Transfusion Site	20	2014/15
		Lower Springfield	CUPAR St. St. GALLS Phase 3	14	Currently being built
		Lower Springfield	131-133 SPRINGFIELD ROAD	3	Currently being built

Housing Need Assment Area (HNA)	Projected Housing Need for (HNA)	Common Landlord Areas (CLAs) within each HNA	Scheme Name	Units	Prog Year
		New Barnsley	MATT TALBOT: New Barnsley Green	20	2015/16
		Roden Street	28 DISTILLERY STREET	14	2014/15
		Springhill	SPRINGHILL CRESCENT	32	2016/17
		St. James' Area	MILL COURT, FALLS ROAD	24	Currently being built
		St. James' Area	512/514 FALLS ROAD	2	2014/15
		TBC West	BELFAST: Design & Build	100	2016/17
Lisburn Road	461	Ulsterville	53-57 Botanic Avenue	12	Currently being built
		Ulsterville	RUSSELL COURT	3	2014/15
		Ulsterville	11 WELLINGTON PARK	6	2014/15
		Ulsterville	5 ULSTERVILLE AVENUE	2	2014/15
		Ulsterville	COLLEGE SITE: BRUNSWICK ST	150	2015/16
Annadale	420	Upper Ormeau	ROSSETTA COTTAGES:ORMEAU ROAD	2	2014/15
		Upper Ormeau	94-100 SUNNYSIDE STREET	27	2015/16
Outer East Belfast	279	Ashfield	385 HOLLYWOOD ROAD	20	2016/17
		Bloomfield	GREENVILLE ROAD	11	2014/15
		Knocknagoney	OLD HOLLYWOOD ROAD	6	2015/16

Housing Need Assment Area (HNA)	Projected Housing Need for (HNA)	Common Landlord Areas (CLAs) within each HNA	Scheme Name	Units	Prog Year
		Sydenham	13 CONNSBROOK AVENUE	11	2014/15
		Sydenham	MAPLE LEAF: Park Avenue	29	2014/15
		Sydenham	1 PARK AVENUE	4	2014/15
		Sydenham	PALMERSTON ROAD	10	2014/15
		Sydenham	72 CONNSBROOK AVENUE	4	2015/16
		Sydenham	38-40 STATION ROAD	4	2016/17
		Sydenham	11 BRANDON PARADE	7	2016/17
		TBC S&E	South & East BELFAST: Design & Build	70	2015/16
		Wandsworth	484 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD	10	2014/15
Lower Ormeau	274	Lower Ormeau	137-141 ORMEAU ROAD	15	2014/15
		Lower Ormeau	McCLURE STREET	27	2014/15
Inner East Belfast	169	Lower Beersbridge Road	132-136 CASTLEREAGH ROAD	9	2015/16
		Newtownards Road	15-17A PARKGATE AVENUE	9	2014/15
		Newtownards Road	WESTBOURNE CHURCH	6	2014/15
		Newtownards Road	St. CHRISTOPHER'S: MERSEY STREET	8	2015/16

Housing Need Assment Area (HNA)	Projected Housing Need for (HNA)	Common Landlord Areas (CLAs) within each HNA	Scheme Name	Units	Prog Year
		Newtownards Road	PIT PARK:NEWTOWNARDS ROAD	6	2016/17
		Roseberry	314 RAVENHILL ROAD	67	Currently being built
		Rosebery	173-187 RAVENHILL AVENUE	86	Currently being built
		Rosebery	LONDON ROAD:RAVENHILL	15	Currently being built
		Rosebery	Ravenhill Avenue / Millar Street	41	Currently being built
		Rosebery	ONSLOW PARADE	14	2014/15
		Rosebery	101 MY LADY'S ROAD	1	2014/15
		Rosebery	34 RAVENHILL STREET	1	2014/15
		Rosebery	156-160 RAVENHILL ROAD	7	2014/15
		Rosebery	15 MY LADY'S ROAD	1	2014/15
		Rosebery	LONDON ROAD/LISMORE STREET	50	2016/17
Donegall Road	165	Donegall Road	DONEGALL AVE.:VILLAGE ATC Ph.1	13	Currently being built
		Donegall Road	VILLAGE URA Phase 3	27	Currently being built
		Donegall Road	VILLAGE NON ATC Rehabs	9	Currently being built

