

Written Answers to Questions

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Friday 9 September 2011

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 9 September 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Sexual Orientation Strategy

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why they are to introduce a Sexual Orientation Strategy given that a number of statutory protections for the lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender communities are already in place.

(AQW 700/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Sexual Orientation Strategy is primarily designed to consider and address the full range of statutory duties, including the duty outlined in S75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB) sector made its views known during the consultations on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy, and this has undoubtedly contributed to a greater understanding of the issues by all concerned. The process of developing and publishing an anti-discrimination and equality of opportunity strategy on sexual orientation will look across the full spectrum of all issues raised.

Officials are to meet with stakeholders, organisations from the sector and other departments, and they expect to deliver draft proposals to develop the Strategy by the autumn. This will then be made available to the OFMDFM Committee. The final consultation process will take place during early 2012 with a view to publishing a Sexual Orientation Strategy later that year.

North South Ministerial Council

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much their Department has spent in relation to the North South Ministerial Council in each year since 1998.

(AQW 726/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL JOINT SECRETARIAT (NORTH)

Year	Actual Expenditure £K
2000/2001	795
2001/2002	899
2002/2003	619
2003/2004	603
2004/2005	577
2005/2006	628

Year	Actual Expenditure £K
2006/2007	695
2007/2008	862
2008/2009	744
2009/2010	1,188
2010/11	777*

* Provisional figure, 2010/2011 accounts not yet finalised

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Draft Rural White Paper

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the consultation on a draft Rural White Paper.

(AQW 1012/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Public consultation on the draft Rural White Paper Action Plan finished on 13 June 2011. Over 60 responses were received from a wide arrange of rural stakeholders including representatives of the agricultural, environmental, equality and rural community sectors.

I am currently undertaking a series of bi-lateral meetings with my Ministerial colleagues to discuss the outcome of the public consultation and to agree a way forward.

I anticipate that a final Rural White Paper Action Plan will be published later this year following formal approval by the Executive.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many times she has (i) met; (ii) spoken; and (iii) corresponded with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (a) Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman MP; and (b) Minister of State, Jim Paice MP.

(AQW 1596/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: To date I have not had the opportunity to speak with or meet these Defra Ministers, as a meeting requested with Caroline Spelman MP in June was declined.

I am however, due to meet with the Defra Secretary of State and other Devolved Ministers on the 25th October 2011. I have also met with the Defra Minister Richard Benyon on the 19th July.

I have written to Caroline Spelman MP six times and Jim Paice MP was copied in to a letter I sent to his Ministerial colleague.

Department of Education

School Enrolment in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the current enrolment number for each (i) primary school; and (ii) post-primary school in the North Antrim constituency.

(AQW 1568/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):

The information requested is detailed in the tables below.

The latest information available relates to the 2010/11 school year.

ENROLMENTS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY 2010/11

School name	Enrolment
Armoy Primary School	47
Ballycastle Integrated Primary School	154
Ballykeel Primary School	350
Ballymena Primary School	316
Ballymoney Controlled Integrated Primary School	267
Balnamore Primary School	104
Barnish Primary School	76
Braid Primary School	16
Braidside Integrated Primary School	358
Broughshane Primary School	319
Buick Memorial Primary School	356
Bushmills Primary School	117
Bushvalley Primary School	149
Camphill Primary School	375
Carnaghts Primary School	102
Carniny Primary School	269
Carrowreagh Primary School	71
Clough Primary School	168
Cloughmills Primary School	33
Dalriada School	79
Dunclug Primary School	86
Dunseverick Primary School	131
Eden Primary School	89
Fourtowns Primary School	219
Gaelscoil an Chastil	80
Garryduff Primary School	64
Glenravel Primary School	155
Gracehill Primary School	436
Harryville Primary School	122
Hazelbank Primary School	96

School name	Enrolment
Kells & Connor Primary School	177
Kilmoyle Primary School	121
Kirkinriola Primary School	93
Knockahollet Primary School	98
Landhead Primary School	59
Leaney Primary School	292
Lislagan Primary School	102
Longstone Primary School	42
Millquarter Primary School	143
Moorfields Primary School	204
Portglenone Primary School	119
Rasharkin Primary School	66
St Anne's Primary School, Corkey	69
St Brigid's Primary School, Clogh Mills	79
St Brigid's Primary School, Ballymoney	194
St Brigid's Primary School, Ballymena	326
St Colmcille's Primary School, Ballymena	316
St Joseph's Primary School, Dunloy	323
St Mary's Primary School, Rathlin	7
St Mary's Primary School, Portglenone	208
St Mary's Primary School, Glenravel	72
St Olcan's Primary School, Armoy	53
St Patrick's & St Brigid's Primary School, Ballycastle	356
St Patrick's Primary School, Rasharkin	204
St Patrick's Primary School, Loughguile	191
St Paul's Primary School, Ahoghill	32
Straidbilly Primary School	97
The Diamond Primary School	130
The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Primary School	68
Tildarg Primary School	74

