

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 23 September 2011

Volume 66, No WA3

Contents

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	71
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	73
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	77
Department of Education	78
Department for Employment and Learning.....	89
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	92
Department of the Environment.....	97
Department of Finance and Personnel	103
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.....	105
Department of Justice	128
Department for Regional Development.....	146
Department for Social Development	164
Northern Ireland Assembly Commission.....	172

Suggested amendments or corrections will be considered by the Editor.
They should be sent to:

The Editor of Debates, Room 248, Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX.
Tel: 028 9052 1135 · e-mail: simon.burrowes@niassembly.gov.uk

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

Assembly Members

Agnew, Steven (North Down)
Allister, Jim (North Antrim)
Anderson, Ms Martina (Foyle)
Anderson, Sydney (Upper Bann)
Attwood, Alex (West Belfast)
Beggs, Roy (East Antrim)
Bell, Jonathan (Strangford)
Boylan, Cathal (Newry and Armagh)
Boyle, Ms Michaela (West Tyrone)
Bradley, Dominic (Newry and Armagh)
Bradley, Ms Paula (North Belfast)
Brady, Mickey (Newry and Armagh)
Buchanan, Thomas (West Tyrone)
Byrne, Joe (West Tyrone)
Campbell, Gregory (East Londonderry)
Clarke, Trevor (South Antrim)
Clarke, Willie (South Down)
Cochrane, Mrs Judith (East Belfast)
Copeland, Michael (East Belfast)
Craig, Jonathan (Lagan Valley)
Cree, Leslie (North Down)
Dallat, John (East Londonderry)
Dickson, Stewart (East Antrim)
Dobson, Mrs Jo-Anne (Upper Bann)
Doherty, Pat (West Tyrone)
Douglas, Sammy (East Belfast)
Dunne, Gordon (North Down)
Durkan, Mark H (Foyle)
Easton, Alex (North Down)
Eastwood, Colum (Foyle)
Elliott, Tom (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Farry, Dr Stephen (North Down)
Flanagan, Phil (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Ford, David (South Antrim)
Foster, Mrs Arlene (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Frew, Paul (North Antrim)
Gardiner, Samuel (Upper Bann)
Gildernew, Ms Michelle (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Girvan, Paul (South Antrim)
Givan, Paul (Lagan Valley)
Hale, Mrs Brenda (Lagan Valley)
Hamilton, Simon (Strangford)
Hay, William (Speaker)
Hilditch, David (East Antrim)
Humphrey, William (North Belfast)
Hussey, Ross (West Tyrone)
Irwin, William (Newry and Armagh)
Kelly, Mrs Dolores (Upper Bann)
Kelly, Gerry (North Belfast)
Kennedy, Danny (Newry and Armagh)
Kinahan, Danny (South Antrim)
Lewis, Mrs Pam (South Antrim)
Lo, Ms Anna (South Belfast)
Lunn, Trevor (Lagan Valley)
Lynch, Seán (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Lyttle, Chris (East Belfast)
McCallister, John (South Down)
McCann, Fra (West Belfast)
McCann, Ms Jennifer (West Belfast)
McCarthy, Kieran (Strangford)
McCartney, Raymond (Foyle)
McCausland, Nelson (North Belfast)
McClarty, David (East Londonderry)
McCrea, Basil (Lagan Valley)
McCrea, Ian (Mid Ulster)
McDevitt, Conall (South Belfast)
McDonnell, Dr Alasdair (South Belfast)
McElduff, Barry (West Tyrone)
McGimpsey, Michael (South Belfast)
McGlone, Patsy (Mid Ulster)
McGuinness, Martin (Mid Ulster)
McIlveen, David (North Antrim)
McIlveen, Miss Michelle (Strangford)
McKay, Daithí (North Antrim)
McKevitt, Mrs Karen (South Down)
McLaughlin, Mitchel (South Antrim)
McMullan, Oliver (East Antrim)
McNarry, David (Strangford)
McQuillan, Adrian (East Londonderry)
Maginness, Alban (North Belfast)
Maskey, Alex (South Belfast)
Maskey, Paul (West Belfast)
Molloy, Francie (Mid Ulster)
Morrow, The Lord (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Moutray, Stephen (Upper Bann)
Murphy, Conor (Newry and Armagh)
Nesbitt, Mike (Strangford)
Newton, Robin (East Belfast)
Ní Chuilín, Carál (North Belfast)
Ó hOisín, Cathal (East Londonderry)
O'Dowd, John (Upper Bann)
O'Neill, Mrs Michelle (Mid Ulster)
Overend, Mrs Sandra (Mid Ulster)
Poots, Edwin (Lagan Valley)
Ramsey, Pat (Foyle)
Ramsey, Ms Sue (West Belfast)
Ritchie, Ms Margaret (South Down)
Robinson, George (East Londonderry)
Robinson, Peter (East Belfast)
Ross, Alastair (East Antrim)
Ruane, Ms Caitríona (South Down)
Sheehan, Pat (West Belfast)
Spratt, Jimmy (South Belfast)
Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 23 September 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Social Investment Fund

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how much has been spent to date under the Social Investment Fund; and (ii) how much is estimated to be spent in the remainder of the current financial year.

(AQW 1611/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The policy is currently being developed and is at an advanced stage. Therefore the spend part of the process has not yet commenced.

We have given the commitment that the fund will remain an £80 million fund. Therefore any monies not processed this year will be re-profiled across years 2, 3 and 4.

Draft Childcare Strategy

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what measures have been put in place to utilise the first £3 million funding of the £12 million funding that has been ring-fenced to progress the draft Childcare Strategy.

(AQW 1736/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are working closely with Departments and with stakeholders, through the Ministerial led Poverty and Social Inclusion Stakeholder Forum, to seek to maximise uptake of the new additional monies ring-fenced for Childcare.

Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the current investment commitments under the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland broken down by constituency; and for their assessment of the investment in North Antrim.

(AQW 1754/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Information on the progress of projects in the Investment Strategy is made available to MLAs on a monthly basis for their constituencies, and is also published on a website that provides details for all the constituencies at:

http://www.isni.gov.uk/projects_ctl.aspx.

The North Antrim constituency is benefiting from new investment in roads, transport, social housing, schools, water and waste management through projects that are completed or currently underway.

Budget Review Group

Mr F McCann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the work of the Budget Review Group.

(AQO 312/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ministerial Budget Review Group is continuing its work during this Assembly term. The Group's work includes exploring additional potential revenue raising options and taking forward the Review of Arm's Length Bodies so that recommendations can be made to the Executive.

The last Budget Review Group meeting took place on 15 June 2011 and, following further development of the work over the summer period, it is expected that the Group will be convened again in early autumn.

Head of the Civil Service

Dr McDonnell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the process and timeframe for the appointment of the successor to the Head of the Civil Service; and whether the process is seeking candidates both internally and externally.

(AQO 346/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Following confirmation by Sir Bruce Robinson that he is to retire, the appointment process for the new Head of the Civil Service is underway.