Housing Need Assment Area (HNA)	Projected Housing Need for (HNA)	Common Landlord Areas (CLAs) within each HNA	Scheme Name	Units	Prog Year
Short Strand	110	Donegall Pass Short Strand	POSNETT STREET 7 MOUNTPOTTINGERROAD	30 6	2014/15 2014/15
Mid Shankill	55	Lawnbrook	Lawnbrook URA	28	Currently being built
Lower Shankill	33	Florence-Hopewell	LOWER SHANKILL Phase 1	21	Currently being built
		Florence-Hopewell	LOWER SHANKILL Phase 2	12	2014/15
North Belfast 2	32	Ballysillan	CARR'S GLEN- BALLYSILLAN PARK	10	2014/15
		Ballysillan	174-202 BALLYSILLAN AVE. Regeneration	14	2014/15
		Grove	LOUGHVIEW	1	2014/15
		Lower Oldpark	LOWER OLDPARK REHABS	26	Currently being built
		Lower Oldpark	36-44 OLDPARK ROAD	12	2014/15
		Skegontell	QUEEN VICTORIA GARDENS	22	Currently being built
		Skegoneill	24-54 FORTWILLIAM PARADE	10	2015/16
		Sunningdale	SUNNINGDALE GARDENS	46	Currently being built
		Shore Road	GRAY'S LANE:792 SHORE ROAD	6	2014/15

Housing Need Assment Area (HNA)	Projected Housing Need for (HNA)	Common Landlord Areas (CLAs) within each HNA	Scheme Name	Units	Prog Year
		Upper & Lower Duncairn	LAWTHER COURT: Tigers Bay	1	Currently being built
		Wheatfield	GLENBRYN PARK	10	2015/16
Finaghy/Taughmonagh	22	Taughmonagh	Finnis Drive	15	Currently being built
Ainsworth/Woodvale	0	Ainsworth	AINSWORTH COMMUNITY CENTRE	4	2014/15
		Cambrai	1-39 Leopold Street	10	Currently being built
		Cambrai	Rosebank/Columbia Re-improvements	8	Currently being built
Ballygomartin	0	Ballygomartin	Somervale	41	Currently being built

Housing Executive Properties: Oil Leaks

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 31347/11-15, how long it took to repair the four properties in Antrim.

(AQW 32614/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the four properties in question have been affected by oil spillage or contamination and must be thoroughly checked to ensure any environmental damage has been contained and remedied. Comprehensive investigations are undertaken to assess the nature and extent of any contamination following a reported oil spillage. By their very nature, such investigations can never entirely cover all possible contaminant migration routes. For example, previously unidentified buried service routes and variable ground conditions can sometimes allow more extensive contaminant migration than may reasonably be expected following a site investigation, often requiring additional investigation and assessment when discovered. In addition, in some instances, the source of the contamination and volume of loss is not always known, or may be migrating onto NIHE property from neighbouring privately-owned properties, leading to complications and delays in remediating the site. Delays may be caused for example, due to continued migration onto the site from an off-site source and in many cases a poor understanding of the spillage event and remedial works completed in the adjacent property, if any.

The Housing Executive has provided the following information in relation to what was involved in resolving the issue at each of the four properties.

Property A

The Housing Executive received a report regarding possible oil spillage on 23 January 2012. Detailed actions included several site investigations, remedial works, additional contamination discovered, lab analysis carried out and structural survey prior to floor reinstatement. The works are estimated to be complete in May 2014.