ENROLMENTS AT POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY 2010/11

School name	Enrolment
Ballee Community High School	298
Ballycastle High School	365
Ballymena Academy	1,206
Ballymoney High School	661
Cambridge House Grammar School	1,044
Cross and Passion College	770
Cullybackey High School	689
Dalriada School	849
Dunclug College	639
Dunluce High School	488
Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney	218
Slemish College	753
St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena	948
St Patrick's College, Ballymena	524

Source: School census.

Note:

Figures for primary schools include pupils in nursery, reception and Year 1 – Year 7 classes.

Figures for post-primary schools include pupils in Year 8 – Year 14.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what savings his Department would have made if the Education and Skills Authority had been established as originally scheduled.

(AQW 1578/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Whilst the major aim for the establishment of a single Education and Skills Authority was the improvement of educational outcomes for all, it would also have delivered key financial benefits with more streamlined and effective administrative support for those delivering education services, releasing funding for reallocation to front-line services.

The initial estimated savings expected to be made when ESA was to be established was £8.3m in 2009-10 and £13.0m in 2010-11.

Agreement on the establishment of ESA will ensure greater consistency and efficiency in service delivery. Without it, scarce resources will continue to be spent on unnecessary bureaucracy and spread too thinly over existing institutions.

Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education how many students who applied for a place at Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh in 2010 and 2011 attended an Exceptional Circumstances Body hearing; and of these how many were successful.

(AQW 1617/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since the Exceptional Circumstances Body (ECB) came into being on 1 June 2010 I am advised by the Secretariat of the Body that it has taken receipt of 14 applications which relate to children where it has been claimed that exceptional circumstances exist requiring their admission to Drumragh Integrated College.

The ECB does not operate on a calendar year basis, and does not therefore maintain statistics in this format. The Body's records are structured to reflect the fact that the issue of placement letters at the conclusion of the transfer procedure (towards the end of May each year) stimulates the core business of the Body, which takes place during the period June to October. The Body is not however restricted to Year 8 applications, and may take receipt of a Year 8-12 application at any point in the year.

During the Body's first year of activity (1 June 2010 to 26 May 2011) it received 9 applications referenced to this school, fewer than 5 of which were unsuccessful, with the remaining successful applications resulting in directions that these children be admitted on a supernumerary basis. During the Body's second year of activity (27 May 2011 to date) it has so far received 5 applications referenced to this school.

Information on specific numbers of children, where those numbers relate to fewer than 5, have not been provided in this answer, as information in relation to applications treated by the Exceptional Circumstances Body is considered sensitive and therefore subject to the Department's disclosure policy on statistical information relating to children.

Funding for Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how much additional funding has been allocated by his Department to (i) the Education and Library Boards; and (ii) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, since 1 April 2011.

(AQW 1622/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Additional funding has been allocated, since 1 April 2011 as follows

	Schools Related Recurrent¹ £'000	Youth Recurrent² £'000	Schools Related Capital² £'000	Youth Capital² £'000
Education & Library Boards	52,885	24,268	50,739	1,619
CCMS	928			

Notes:

- 1 This 'additional' funding is in respect of specific earmarked initiatives that were included in my Department's 2011/12 financial plans and allocated when the appropriate information was received from Education and Library Boards/CCMS.
- 2 All Youth and capital allocations for the 2011/12 year have been allocated after 1 April 2011.

Exceptional Circumstances Body

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education (i) whether parents of students who apply to the Exceptional Circumstances Body seeking admission to a particular post-primary school are entitled to comprehensive feedback if they are unsuccessful; and (ii) for his Department's definition of 'comprehensive' in relation to this feedback.

(AQW 1644/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is reasonable for applicants to any decision-making body to expect to receive a full explanation for any decisions that result from an application. As the Exceptional Circumstances Body operates independent of the Department of Education, it would be inappropriate for the Department to

seek to specify the level of detail that should be supplied by the Body in communicating feedback to applicants.

I understand that all applicants to the Body, whether successful or unsuccessful, receive feedback which is referenced to the three tests which must be applied to the evidence presented in order to determine whether or not a child must attend a specified post-primary school due to the exceptional circumstances being claimed.