The present process is by an internal competition. The successful candidate will be Secretary to the Executive, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Permanent Secretary for OFMDFM.

The particular skills set required for this challenging position necessitate, or at least provide a presumption in favour of, a thorough understanding and direct experience of working at a senior level within the devolved administration.

In both London and Dublin this appointment is also an internal process.

Applications were invited by 26 August from suitably qualified candidates within the Northern Ireland Civil Service who possess the relevant skills and experience. Clearly if this approach did not provide a satisfactory outcome we would reconsider.

Applicants have been interviewed by an external recruitment panel with considerable experience of recruiting to the highest level of the Civil Service and the wider public and private sectors.

The final stage will be for us to consider the panel's recommendations on suitable candidates.

It is hoped that this process will be completed shortly.

We believe that a similar approach should be repeated for some other appointments to the Senior Civil Service in the future and we will bring a paper to our Executive colleagues on this subject.

Maze/Long Kesh: Peace-building and Conflict Resolution Centre

Mr B McCrea asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the funding application to the Special EU Programmes Body for the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQO 350/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre funding application is currently with the Special European Union Programmes Body. We understand that a decision may be expected in November.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Village Renewal Funding

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what support is available under Village Renewal Funding to assist villages to produce their 5 year village plans; and what steps she proposes to take to ensure that Departments and sub-regional bodies work cross-sectorally to ensure that there is a coherent strategy for rural development.

(AQW 1771/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Under Measure 3.5 'Village renewal' of Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, a budget of £12 million has been made available to the seven Joint Council Committees (JCCs) implementing the Axis on the Departments behalf. The main purpose of the measure is to enable and encourage residents of villages and surrounding areas to create a vision and an integrated action plan to ensure the full potential of such areas is achieved and to support integrated village initiatives. The action plans should include an analysis of what needs to be done and reference to possible sources that could implement these including government departments, local authorities or other statutory bodies.

The identification of villages that will receive Axis 3 assistance is a decision for the individual cluster to take. DARD has provided detailed guidance to all clusters on the Village Renewal process to be adopted via Axis 3.

In addition to this guidance, the Rural Network for NI (RNNI) has set up a thematic group involving representatives of all seven council clusters.

Cluster representatives been involved in undertaking study visits and in the drafting of additional guidance via this thematic group.

Village Renewal Funding

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she will ensure that rural community groups maximise the opportunities presented by Village Renewal Funding so that no monies are unallocated and returned to the EU Commission.

(AQW 1772/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under Measure 3.5 'Village renewal' of Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, a budget of £12 million has been made available to the seven Joint Council Committees (JCCs) implementing the Axis on the Departments behalf. DARD has provided detailed guidance to all clusters on the Village Renewal process to be adopted via Axis 3. Also through the NI Rural Network a thematic group has been established made up of Local Action Group (LAG) members from across the seven LAG areas. This group has been involved in several study visits and produced a booklet highlighting the village renewal process.

The programme is delivered using the LEADER approach which is a grassroots 'bottom up' system which will ensure that rural community groups are aware of and avail of the opportunities that exist within Measure 3.5. Additionally, funding has been provided through the Rural Development Programme to employ the services of a Village Renewal Facilitator to work on the ground and provide assistance where required.

The Village Renewal Measure is open to all rural groups representing villages in the north, regardless of size and capacity. It is hoped that newly formed and smaller groups will choose to avail of the services of the Facilitator.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is the maximum number of audits carried out by her Department and external bodies, up to and including European Level, that any

one project which is part of the current Rural Development Program may be subject to; and whether there is a minimum project value to which any of these audits would not be applicable.

(AQW 1817/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The EU has introduced a number of audit and verification control checks to ensure that expenditure by Member States is in compliance with EU Regulation 65/2011. The number and type of audit checks applied will be dependent on the Rural Development Measure to which an applicant has successfully applied and submitted a claim.

Whilst it would be unlikely, it is the case that any one project submitting claims under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) could potentially be subjected to up to 6 Audits and Verification Checks in any one financial year. The assumption for this is:

- (i) For all successful grant applications to the RDP, DARD's Internal Audit Unit, NIAO and The Commission Auditors have the authority to carry out an audit in accordance with their audit strategies. An examination of DARD's procedures could result in audit visits to grant recipients.
- (ii) All successful applications to the RDP will be subjected to an administration check as required by Articles 11 and 24 of EC Reg 65/2011. In respect of Axes 1 & 3 of the RDP, DARD staff carry out a re-performance check on a sample of claims.
- (iii) Beneficiaries may also be subject to on the spot checks in accordance with Articles 12 and 25 of the Regulation. These checks must cover at least 5% of all beneficiaries applying to animal and area based schemes for each claim period and at least 5% of the expenditure of other schemes.
- (iv) Investment projects under Axis 1 and 3 (including Leader) may also be subject to ex post checks in accordance with Article 29. This check must cover at least 1% of EAFRD expenditure.

I would re-iterate that that all applicants will be not be subjected to all these checks but they will be subjected to at least one administration check.

There is no minimum project value to which any of these audits would be applicable.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what risks her Department has identified in each Joint Council Committee or Local Area Group in the Rural Development Programme that necessitate a level of audit of 50 percent and above.

(AQW 1835/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The audit to which the member refers is the re-performance checks undertaken by my Department's Rural Development Programme Compliance Unit (PCU) in respect of project administration checks performed by Joint Council Committees (JCCs) under Article 24 of Community Regulations 65/2011. These re-performance checks provide two key functions. First and foremost, they act as a support mechanism where, through the re-performance process, PCU and local Rural Development Division officials provide JCC staff with ongoing advice and guidance to enable them to address issues arising from administration, management and approval of individual projects under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme. Such issues will include applicant reliability, eligibility of project for funding, public procurement requirements and so on.

The second function of re-performance checks is to provide the Department, as the Paying Agency for EU funds and custodian of National monies, with assurances that JCC's and LAGs are compliant with agreed operating rules and that they continue to make good progress in administering and managing Axis 3 projects at a local level. This ongoing assessment evaluates a number of potential risk factors, which apply to all JCCs/LAGs, and include:

- The volume of payments processed by the JCC within each of the Axis 3 measures.
- The ability to test payments processed by individual JCCs in each of the measures
- The number of projects which have been assessed by the JCC as high, medium or low risk.

- The number of findings / recommendations from various audits, including NIAO, DARD Internal Audit and DARD re-performance checks.
- Implementation of previous audit findings / recommendations.
- Ineligible expenditure identified by the various audit inspections.

I am pleased that performance to date by JCCs has enabled my Department to reduce re-performance checks on all JCCs by 50% and am confident that this will reduce further as and when JCCs have encountered and processed reasonable levels of projects from all the Axis 3 funding measures. The overall aim of my Department, working closely with JCCs and LAGs, is to ensure that Axis 3 of the RDP provides a fair, equitable and accountable funding process and where all projects approved meet the test of eligibility, public procurement requirements, value for money and other terms and conditions under EU and National funding regulations and rules. Failure to do so can lead to expenditure disqualification and even penalty fines, which my Department and JCCs/LAGs are equally determined to prevent.