Property B

The Housing Executive received a report regarding possible oil spillage on 2 July 2012. Detailed actions included site investigations, contractual issues and remedial works. All works were completed in December 2013.

Property C

The Housing Executive received a report regarding possible oil spillage on 25 May 2011. Detailed actions included site investigations, air report, pipe inspections, remedial works at boiler house and party wall, neighbour notified of spillage. The site was fully reinstated on 17 April 2012.

Property D

The Housing Executive received a report regarding possible oil spillage on 9 April 2013. The issues at this site are believed to have arisen as a result of a third party spillage at a neighbouring private property. Despite comprehensive investigation and remedial works being undertaken internal odours were still reported and it was agreed that the Housing Executive's appointed consultant would undertake a review of the works completed at both properties. It is believed that re-contamination of the neighbouring property is occurring. The Housing Executive has advised that works are ongoing and are expected to complete in eight to ten weeks.

Occupational Health Services

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to offer comprehensive occupational health services to its employees, including early access to services such as physiotherapy.

(AQW 32725/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Northern Ireland Civil Service Occupational Health Service (OHS) provides a comprehensive occupational health service to all of the NICS Departments and this is available to all employees. Further details of OHS services can be found at www.nicsohs.gov.uk. This service does not however provide early access to physiotherapy.

The Department also has a Welfare Support Service with trained officers who offer help and guidance to anyone affected by personal, domestic or work related problems. These officers visit staff on long-term sick absence and they provide practical support, advice and guidance on a wide range of personal issues.

Further help is available to support staff through the DSD Employee Assistance Programme delivered by Carecall. This service provides a confidential counselling service and bolsters the work of the Welfare Support Service.

DSD in conjunction with OHS, also provide a unique Pregnancy Support Service to expectant mothers, offering advice and guidance on all aspects of pregnancy, and optional pre and post-natal appointments with OHS.

The NICS also has a health and wellbeing programme referred to as WELL. The aim of this programme is to enable staff to help themselves, providing staff with accurate and accessible information to encourage a healthy life. DSD has a role in the ongoing implementation of this programme, and it has a network of DSD WELL Champions ensuring staff have access to the health advice, guidance and support.

Clanmill Housing Association

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to list the sites on which Clanmill Housing intend to develop the 1,600 houses with the recently secured £180m investment.

(AQW 32786/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As stated in AQW 32785/11-15, the figure of 1,600 houses is Clanmil's projected delivery of new social housing starts over the four years 2014/15 – 2017/18. The table attached details the schemes currently programmed in the Social Housing Development Programme for Clanmil in the period 2014/15 – 2016/17.

This is Clanmil's gross programme and schemes can be lost in-year or slip to future programme years for a variety of reasons, such as delays in securing Planning Permission or inability to acquire a site. New schemes can also be added in-year to any given programme year, e.g. through the purchase of existing satisfactory or off-the-shelf properties.

Clanmil has confirmed that they are actively working to identify suitable opportunities in areas of housing need throughout Northern Ireland. However until an agreement to purchase is reached these proposals remain commercially sensitive.

CLANMIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS 2014-17

Scheme Name	Location	Number units	On-site year	Completion year
117A Donaghadee Road/7 Summerhill Park	Bangor	10	2014/15	2015/16
Colin Glen	Belfast	67	2014/15	2016/17
Durham Street (Blood Transfusion Service Surplus Site)	Belfast	27	2014/15	2016/17
Governor's Place	Carrickfergus	16	2014/15	2016/17