I am advised that if an applicant is unsuccessful and receives feedback which is unclear, or which is considered by the applicant to be lacking in substance, he/she may request, through the Body's Secretariat, further clarification from the Chairperson of the panel that heard that particular case. These arrangements are designed to help applicants fully comprehend each decision made by the Body.

School Enrolment in the North Down Constituency

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the current enrolment number for each (i) primary school; and (ii) post-primary school in the North Down constituency.

(AQW 1685/11-15)

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

The latest information available relates to the 2010/11 school year.

ENROLMENTS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY 2010/11

School name	Enrolment
Ballyholme Primary School	593
Ballymagee Primary School	409
Ballyvester Primary School	68
Bangor Central Primary School	572
Bloomfield Primary School	332
Clandeboye Primary School	132
Connor House Preparatory School	85
Crawfordsburn Primary School	219
Donaghadee Primary School	418
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	226
Glenlola Collegiate	83
Grange Park Primary School	363
Hollywood Primary School	324
Kilcooley Primary School	144
Kilmaine Primary School	670
Millisle Primary School	172
Rathmore Primary School	551
Redburn Primary School	76
St Anne's Primary School, Donaghadee	31
St Comgall's Primary School, Bangor	290

School name	Enrolment
St Malachy's Primary School, Bangor	330
St Patrick's Primary School, Holywood	217
Sullivan Upper School	184
Towerview Primary School	369

ENROLMENTS AT POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY 2010/11

School name	Enrolment
Bangor Academy and 6th Form College	1,412
Bangor Grammar School	901
Glenlola Collegiate	1,073
Priory College	481
St Columbanus' College, Bangor	558
Sullivan Upper School	1,070

Source: School census October 2010.

Note:

Figures for primary schools include pupils in nursery, reception and Year 1 – Year 7 classes.

Figures for post-primary schools include pupils in Year 8 – Year 14.

Department for Social Development

Jobs and Benefits Project

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister for Social Development when his Department intends to roll-out further the Jobs and Benefits Project.

(AQO 269/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Jobs and Benefits service has been introduced into 27 offices across Northern Ireland, however at this juncture it is not possible to introduce it into the remaining 8 offices as no capital funding has been made available to the Department to complete the roll-out. While it is not possible to continue with the roll-out of new or substantially refurbished offices as originally envisaged, both my colleague, the Minister for Employment and Learning and I remain committed to maintaining and improving services to customers and will seek to take advantage of future opportunities to complete the introduction of the Jobs & Benefits service on an office by office basis. There is, however, no timeline for this work and progress will be subject to the identification of funding.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 9 September 2011

(AQW 1304/11-15)

Work is in progress to develop appropriate assessment tools for trout and a report is expected in early 2012. The status of adult salmon stocks on the River Maine is measured against a specific conservation limit (CL) for the river. The CL for the River Maine is expressed as the number of eggs required to seed the available accessible habitat and the annual attainment against CL from 2005-10 is outlined in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. ATTAINMENT OF CL ON THE RIVER MAINE 2005-2010

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
% Attainment of CL	42	96	170	68	61

DCAL works within the guidelines specified under the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 as amended to safeguard the migratory run of salmon and trout within the Department's jurisdiction. In 2007 the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) took over the responsibility of investigating water pollution incidents and prosecuting offenders under the Water Order. DCAL works closely with the NIEA where a fish kill occurs as result of a pollution incident.

The River Maine has been surveyed annually at over 100 monitoring sites since 2002 and an annual index of recruitment has been generated to monitor trends in abundance over time. The annual fry index for the River Maine catchment is detailed in Table 2 below

TABLE 2 ANNUAL FRY INDEX RIVER MAINE

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
No Fry	4.38	9.27	5.17	5.00	3.08	3.59	5.65	4.68	3.41
5 Min									

Three DCAL Fishery Protection Officers (Bailiffs) work in the Northern Area which covers the River Maine system. Fishery Protection Officers operate an On Call system from June to December to respond to reports of illegal fishing activity in the DCAL operational area. In addition, planned patrols are carried out both during the week and at weekends to detect breaches of Fisheries Legislation on the River Maine.

The former Fisheries Conservancy Board (FCB) employed 12 Fishery Protection Officers ten years ago covering the North with the exception of the Foyle and Carlingford areas, which are under the jurisdiction of the Loughs Agency. The Fishery Protection Officers worked a rota basis of 6 hours per day for 6 days a week. The former FCB employed 2 Fishery Protection Officers on the River Maine area. DCAL have 3 Fishery Protection Officers appointed to the Northern Area which includes the River Maine catchment area.



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