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any meetings she has had with Northern Ireland's MPs in relation to the forthcoming negotiations on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

(AQW 1845/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have discussed the forthcoming reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with Pat Doherty MP MLA in his role as Assembly Private Secretary. However, I have not received requests from other local MPs for meetings on this issue. I would, of course, welcome any such requests and would be more than willing to meet with our MPs given the importance of CAP reform to the local agricultural industry.

Student Fee Freeze

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what alterations she has made to her departmental budget to accommodate the freeze in student fees.

(AQW 1938/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Budget reductions are required from 2012-13 onwards, therefore my department has not made any alterations to its 2011-12 budget to accommodate the freeze in student fees.

I have not yet made a decision on how my department will accommodate our budget reductions from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Veterinary Degree Courses in Northern Ireland

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with the relevant bodies regarding the provision of veterinary degree courses in Northern Ireland; and what veterinary courses are currently available.

(AQW 1940/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I recently met with the North of Ireland Veterinary Association and the British Veterinary Association. During this meeting, we discussed their concerns about the effects of university fees on veterinary students from the north of Ireland but did not discuss the provision of a veterinary degree course here.

A veterinary public health post-graduate course is available at the University of Ulster in conjunction with University College Dublin, and CAFRE provides part time courses in veterinary nursing at Further Education level. Veterinary science degree courses are available at seven universities in Britain and in University College Dublin. There are also a number of veterinary degree courses available in other EU Member States.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the set up costs; and (ii) maintenance costs to date for her Department's Rural Development Programme database.

(AQW 1960/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The database to which the Member refers is a multi-Departmental system procured by DFP. To date, set up costs associated with my Department's Rural Development Programme amount to £304,238 and associated maintenance costs total £111,534.

Angling Trust's Legal Challenge to the Water Framework Directive

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she is aware of the Angling Trust's legal challenge to the Water Framework Directive; and what action she is taking to protect the fishing industry in the event of the challenge succeeding.

(AQW 1999/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware that the Angling Trust and WWF UK halted a Judicial Review of the English Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plans for improving water quality under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). DOE have lead responsibility for the implementation of the WFD here. My Department works with DOE to meet the requirements of the WFD which are outlined in their River Basin Management Plans. This is done through the WFD Interdepartmental Working Group and bilateral meetings with the NIEA and engagement with stakeholders through the WFD Stakeholder Forum and Catchment Stakeholder Groups. I am not aware of any similar challenge to River Basin Management Plans here.

Forest Service's Business Plan 2011/12

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the Forest Service's Business Plan 2011/12 includes a target to extend the area of woodland cover by 200 hectares when this is lower than the figure that was achieved in 2010/11, given that if it was met it would take 400 years to double woodland cover rather than the 50 years committed to by the Executive in 2006.

(AQW 2017/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Forest Service Business Plan target to create 200 hectares of woodland under the Woodland Grant Scheme in 2011/12 is a realistic and achievable target. It reflects the recent uptake of woodland creation grants by landowners and is affordable given capital budgetary constraints. The Business Plan also identifies an associated target to develop proposals for new mechanisms to support woodland creation, in recognition that higher levels of planting will be required in future to achieve our long term aim.

The long-term aim, expressed in the Forestry Strategy (2006), seeks to increase woodland cover from 6% to 12% of land area over the next 50 years. The Strategy acknowledges, however, the strong tradition and desire that farmers have towards farming. This means that woodland expansion is likely to be slow in the early years of the 50 year period.

The Business Plan also includes a target to complete a report on woodland area and type in the north of Ireland and publish preliminary results. This will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the baseline woodland cover and type and help inform us about future woodland creation targets. In addition, I will be reviewing the effectiveness of the Strategy and the associated targets contained in the Business Plan.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Fish Stocks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the impact on fish stocks arising from poaching in inland waterways.

(AQW 1674/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Poaching is an illegal fishing activity and DCAL is concerned with any illegal fishing activity taking place throughout its operational area.

There is a wide range of complex factors that affect fish stocks and without specific information on the numbers of fish being taken by poachers it is difficult to give any meaningful assessment of the impact of poaching.

However, the loss of any adult fish has the immediate effect of reducing the numbers available for anglers and in the longer term reduces the potential breeding stock in that water.

Refurbishment of Windsor Park

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she intends to ensure that a social inclusion clause that will reflect the high levels of unemployment in the surrounding community is incorporated into the building contract for the planned refurbishment of Windsor Park.

(AQW 1729/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I can confirm that it is our intention that the governing body of association football will incorporate social inclusion clauses within the building contracts for the Windsor Park project. This will also apply to the governing bodies of rugby and Gaelic games. The content of the social clauses for inclusion in Construction Contracts have been devised by a Construction Industry Forum Sustainability Task Group. Central Procurement Directorate and the Department for Employment and Learning are currently in a series of discussions to agree standard social clauses for inclusion in all future public procurement contracts.

It is the intention to include social clause requirements for: the long term unemployed, apprentices and graduates and a six month pilot is currently in place. Such clauses will necessarily be compliant with existing procurement regulations.

Chairperson of Libraries NI

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the resignation of the Chairperson of Libraries NI (i) when she intends to appoint a new Chairperson; (ii) who will act as Chairperson of the Board of Libraries NI until a successor is appointed; and (iii) when she will appoint a full complement of councillors to the Board of Libraries NI.

(AQW 1901/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) In light of the resignation of the Chairperson of Libraries NI, I intend to appoint a new Chairperson as quickly as possible. The Appointment process has already commenced, and is being treated as urgent.
- (ii) It is my intention to appoint an Interim Chairperson before the end of September 2011 to act as Chairperson of the Board of Libraries NI.
- (iii) Officials are currently working on the process of appointing further Councillor members to the Libraries NI Board so that there is a full complement. The appointment process is likely to take a number of months to complete.

Department of Education

Current Deficit in Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the current deficit of (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools, broken down by (a) school type; and (b) Education and Library Board area. **(AQW 1618/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):

The latest full financial year for which this data is currently available is 2009/10. The data requested for each Education and Library Board Area is contained in the tables below.