Scheme Name	Location	Number units	On-site year	Completion year
2a & 2-6 Seymour Street	Lisburn	23	2014/15	2016/17
5 Church Grove	Kircubbin	6	2014/15	2015/16
36 Abbey Road	Millisle	2	2014/15	2015/16
26 Beechwood Avenue	Londonderry	14	2014/15	2015/16
NI Water Service Site, Belfast Road	Lisburn	23	2014/15	2016/17
Killard School, North Road	Newtownards	79	2014/15	2016/17
30-34 Dromore Street	Ballynahinch	27	2014/15	2016/17
Upper Greenwell Street	Newtownards	5	2014/15	2016/17
8A&10 Clooney Terrace	Londonderry	9	2014/15	2016/17
8-10 Victoria Road	Londonderry	40	2014/15	2016/17
Grangemore, Ardgrange	Londonderry	15	2014/15	2016/17
Posnett Street	Belfast	30	2014/15	2016/17
Ballyowen Replacement	Belfast	31	2014/15	2016/17
Rathmoyle	Ballycastle	28	2014/15	2016/17
Clandeboye Road	Bangor	54	2014/15	2016/17
12-16 Graham Gardens	Lisburn	27	2014/15	2016/17
Grattan Park	Lurgan	28	2014/15	2016/17
Norglen Parade	Belfast	1	2014/15	2015/16
Win Business Park	Newry	18	2014/15	2015/16
137/141 Ormeau Road	Belfast	15	2014/15	2015/16
South Area Older People, Dromore & Banbridge	Banbridge	18	2014/15	2015/16
Glen Road	Belfast	4	2014/15	2015/16
18 Warren Road	Donaghadee	10	2014/15	2015/16
512-514 Falls Road	Belfast	2	2014/15	2015/16
132 Frances Street	Newtownards	11	2015/16	2016/17
Movilla Road	Newtownards	10	2015/16	2016/17
Beechvale Road	Killinchy	5	2015/16	2016/17
Hilden Mill Phase 1	Lisburn	75	2015/16	2018/19
Wolfhill	Belfast	17	2015/16	2017/18
The Old Mill, Mill Road	Crumlin	32	2015/16	2017/18
125-127 Larne Road	Ballymena	32	2015/16	2017/18
South Area Older People, Armagh & Dungannon	Armagh/ Dungannon	18	2015/16	2017/18

Scheme Name	Location	Number units	On-site year	Completion year
94-100 Sunnyside Street	Belfast	27	2015/16	2016/17
132-136 Castlereagh Road	Belfast	9	2015/16	2016/17
Old Holywood Road	Belfast	6	2015/16	2016/17
Jamaica Inn, Jamaica Street	Belfast	26	2015/16	2016/17
39 Greenmount Avenue	Coleraine	7	2015/16	2016/17
66 Main Street	Greyabbey	10	2015/16	2016/17
30 Union Place	Dungannon	12	2015/16	2016/17
Beech Valley Phase 1	Dungannon	30	2015/16	2016/17
Hilden Mill Phase 2	Lisburn	75	2016/17	2019/20
37-45 Downpatrick Street	Crossgar	11	2016/17	2017/18
11 Brandon Parade	Belfast	7	2016/17	2017/18
53 Mill Road	Crumlin	11	2016/17	2017/18

Clanmil Housing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what procedures were followed before the decision was made to award Clanmil Housing £60m.

(AQW 32787/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The £60m figure represents the estimated Housing Association Grant, which will be available to Clanmil Housing Association over the next four years following their recent announcement to build up to 1,600 new social homes. This will be subject to Housing Executive approval and allocated on confirmation of compliance with the terms and conditions set out in the Housing Association Guide on a scheme by scheme basis.

Fold Development Type Housing

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the future provision for Fold development type housing planned for the (i) Antrim; and (ii) Newtownabbey Borough Council areas.

(AQW 32824/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) One scheme for 10 general needs units of Fold development type housing is planned for the Antrim District Council area during the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) 2014/15 – 2016/17. The scheme will involve the transfer of Housing Executive land at Chainé Court Ballycraigie and is programmed to go on-site in 2015/16 and complete in 2016/17.

The table below shows the Supported or Sheltered Housing schemes in the SHDP for Antrim District Council from 2014/15-2016/17.