BELFAST EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Type	Total Cumulative Deficit Amount at 31st March 2010
Controlled Primary	-£2,085,325
Maintained Primary	-£443,926
Controlled Integrated Primary	0
Irish Medium Primary	-£115,845
Other Maintained Primary	0
Controlled Post-Primary	-£309,198
Maintained Post-Primary	-£1,712,003
Controlled Integrated Post-Primary	0
Irish Medium Post-Primary	-£70,013
Controlled Grammar	0
Total	-£4,736,310

NORTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Type	Total Cumulative Deficit Amount at 31st March 2010
Controlled Primary	-£507,559
Maintained Primary	-£239,311
Controlled Integrated Primary	-£166,053
Irish Medium Primary	-£1,320
Other Maintained Primary	-£214
Controlled Post-Primary	-£697,227
Maintained Post-Primary	-£140,720
Controlled Integrated Post-Primary	-£199,067
Irish Medium Post-Primary	0
Controlled Grammar	-£165,376
Total	-£2,116,847

SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Type	Total Cumulative Deficit Amount at 31st March 2010
Controlled Primary	-£450,627
Maintained Primary	-£123,981
Controlled Integrated Primary	-£25,985
Irish Medium Primary	-£4,479
Other Maintained Primary	0
Controlled Post-Primary	-£79,759
Maintained Post-Primary	-£292,364
Controlled Integrated Post-Primary	-£34,965
Irish Medium Post-Primary	0
Controlled Grammar	0
Total	-£1,012,160

SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Type	Total Cumulative Deficit Amount at 31st March 2010
Controlled Primary	-£403,491
Maintained Primary	-£638,558
Controlled Integrated Primary	0
Irish Medium Primary	-£3,217
Other Maintained Primary	-£55,631
Controlled Post-Primary	-£305,420
Maintained Post-Primary	-£589,419
Controlled Integrated Post-Primary	0
Irish Medium Post-Primary	0
Controlled Grammar	0
Total	-£1,995,736

WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Type	Total Cumulative Deficit Amount at 31st March 2010
Controlled Primary	-£52,736
Maintained Primary	-£161,380
Controlled Integrated Primary	£0
Irish Medium Primary	£0

Other Maintained Primary	£0
Controlled Post-Primary	-£84,194
Maintained Post-Primary	-£297,163
Controlled Integrated Post-Primary	£0
Irish Medium Post-Primary	£0
Controlled Grammar	£0
Total	-£595,473

1979/10 Circular: The Greater Involvement of Young People in Northern Ireland

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Education what policy has overtaken the 1979/10 circular 'The Greater Involvement of Young People in Northern Ireland'; and (ii) based on what advice did he consider the withdrawal of the circular.

(AQW 1656/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) DE Circular 1979/10 which is titled "The Greater Involvement of Young People in the Youth Service" was published by the Department in 1979 and set out structural and funding arrangements considered necessary 32 years ago when the participation of young people was a relatively new concept. The wider participation environment for young people today is very different.

Since 1979, structures and good practice, as well as policy, have enabled the development of the participation environment. The development of new participation structures, the formal and non formal education curricula, and importantly, youth work practice, have all evolved significantly. Participation of young people in the youth service is now supported and encouraged as a matter of good practice and underpins the approach to work in this area. The introduction of 'A Model for Effective Practice' in 1997, its relaunch in 2003 and the recent launch of the guidance for part-time workers and volunteers "3 Core Principles" highlight the importance of participation as a key element of the youth work process.

- (ii) Officials reviewed the 1979 circular in detail to assess whether the provisions remained relevant before its withdrawal was considered. In carrying out this review, a number of discussions were held, both within the department and also with colleagues and interested parties such as the Youth Council and the Youth Forum. The review concluded that the provisions of the circular were not reflective of the current and emerging participation environment or consistent with the current funding schemes for youth work supported by DE or the governance and accountability requirements for funding.

I am committed to the active participation of young people in society and education and will seek to strengthen the arrangements for participation of young people within a much broader educational context through the youth service as part of the forthcoming "Priorities for Youth" policy.

Teaching Posts

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the guidelines for advertising teaching posts; (ii) the number of teaching posts that have been filled in the last 12 months, broken down by Education and Library Board; and (iii) how many of these posts were publicly advertised.

(AQW 1687/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools have separate but similar advertising policies contained in their respective Teaching Appointment Schemes. As a general rule, these require that positions expected to last six months or more should be publicly advertised. There are a number of exceptions including teachers appointed to comply with the requirements of the Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (N I) 2002 (where the teachers concerned have been employed continuously on fixed term contracts for a period of four years or more).
- (ii) The numbers of teaching posts filled in each education and library board area in the last 12 months and
- (iii) the numbers of these posts that were publicly advertised are as follows:

E&L Board Area	Posts Filled*	No of these Posts Advertised
Belfast	83	72
Western	148	148
North-Eastern	155	110
South-Eastern	164	164
Southern	147	147

* Excludes voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools.

Non-Executive Director

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education (i) why his Department has appointed a non-executive director to its departmental board; and (ii) to detail the remuneration for this appointment.

(AQW 1703/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- i) Independent non-executive directors are appointed to the Boards of all departments within the Executive to provide:-
- constructive challenge across the Board's business;
 - a fresh, objective perspective and new ideas;
 - improved rigour to Board processes;
 - specific expertise and experience;
 - a safe sounding board for new approaches; and
 - a balance to the mix of skills and personalities on the Board.

The recent appointment was to replace an outgoing non-executive director.

- ii) The remuneration of a non-executive director is £10,000 per annum.

Register of School Premises and Accommodation

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education whether there is a register of all school premises and accommodation owned and operated by (i) the Education and Library Boards; (ii) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; and (iii) other educational bodies whose students are funded by his Department.

(AQW 1732/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

The Education and Library Boards operate a database known as Manhattan that contains details of schools in all sectors and school related buildings in the controlled and maintained sectors. This is a

live system and is utilised for recording information for schools in all education sectors provided they are receiving funding by the Department.

Within the database a unique Department of Education number defines the Education and Library Board area in which the building is located, the type of institution and the management type ie whether belonging to the controlled, maintained or other educational sectors.

There may however be a small number of schools that are not included in the Manhattan database. These schools may be those that have recently been either in receipt of a new school build or refurbishment or alternatively been procured using private finance.

Maghera High School Site

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has for the site of Maghera High School.

(AQW 1775/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A Development Proposal to close Maghera High School was approved by the Department and the school closed on 31 August 2009. In accordance with procedures on the disposal of public sector assets, the matter was referred to the Central Advisory Unit (CAU) of LPS for central clearing.

Following interest by both CnaG and CCMS in the Maghera High School site, the Department wrote to the NEELB in December 2010 requesting that it did not demolish the property, or proceed with the open market sale of the site at this time to allow for further exploration of other potential educational uses.

To date, the Department has received no development proposals in relation to the Maghera High School site.

Language Strategy

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Education (i) whether his Department has commissioned a report on the Language Strategy; and (ii) the current position on the report and when it will be published.

(AQW 1813/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

My Department commissioned a report containing recommendations that might inform a modern languages strategy and has received a near final draft of that report from the QUB/UU Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies. The original commission, which predated the restoration of devolution, envisaged a wide ranging report that would focus on the place of language learning not just in schools but for the economy and for society more generally.

After engagement with other relevant departments, the feedback received has been relayed to the two universities and I expect that they will be in a position to submit their final report to me very shortly. Recognising that it will contain recommendations for other Ministers, I intend to circulate the final report to the Executive. As Education Minister I will also be looking carefully, within the resources available to me, at how best to move forward on those recommendations that are focused on the teaching and learning of modern languages in schools.

Enrolment Numbers in the East Derry Area

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the current enrolment numbers for each (a) primary school; and (b) post-primary school in the East Derry area; and (ii) for his assessment of the extent to which the schools in each sector are non-viable.

(AQW 1931/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) The current enrolment numbers for each (a) primary school and (b) post-primary school in the East Derry area are in the table below.

- (ii) The educational viability of a school is assessed against the six criteria as set out in the Sustainable Schools Policy, taking account of the school's individual circumstances. It is in the first instance a matter for the school managing authorities to determine the viability of schools and, where they are found to be non-viable, to bring forward proposals for consideration by the Department. Until such times as an area based approach to planning is developed and an assessment of each school is made in that context I am not in a position to comment on viability of schools in a particular area.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE EAST DERRY CONSTITUENCY – 2010/11

School	Total Enrolment	Enrolment Excluding Nursery & Reception (If Different)
Bellarena Primary School	35	
Ballykelly Primary School	267	241
Drumachose Primary School	228	
Cumber Claudy Primary School	131	
Limavady Central Primary School	475	
Drumrane Primary School	89	
St Canice's Primary School	104	
St Anthony's Primary School	32	
St Matthew's Primary School	86	
Termoncanice Primary School	560	508
St Mary's Primary School	199	
Listress Primary School	30	
Faughanvale Primary School	151	
St Aidan's Primary School Magilligan	43	
St Canice's Primary School	361	334
St Colmcille's Primary School	264	238
St Peter's & St Paul's Primary School	57	
St Finlough's Primary School, Sistrakeel	55	
St John's Primary School , dernaflaw	137	
St Mary's Gortnaghey Primary School	35	
Roe Valley Integrated Primary School	158	
Portrush Primary School	199	
Ballytober Primary School	66	
Carnalridge Primary School	170	
Culcrow Primary School	60	
Cullycapple Primary School	30	
Damhead Primary School	180	

School	Total Enrolment	Enrolment Excluding Nursery & Reception (If Different)
Hezlett Primary School	240	232
Killowen Primary School	168	
Portstewart Primary School	254	228
Millburn Primary School	413	
Kilrea Primary School	75	
D H Christie Memorial Primary School	403	
Castleroe Primary School	74	71
Macosquin Primary School	195	189
Harpurs Hill Primary School	203	175
Gorran Primary School	90	
Garvagh Primary School	124	
Ballysally Primary School	192	
Irish Society's Primary School	382	330
St Patrick's Primary School	85	83
Ballyhackett Primary School	46	43
St Columba's Primary School	100	96
St Colum's Primary School	192	
St Patrick's & St Joseph's Primary School	172	
St Malachy's Primary School	236	233
St John's Primary School	159	
St Columba's Primary School	186	160
Carhill Integrated Primary School	26	
Millstrand Integrated Primary School	193	165

POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE EAST DERRY CONSTITUENCY – 2010/11

School	Total Enrolment	Enrolment Yrs 8-12	Enrolment Yrs 13-15
Limavady High School	748	653	95
St Mary's Limavady	725	626	99
St Patricks & St Brigids High School	526	526	0
St Patrick's College	336	284	52
Limavady Grammar School	891	654	237
Garvagh High School	120	120	0
Coleraine College	304	261	43

School	Total Enrolment	Enrolment Yrs 8-12	Enrolment Yrs 13-15
St Joseph's College	363	294	69
St Paul's College	328	328	0
North Coast Integrated College	494	414	80
Coleraine High School	813	600	213
Coleraine Academical Institution	760	616	144
Loreto College	796	603	193
Dominican College	491	365	126

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost to his Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1948/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The cost to the Department of Education of its arm's-length bodies in 2010-11 and 2009-10 is shown in the following table:

	2010-11 £'000	2009-10 £'000
Belfast Education and Library Board	257,785	252,541
North-Eastern Education and Library Board	323,809	326,009
Southern Education and Library Board	348,118	346,228
South-Eastern Education and Library Board	281,806	288,696
Western Education and Library Board	325,412	324,260
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards	362	385
NI Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment	20,201	20,916
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	4,091	5,238
Youth Council for Northern Ireland	4,370	4,412
General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland	73	72
Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (Note 1)	142	196
Exceptional Circumstances Body (Note 2)	146	-
NI Council for Integrated Education	770	691
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	679	637
Total	1,567,764	1,570,281

Note 1 – Responsibility for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) transferred from the Department of Education to the Department of Justice with effect from 1 April 2011.

Note 2 – The Exceptional Circumstances Body (ECB) was created on 1 March 2010 and commenced business on 1 June 2010.

Education Network for Northern Ireland

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number and type of contracts that will be replaced as a result of the introduction of the Education Network for Northern Ireland; and (ii) what savings will be made.

(AQW 1963/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: ICT equipment and connectivity in schools is provided largely via the C2k managed service. It is currently funded centrally and is therefore free to schools. The level of provision is designed to ensure that schools are able to meet their statutory requirements to deliver ICT as a cross-curricular skill within the revised curriculum and to assess pupils using ICT as a cross-curricular skill, as well as providing a back office system for data recording, storage and analysis.

C2k is currently taking forward a major procurement exercise to secure a new service provider to deliver the next generation of education technology services under a single contract, to which it refers as EN(ni) – Education Network for Northern Ireland. These services will have added value as a result of recent technical developments and will offer schools greater flexibility and choice.

This new contract will replace the existing contracts, known as Lots, for: Local Area Networks, including PCs and laptops, in post-primary and special schools (Lot 3) and in primary schools (Lot 6); Wide Area Networking, which provides secure access to the Internet, e-mail and the LearningNI virtual learning environment (Lot 5); and the software licence to provide schools with a management information system.

Expenditure on C2k contracts from 2000/2001 to the end of the 2010/11 financial year has been some £363 million.

Through a procurement which makes the most of the general downturn in ICT prices, the Department intends to reduce spending in this area by £60 million over the 4 years of the current spending round (2011/12 to 2014/15).

The procurement is in its latter stages, with an Appointment of Bidder business case (ABC) currently being considered by the Department. Subject to approval of the ABC by the Department of Finance and Personnel, a Full Business Case will follow in October, and award of contract is projected for the end of November 2011.

C2k Contracts

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of C2k contracts since its introduction.

(AQW 1966/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: ICT equipment and connectivity in schools is provided largely via the C2k managed service. It is currently funded centrally and is therefore free to schools. The level of provision is designed to ensure that schools are able to meet their statutory requirements to deliver ICT as a cross-curricular skill within the revised curriculum and to assess pupils using ICT as a cross-curricular skill, as well as providing a back office system for data recording, storage and analysis.

C2k is currently taking forward a major procurement exercise to secure a new service provider to deliver the next generation of education technology services under a single contract, to which it refers as EN(ni) – Education Network for Northern Ireland. These services will have added value as a result of recent technical developments and will offer schools greater flexibility and choice.

This new contract will replace the existing contracts, known as Lots, for: Local Area Networks, including PCs and laptops, in post-primary and special schools (Lot 3) and in primary schools (Lot 6); Wide Area Networking, which provides secure access to the Internet, e-mail and the LearningNI virtual learning environment (Lot 5); and the software licence to provide schools with a management information system.