Programme Year	Scheme Name	Nr units (shared)	Housing association	Needs Group	Type	Completion Year
2014/15	Norfolk Court, Antrim	12	Oaklee	Mental Health	Off-the-Shelf/ Existing Satisfactory	2015/16
2014/15	Northern Trust Mental Health Resettlement (Moylinney Closure, Antrim)	24	Trinity	Mental Health	New Build	2016/17
2015/16	Abbey Gardens, Muckamore Resettlement (Phase 2)	13	Triangle	Learning Disabilities	Rehabilitation	2017/18

This information is based upon the current gross SHDP for 2014/15 – 2016/17. Further schemes may be identified through the annual bidding rounds for inclusion in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 years of the SHDP. Schemes can also be added to the SHDP in-year, subject to confirmation of housing need.

- (ii) There are no schemes currently programmed in the SHDP 2014/15 – 2016/17 for fold type housing in the Newtownabbey District Council area.

Townscape Heritage Initiative

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the impact on the Townscape Heritage Initiative following the Northern Ireland Housing Executive terminating matched funding for the scheme; and what action he is taking to retrieve the situation.

(AQW 32831/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Town and city centre regeneration is a key policy priority, as my Department's Housing Strategy and Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework clearly sets out. I have previously stated my intention to revitalise the LOTS initiative, which I believe will help to encourage people to return to town centre living.

Officials are presently finalising a review of the previous scheme operated by the Housing Executive, with a view to consulting on a new scheme early in the 2014-15 financial year. Once the public consultation is completed, I plan to put in place a renewed policy, subject to available resources. Officials from my Department have been working with Town Heritage Initiative (THI) representatives and are aware of the dependencies and potential linkages between LOTS and THI. This will form part of the thinking in any potential new scheme.

Benefits for Students

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development whether a student who has been overseas and returns home is entitled to benefits immediately; and if not, to detail any restrictions which prevent them from accessing benefits following their return home.

(AQW 32844/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Students cannot normally claim benefit while they are still undertaking a course of study unless they fall into one of the prescribed categories for that benefit. However, a student who is returning from a period of study overseas and whose course of study has ceased or been terminated may be entitled to Income Support or income-related Employment Support Allowance immediately, subject to the normal conditions of entitlement to that benefit being satisfied and as long as they can provide evidence that they are no longer undertaking a course of study.

Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance is not affected by full time education and can be claimed at any time.

From 1 January 2014, a United Kingdom or European Economic Area national who makes a claim to income-based Jobseeker's Allowance following a period abroad will also be required to show that they have been resident in the United Kingdom or Common Travel Area (which comprises the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland) in the 3 months preceding their claim. If they cannot meet this condition, their claim will be disallowed. This requirement will not apply to those claimants who have paid sufficient national insurance contributions to qualify for contribution based Jobseeker's Allowance.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in North Antrim have had carbon monoxide alarms installed in the last three years.

(AQW 32863/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that over the last three years they have installed carbon monoxide detectors to a total of 1,047 properties in North Antrim through planned schemes.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in North Antrim have yet to have a carbon monoxide alarm installed; and to outline the timescales for installation in these properties.

(AQW 32865/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that within the North Antrim area 1,262 properties had been identified which fell within the NIHE Board's approval to have a carbon monoxide detector installed. To date the Housing Executive has installed 1,047 carbon monoxide detectors in its properties. No access or refusals were recorded against the remaining 215 properties.

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

Employment and Support Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 17264/11-15, to provide the most up to date figures for (i) 2013; and (ii) 2014.

(AQW 32884/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information, detailed below by financial year, covers the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2014.

(i) percentage of medical assessments held at Royston House:

- 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 – 38.91%
- 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 – 39.26%

(ii) percentage of medical assessments held in the applicant's home:

- 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 – 1.66%
- 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 – 1.61%

(iii) percentage of medical assessments held in other medical examination centres:

- 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 – 59.43%
- 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 – 59.13%

Businesses in the Harbour Area of Newcastle

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 31974/11-15, whether any additional funding schemes are available, or will be made available, to businesses in the Harbour area of Newcastle by way of regeneration or improvement projects.