Expenditure on C2k contracts from 2000/2001 to the end of the 2010/11 financial year has been some £363 million.

Through a procurement which makes the most of the general downturn in ICT prices, the Department intends to reduce spending in this area by £60 million over the 4 years of the current spending round (2011/12 to 2014/15).

The procurement is in its latter stages, with an Appointment of Bidder business case (ABC) currently being considered by the Department. Subject to approval of the ABC by the Department of Finance and Personnel, a Full Business Case will follow in October, and award of contract is projected for the end of November 2011.

Education Network for Northern Ireland

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for an update on the introduction of the Education Network for Northern Ireland contract.

(AQW 1967/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: ICT equipment and connectivity in schools is provided largely via the C2k managed service. It is currently funded centrally and is therefore free to schools. The level of provision is designed to ensure that schools are able to meet their statutory requirements to deliver ICT as a cross-curricular skill within the revised curriculum and to assess pupils using ICT as a cross-curricular skill, as well as providing a back office system for data recording, storage and analysis.

C2k is currently taking forward a major procurement exercise to secure a new service provider to deliver the next generation of education technology services under a single contract, to which it refers as EN(ni) – Education Network for Northern Ireland. These services will have added value as a result of recent technical developments and will offer schools greater flexibility and choice.

This new contract will replace the existing contracts, known as Lots, for: Local Area Networks, including PCs and laptops, in post-primary and special schools (Lot 3) and in primary schools (Lot 6); Wide Area Networking, which provides secure access to the Internet, e-mail and the LearningNI virtual learning environment (Lot 5); and the software licence to provide schools with a management information system.

Expenditure on C2k contracts from 2000/2001 to the end of the 2010/11 financial year has been some £363 million.

Through a procurement which makes the most of the general downturn in ICT prices, the Department intends to reduce spending in this area by £60 million over the 4 years of the current spending round (2011/12 to 2014/15).

The procurement is in its latter stages, with an Appointment of Bidder business case (ABC) currently being considered by the Department. Subject to approval of the ABC by the Department of Finance and Personnel, a Full Business Case will follow in October, and award of contract is projected for the end of November 2011.

1979/10 Circular: The Greater Involvement of Young People in Northern Ireland

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education (i) whether he is aware of the decision taken by his Department to withdraw 1979/10 circular 'The Greater Involvement of Young People in Northern Ireland', which creates a formal relationship between his Department and the NI Youth Forum; and (ii) whether he would consider postponing the decision until the Committee for Education has further considered this matter.

(AQW 1979/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) I was consulted on the decision to withdraw DE Circular 1979/10, which is entitled 'The Greater Involvement of Young People in the Youth Service'. Following the establishment of the Youth Council in 1990, the Youth Council assumed the responsibility for funding Regional Voluntary Youth organisations in the north of Ireland, including the Youth Forum and thereby changing the relationship between the Department of Education and the Youth Forum.

- (ii) The circular was published by the Department of Education in 1979 and set out structural and funding arrangements considered necessary 32 years ago when the participation of young people was a relatively new concept. The wider participation environment for young people today is very different.

I welcome the Committee for Education's interest in this matter. However, the provisions of the circular are not being adhered to and are not enforced. Furthermore, as the removal of the circular does not diminish in any way the ability of the Forum, or any other representative group, to have their views heard and considered by officials and Ministers, I am not inclined to delay the withdrawal of the circular.

Home to School Transport Policy

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Education when he intends to review his Department's Home to School Transport policy.

(AQW 2043/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have already indicated to the Education Committee my view that we need to examine every aspect of the arrangements for home to school transport to identify scope for savings that can be released to support teaching and learning in classrooms.

It is in line with this that the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit of the Department of Finance and Personnel was engaged to review this area (amongst others) to explore the scope for efficiencies. Stage 1 of the review, published in March 2011, identified the Education and Library Board operational arrangements for home to school transport as an area for further investigation at Stage 2. I am currently awaiting the outcome of Stage 2 of the review.

While it will focus primarily on the scope for improving efficiency and reducing costs within the existing policy framework, I expect that it will also signal areas where policy change could yield further savings and I will want to consider those and other areas carefully and in the context of the wider financial climate before bringing forward any proposals for change.

Schools Sharing Resources or Classes

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the primary schools and post-primary schools currently involved in sharing resources or classes; and (ii) to provide an estimate of the savings made from schools sharing resources or classes.

(AQW 2051/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold the information requested. However, I know that many schools, both primary and post primary, do work together at a number of levels; post primary schools work in collaboration with each other in Area Learning Communities to deliver a wider range of courses for pupils from key Stage 4 and above and in many other areas, including the provision of out-of-school sporting and enrichment activities. The Extended Schools programme encourages neighbouring schools to share resources and facilities which benefits both pupils and the wider community in that it provides access to a greater range of opportunities. Of the schools eligible for the 2011/12 ES programme 434 (96%) are working in partnership with neighbouring schools.

While it is not possible to estimate savings when schools work together benefits accrue for the teachers involved, the pupils and the wider school and local community. I believe that schools working together to share resources and expertise can enhance the educational experience for the whole school community and can help to break down barriers – actual or perceived – through joint working. Schools working collaboratively in Area Learning Communities, for example, are able to reduce duplication and provide new opportunities for pupils that otherwise might not be available. One of the most positive developments over the last number of years has been the role the special schools sector has played in increasing collaborative delivery for pupils at these schools in partnership with mainstream schools.

Department for Employment and Learning

Northern Regional College Campus at Ballymoney

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) to outline his plans for the long-term sustainability of the Northern Regional College campus at Ballymoney; (ii) which courses are currently taught at this campus; and (iii) what additional courses will be developed and delivered at this campus in future.

(AQW 1594/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The Northern Regional College (NRC) and the Southern Regional College have jointly submitted a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the development of their estates. The SOC has been approved by my Department and by the Department of Finance and Personnel. The SOC, which is a high level examination of the issues and a range of options, has proposed a rationalisation of NRC's campuses, including the possible co-location of Coleraine and Ballymoney. Co-location on a permanent basis will require further examination through the completion of a more detailed Outline Business Case which is likely to take the colleges at least eighteen months to complete. No decisions will be taken on the future of the Ballymoney Campus ahead of the Outline Business Case being concluded and considered. It is important that an open mind is maintained with respect to the options for future provision in the Ballymoney area.

In the current academic year the Ballymoney campus is offering 56 full and part time further education courses across a range of academic and vocational areas. Two higher education courses are also on offer. Full details can be found at the following web address: http://www.nrc.ac.uk/course_search_details.asp?campus=3&type=0&category=0

Regarding future course provision, while the Department sets the strategic direction for the Further Education Sector, it is the responsibility of the individual colleges to design and deliver a curriculum offering that meets the needs of learners and employers across their areas. Northern Regional College will therefore be responsible for deciding the provision that will be made available at its Ballymoney campus.