(AQW 32885/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has responsibility for assisting with the regeneration or improvement of urban areas as defined in the relevant Area Plan. In Newcastle the town centre boundary as defined in the Draft Ards and Down Area Plan excludes the Harbour area. As a result my Department's has no plans to provide funding for schemes in the Harbour area of Newcastle. My Department is currently taking forward a £250,000 Revitalisation Scheme in partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce in town centre.

Social Housing Scheme: 5 Millisle Road

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 32137/11-15 and following the withdrawal of Triangle Housing, whether a new housing association is being sought for the site.

(AQW 32943/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In respect of the site at 5 Millisle Road, Donaghadee, the Housing Executive is currently investigating whether the previously identifiable constraints can be resolved before making a decision about re-nominating the site to another Housing Association.

Direct Labour Organisation: Cost

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW to AQW 29987/11-15, to provide the cost of running the Direct Labour Organisation.

(AQW 32975/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that their Direct Labour Organisation's total turnover including grounds maintenance, void property security, health and safety electrical inspections and response maintenance repairs was £16m in 2013/14* and is expected to increase to around £20m in the 2014/15 financial year.

*The original planned cost in 2013/14 was £7.4m. However, following the transfer of contracts and staff under TUPE the costs rose to £16m.

Direct Labour Organisation

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the purpose of the oversight committee within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in respect of the Direct Labour Organisation, including how it will operate and the role that the non-executive members perform.

(AQW 32976/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the Direct Labour Organisation Performance and Development Committee is an advisory and scrutiny body with no executive powers. The Committee has been established to assist the Housing Executive's Board to scrutinise and oversee the in-house resource to ensure that risks are managed and that it delivers a quality competitive service which provides value for money. The Committee will provide assurance to the Housing Executive's Board on the effectiveness and efficiency of management, performance, governance and compliance control in the Direct Labour Organisation. Emerging risks will need to be identified and brought to the Housing Executive's Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Direct Labour Organisation's Performance and Development Committee will be expected to meet five to six times per annum.

The Non-Executive members will be expected to:

- Provide expert advice on contract, financial and manpower management, quality, value for money, effectiveness and efficiency, commercial opportunities, benchmarking and the performance and development of the Direct Labour Organisation;
- Work with the Direct Labour Organisation Performance and Development Committee to promote new approaches and different perspectives;
- Bring individual objectivity and experience to meetings of the Direct Labour Organisation Performance and Development Committee and
- Prepare for and contribute to meetings of the Committee

Minimum Pricing for Alcohol

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Scotland on a minimum pricing for alcohol.

(AQW 32986/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is responsible for the law regulating the sale and supply of alcohol in Northern Ireland. The Department of Health, which has responsibility for health and well-being, takes the lead in addressing alcohol misuse and trying to reduce overall consumption levels.

I have been working closely with Health Minister Poots on considering the need for introducing minimum unit pricing of alcohol in Northern Ireland.

Whilst I have not met with my Scottish counterpart I have been advised that Minister Poots met with Alex Neil MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Scotland and Michael Matheson MSP, Minister for Public Health Scotland in March to discuss relevant health matters, including the issue of alcohol retail pricing.

These matters have also been discussed on an ongoing basis, at both an official and Ministerial level, at the British Irish Council Substance Misuse Sectoral Group, on which both my Department and the Health Department are represented.

I understand the introduction of minimum unit pricing is currently subject to legal challenge in the Scottish courts and my officials are continuing to monitor developments.

Minimum Pricing for Alcohol

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Republic of Ireland on a minimum pricing for alcohol.

(AQW 32987/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is responsible for the law regulating the sale and supply of alcohol in Northern Ireland. The Department of Health, which has responsibility for health and well-being, takes the lead in addressing alcohol misuse and trying to reduce overall consumption levels.

I have been working closely with Health Minister Poots on considering the need for introducing minimum unit pricing of alcohol in Northern Ireland.

Whilst I have not met with my counterpart in the Republic of Ireland, I have been advised that Minister Poots has discussed the issue of alcohol pricing with Dr James Reilly TD, Minister for Health in the Republic of Ireland, on a number of occasions including at the North South Alcohol Conference in January 2012.

Both my officials and health officials work closely with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland on a regular basis on a range of alcohol issues, including representation on the British Irish Council Substance Misuse Sectoral Group.

Following the outcome of a joint consultation in 2011 between my Department and the Health Department, research has been commissioned in collaboration with the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland to model the likely impact of introducing a minimum unit price of alcohol in each jurisdiction. This research, which will be completed in the near future, will help inform any policy decisions in this area.

My officials also continue to monitor the developments in other jurisdictions including Scotland, where I understand the introduction of minimum unit pricing is currently subject to legal challenge.

Funding for Urban Regeneration

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of funds his Department has spent on urban regeneration in each of the last three years, broken down by local council area.

(AQW 33000/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details spend on urban regeneration in each of the last three years, broken down by local council area

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Antrim	173,833	201,006	1,167,641
Ards Borough Council	208,550	276,131	235,722
Armagh	609,609	614,318	1,181,144
Ballymena	835,964	265,232	1,059,445
Ballymoney	202,474	103,982	124,579
Banbridge	63,677	137,690	594,646
Belfast	26,254,057	24,114,109	26,869,645
Carrickfergus	139,695	136,259	1,470,259
Castlereagh	462,607	490,424	599,426
Coleraine	1,092,940	2,121,134	1,114,263
Cookstown	134,366	87,512	315,931
Craigavon	3,990,399	4,119,967	4,172,746
Londonderry	5,706,122	5,076,822	6,498,210
Down District Council	2,504,212	506,278	1,647,863
Dungannon & South Tyrone	694,184	1,289,552	1,477,234
Fermanagh DC	622,313	782,674	1,447,302
Larne	112,100	341,766	357,637
Limavady	382,038	711,196	577,684
Lisburn City Council	2,705,440	2,439,299	3,341,797
Magherafelt	128,261	150,755	347,078
Moyle	44,501	117,315	80,862
Newry & Mourne	2,295,306	2,767,219	2,427,460
Newtownabbey	301,708	467,981	810,740
North Down Council	510,321	407,741	5,159,033
Omagh	1,009,962	1,463,908	1,277,280
Strabane	754,454	882,669	1,019,219
Total	51,939,092	50,072,939	65,374,847

Notes:

Caution is advised in making comparisons of expenditure across areas. Expenditure is influenced by factors such as the population of an area; the historic expenditure and/ or proposed capital investment in an area from other initiatives or mainstream sources, geographical location and proximity to existing services; as well as revenue investment in an area from lead Departments or from other initiatives

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Electronic Voting

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission what consideration has been given to the introduction of electronic voting for Plenary business.

(AQW 32851/11-15)

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Voting for Plenary business is already electronic to the extent that Members' votes are recorded into a lobby voting system that maintains a tally of votes cast, including abstentions, and performs the calculation required in cross community votes.

The conduct of voting is set out in Standing Orders and therefore falls within the remit of the Committee on Procedures. At its meeting on 25 March 2014, the Committee requested a briefing on electronic voting for the next meeting, after which the Committee will decide whether and how to take the matter forward. Any amendments to Standing Orders would then be debated in Plenary.

Should the Assembly agree that there should be provision for a fuller form of electronic voting; the Commission's role will be to make the necessary provision in the Chamber. This may require some work to be carried out. The two front rows seat 60 Members, and all the tables and desks have power and trunking for any extra cabling. The back benches, however, do not have desks for all individual Members, and so alternative solutions would have to be investigated.