Students from Northern Ireland Studying in the Republic of Ireland

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much his Department has spent on (i) fees; (ii) bursaries; and (iii) loans for students from Northern Ireland studying in the Republic of Ireland in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1606/11-15)

Dr Farry: All Northern Ireland domiciled students studying in the Republic of Ireland are eligible to have their university registration fee paid. In addition they can apply for a maintenance loan and higher education bursary, both of which are means tested. Details of the amounts paid in the last 5 academic years are detailed in the table overleaf.

Academic Year	Registration Fee £k	Maintenance Loan £k	Higher Education Bursary £k	Total £k
2005/06	404	1,867	276	2,547
2006/07	393	2,131	314	2,838
2007/08	489	2,261	301	3,051
2008/09	624	2,294	324	3,242
2009/10	1,047	2,370	361	3,778

Students Enrolments

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the (i) maximum capacity; and (ii) number of students enrolled in each regional college, including the Belfast Metropolitan College, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1800/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) The Department does not hold information on the maximum capacity of Further Education Colleges. Maximum capacity is complex, and would be determined by a number of factors including, for example, the fact that most courses have minimum and maximum class sizes to take account of course viability and quality considerations respectively. In addition, the minimum and maximum range is likely to vary according to the type of provision being delivered. Actual enrolments on individual courses will vary between these minimum and maximum numbers. Therefore, the Department is not in a position to provide information on the maximum capacity of Further Education Colleges.
- (ii) The tables below detail the number of enrolments at the Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) Colleges in each of the last three years for which data are available. These enrolments include all provision delivered by the Colleges which includes mainstream FE, Higher Education, Essential Skills, Entitlement Framework, cost recovery and training and have been broken down by professional and technical (i.e. those with a qualification aim) and non-professional and technical.

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL ENROLMENTS AT NI FE COLLEGES

FE College	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Belfast Metropolitan	38,046	37,594	42,567
Northern Regional	21,089	19,822	21,654
South Eastern Regional	21,760	23,465	26,044
Southern Regional	27,209	27,309	32,839
South West	17,004	17,148	20,005
North West Regional	16,992	17,148	20,241
Total	142,100	142,486	163,350

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

NON PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL ENROLMENTS AT NI FE COLLEGES

FE College	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Belfast Metropolitan	12,603	13,460	12,288
Northern Regional	7,093	4,359	4,146
South Eastern Regional	6,102	4,561	3,500
Southern Regional	9,358	7,970	7,542
South West	6,403	5,696	4,796
North West Regional	4,450	4,341	4,972
Total	46,009	40,387	37,244

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

TOTAL ENROLMENTS AT NI FE COLLEGES

FE College	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Belfast Metropolitan	50,649	51,054	54,855
Northern Regional	28,182	24,181	25,800
South Eastern Regional	27,862	28,026	29,544
Southern Regional	36,567	35,279	40,381
South West	23,407	22,844	24,801
North West Regional	21,442	21,489	25,213
Total	188,109	182,873	200,594

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

Notes: (1) The latest available data are for 2009/10.

Student Fees in Great Britain

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of the increase in student fees in Great Britain, whether her Department has any plans to assist veterinary students who travel there to study.

(AQW 1941/11-15)

Dr Farry: Veterinary students can avail of the standard student financial support package, including (subject to approval of the appropriate legislation) from academic year 2012/2013, tuition fee loans of up to £9000, maintenance loans of up to £6,780, maintenance grant of up to £3,475 and supplementary grants, including childcare grant and disabled students' allowances. Any additional financial assistance for veterinary students who travel to Great Britain would be a matter for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, who hold the policy remit for veterinary students.

Educational Funding for Kilcooley Women's Centre, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to help with educational funding for Kilcooley Women's Centre, Bangor.

(AQW 1972/11-15)

Dr Farry: I refer the Member to my previous answer. AQW 412/11-15

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the cost to his Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 2067/11-15)

Dr Farry: The cost to the Department for Employment and Learning of its Arms Length Bodies in each of the last two years was as follows;

	2010/11 £'000	2009/10 £'000
Construction Industry Training Board	-	-
Ulster Supported Employment Agency	634	621
Labour Relations Agency	3,110	3,695

The cost represents Grant in Aid paid to each organisation by the Department, as reported in the Annual Resource Accounts. Construction Industry Training Board is funded through a statutory levy for the purposes of encouraging employers to participate in training and to fund the Board's activities.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Invest NI Funding

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of whether the level of funding awarded by Invest NI to encourage companies to set up would be affected by a reduction in the Corporation Tax rate.

(AQW 1566/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): A key advantage for Northern Ireland in securing a lower corporation tax rate is that this will enable Invest NI to pursue target markets in which it currently cannot compete. A reduction in corporation tax will not only attract foreign investment, but, importantly, it will promote Northern Ireland as a place where investors might increase profits, rather than as a place to reduce costs.

If Northern Ireland were to secure a lower rate of Corporation Tax, Invest NI would still wish to pursue the existing FDI markets where grant assistance plays a critical role and therefore it would be necessary to have financial incentives available. It would also help to offset the impact of the reductions in SFA thresholds which came into force on 1 January 2011 and have constrained Invest NI's ability to leverage FDI through higher levels of grant support.

It is not therefore anticipated that the current levels of funding awarded by Invest NI will be reduced.

Invest NI Start A Business Programme

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to the Invest NI 'Start A Business Programme' (i) to detail the criteria for receiving financial assistance after completion of the Programme; (ii) what further advice or support is available to those who complete the Programme but are not offered financial assistance; and (iii) what focus is made on rural development and enterprise by the Programme.

(AQW 1607/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest Northern Ireland's Go For It programme is targeted at early stage entrepreneurs and offers individuals a bespoke package of training and support to improve business capability. Participants are given advice on finance, marketing, sales and business planning to give their business the best possible chance of success, equipping the individual to develop their own business plan. The Programme does not offer financial support to the business start up.

Alongside the programme, the Short Term Employment Scheme (STES) provides business start incentive support. STES encompasses a set of measures to provide assistance over the next four years to 2015, with the aim of increasing employment and improving employability.

The business start incentive grant provides support to both participants on the "Go For It" programme from the identified 36 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) and to young people aged between 16 – 24 not in education, employment or training who complete the programme to business plan approval stage and who subsequently start a business and trade independently.

Invest NI and other stakeholders, including Councils, provide a range of business support programmes for the wider business base post business start up.

The Go For It programme is delivered across Northern Ireland, including rural areas, and since 2009 41% of the business plan completions have been from rural areas.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given that a company suspended its hydraulic fracturing activities in Blackpool after two minor earthquakes were related to its work, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that any hydraulic fracturing being carried out in Northern Ireland does not damage the environment.

(AQW 1665/11-15)

Mrs Foster: No applications have been made to carry out hydraulic fracturing in Northern Ireland and it is unlikely that such an application will be submitted before 2014. The Department of the Environment has primary responsibility for environmental protection but DETI will work closely with DOE to ensure that the activities that are specific to shale gas exploration are adequately regulated and monitored. In the interim, DETI and NIEA will consult with their counterparts in GB and Ireland, and take into account the recommendations of recent and forthcoming studies from the USA, to ensure that appropriate controls in Northern Ireland conform to highest regulatory standards.