Crèche Provision

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission whether it would consider carrying out a survey to assess the demand for crèche provision within Parliament Buildings to encourage and support more parents of young children to be MLAs.

(AQW 32852/11-15)

Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): While the Assembly Commission has no plans to undertake a survey of Members to assess the demand for crèche facilities, there is alternative support available for Members who are parents to young children. It is unlikely that the financial outlay required to operate a crèche could be justified at this time.

As an alternative to a crèche, the Commission administers a childcare allowance scheme. This scheme enables a Member to receive an allowance towards the cost of childcare while the Member is at work and operates on the basis of a cash payment to eligible participants. Payments made through the scheme are subject to personal income tax and national insurance contributions. The Commission bears the cost of employers' national insurance contributions.

Assembly Chamber: Access

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission to detail any plans to make the Assembly Chamber more accessible for (i) Members; (ii) visitors to the public gallery; and (iii) officials in the officials' box who have a physical disability.

(AQW 32853/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission is always mindful of opportunities to improve accessibility and has carried out a range of improvements to Parliament Buildings for that purpose.

The Assembly Chamber was originally designed to cater for a 52 Member parliament and modifications, within the constraints of the listed building status, have been made throughout the history of the building to take account of the changing needs.

Most recently, in the summer of 2008, the Assembly Commission undertook a major project to modify and refurbish the chamber. This work addressed the issue of accessibility to the floor of the chamber and included significant improvements to the public galleries, particularly for people with physical disabilities.

With regard to the specific issues you refer to:

- (i) On the floor of the chamber, level access has been provided from both the main Members' entrance and from the Speaker's Table end of the chamber. Ramped access to the voting lobbies is also available from the floor of the chamber.
- (ii) For visitors to the Public Gallery, improvements include the installation of a platform hoist to the gallery and the creation of a viewing area suitable for wheelchair users. In addition, there is a small area for wheelchair users in each of the side galleries (accessible from the west side of the building).
- (iii) There is level access from the Speaker's Table end of the chamber to each of the official's boxes. Space constraints would make further specific improvements to this facility difficult to achieve. Wheelchair users could be accommodated in the immediate vicinity of the official's box should that be required.

At present, the Assembly Commission has no plans to make any further modifications to the Assembly Chamber. However, as a result of your enquiry, we will undertake a further review to determine if any further improvements can be accommodated.

Please let me know if you require anything further.

Health and Wellbeing Standards

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission what measures are in place within Parliament Buildings to allow Members and staff to meet health and wellbeing standards, such as access to physical activity; and what consideration has been given to improving this provision.

(AQW 32855/11-15)

Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Given the unique role of Members and the precise role of the Assembly Commission, the Commission has not implemented measures to improve the health and wellbeing of Members. In common with other users of the Stormont Estate, Members can avail of the facilities at the Stormont Pavilion.

The Commission recognises the benefits of a healthy workforce and is committed to helping to improve the health and wellbeing of its staff. There is a range of policies which support the health and wellbeing of staff. These include:-

- flexible working arrangements;
- maternity, paternity and parental leave arrangements;
- special leave and career break opportunities;
- secondment opportunities;
- mentoring and coaching opportunities;
- volunteering opportunities;

- access to an independent employee assistance programme which provide counselling across a range of matters.

A Health & Wellbeing Committee comprising staff from across the Secretariat is in place to develop and deliver initiatives. The Committee undertook a wellbeing survey in June 2012 and as a result of the survey feedback, a wide variety of events are delivered including stress awareness advice, podiatry sessions, Pilates and yoga classes.

A Health & Wellbeing Fair is held on an annual basis with contributors who provide screening for specific health issues, fitness information and information on healthy eating.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 2 May 2014

(AQW 28948/11-15)

The total spend on private health care providers within the UK and the Republic of Ireland amounted to £41.3m in 2011/12 and £64.5m in 2012/13.



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