Exploratory Drilling of Shale Gas

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail any licences that have been issued for the exploratory drilling of shale gas, including whether there are any conditions on which chemicals are permitted for use.

(AQW 1694/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Four petroleum licences have been issued in Northern Ireland in 2011, one of which is for shale gas in County Fermanagh issued to Tamboran Resources Pty Ltd. However, no exploration drilling can be carried out without additional consents from several regulatory authorities including DETI, HSENI, Planning Service and NIEA. Should a drilling application be submitted, the transport, storage and use of chemicals would be regulated under the relevant legislation to prevent the input of hazardous substances into groundwater, and for pollution prevention and control. In any case, the company has stated that they would not use any chemical additives for hydraulic fracturing.

Proposed Hydraulic Fracturing in Fermanagh

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether an Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposed hydraulic fracturing in Fermanagh.

(AQW 1695/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has not yet received an application for consent to drill from Tamboran Resources Pty Ltd on the petroleum licence they hold in Fermanagh. If the company wishes to drill an exploration well, and carry out hydraulic fracturing, they are required to submit an application for planning permission which will be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment. In addition, DETI would carry out a Habitats Regulation Assessment of the potential impact of the proposed drilling programme on Natura 2000 sites. These processes would inform any decision as to whether, and under what conditions, drilling could proceed.

Unemployed Trained Teachers

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of unemployed trained teachers currently available for work.

(AQW 1733/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Northern Ireland Claimant Count data can be used to provide information on the number of unemployment benefit claimants, whose usual or sought occupation is as a 'Teaching Professional'. Since the number of unemployed teachers fluctuates month on month in line with the academic year, it is best to provide the average monthly number of claimants during the last year.

In the year to August 2011, an average of 660 unemployed claimants stated that their usual occupation was that of a Teaching Professional. During the same period, an average of 775 unemployed claimants stated they were seeking employment as a Teaching Professional.

Cruise Liners

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) to detail the number of cruise liners that have docked in the bay of Ballycastle, or any other bay along the North coast, in each of the last four years; (ii) to provide details of the cruise liners that docked; and (iii) what plans are in place to increase the number of cruise liners visiting the North Antrim coast.

(AQW 1743/11-15)

Mrs Foster: (i)

The number of cruise ships that have docked in Ballycastle or any other bay along the North Coast in the last four years are detailed below:-

BALLYCASTLE HARBOUR

2011	4 cruise ships
2010	2 cruise ships
2009	1 cruise ship

PORTRUSH HARBOUR

2011	3 cruise ships
2010	9 cruise ships
2009	4 cruise ships
2008	4 cruise ships

(ii)

DETAILS OF CRUISE LINERS AT BALLYCASTLE HARBOUR

Date	Ship	Passengers	Crew	Dock
23/09/2011	Hebridean Princess	43 To be confirmed	38 To be confirmed	Ballycastle Harbour
03/09/2011	Silver Cloud	250	190	Tender Port Ballycastle
08/06/2011	Hebridean Princess	47	38	Ballycastle Harbour
04/05/2011	Ocean Nova	70	38	Anchored Rathin Bay
08/08/2010	Hebridean Princess	43	36	TBC
21/06/2010	Hebridean Princess	35	40	TBC
09/05/2009	Polar Star	90	40	Anchored Rathlin Bay

DETAILS OF CRUISE LINERS AT PORTRUSH HARBOUR

Date	Ship	Passengers	Crew	Dock
25/08/2011	MS Clipper Odyssey	Not available	Not known	Portrush
08/07/2011	MS Clipper Odyssey	79	Not known	Portrush
29/06/2011	MV Minerva	191	Not known	Portrush
11/10/2010	MS Quest	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Port Ellen, Islay
25/07/2010	Ms Prince Albert 11	Not available	Not known	Portrush
22/07/2010	MS Prince Albert 11	Not available	Not known	Portrush
24/06/2010	Ms Island Sky	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Rathlin
19/06/2010	Ms Expedition	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Belfast
26/05/2010	Ms Prince Albert	Not available	Not known	Portrush
09/05/2010	MS Polar Star	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Rathlin
07/05/2010	MS Expedition	91	Not known	Portrush/onward to Rathlin
07/05/2010	MS Expedition	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Rathlin
28/08/2009	MV Le Diamant	Not available	Not known	Portrush
09/06/2009	MV Clipper Adventure	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Rathlin
26/05/2009	MC Island Sky	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Iona
09/05/2009	MV Expedition	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Rathlin
08/09/2008	MV Island Sky	Not available	Not known	Portrush/onward to Rathlin
04/06/2008	MV Island Sky	108	Not known	Portrush
25/05/2008	MV Island Sky	82	Not known	Portrush
15/05/2008	MV Island Sky	100	Not known	Portrush

(iii)

The Moyle Harbour Master, in conjunction with the Council's Tourism Officer, plan to compile a destination data sheet of the relevant harbour/anchorage information including a guidance to local attractions and services that are available to the passengers and to promote the area as a preferred mid-cruise location.

To date “Hebridean Princess” is due to visit Ballycastle on 23/09/11, 22/08/12 and 31/08/12 and the “Expedition” at Rathlin on the 27/05/12.

Over the past four years Coleraine Borough Council has forged links with local agents including Hamilton shipping to encourage uptake of Portrush Harbour as a port of call for cruise ships. On numerous occasions the Council extended a welcome to the various ships, in particular by arranging a piper to play as the passengers arrived on shore. Staff also made a point of welcoming the Captain and encouraging repeat visits.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance, financial or otherwise, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has provided to agricultural shows and country fairs in each of the last three years; and for a breakdown of the assistance provided to each event.

(AQW 1849/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In 2009/10, the DCAL Events Fund supported the Great Games Fairs of Ireland £20,000 and the National Country Sports Fair £25,000 of financial assistance.

In 2010/2011, the DCAL Events Fund (administered by NITB) awarded the Great Games Fair of Ireland £7,000 and the National Country Sports Fair £10,000 of financial assistance.

In 2011/2012, the NITB Events Fund awarded the Great Games Fair of Ireland £15,000 and the National Country Sports Fair £15,000 of financial assistance.

No agricultural shows have applied for funding in recent years.

At the 2011 Balmoral Show the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) in partnership with Food NI promoted Northern Ireland food in the Good Food Pavilion. Northern Ireland Signature Dishes were created using the best local produce to showcase the quality of Northern Ireland food, our proud food traditions and heritage and distinctive food culture. The total project cost of the promotion was £18,000.

NITB also provides coverage for events which might be of interest to visitors on www.discovernorthernireland.com. The events covered are those which have been notified to us in advance by the event organisers or are provided by the local Tourist Information Centre (TIC) network, Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs) or relevant local authorities.

All events funded under the NITB Tourism Event Funding Programme are promoted through this site.

Exposure to Asbestos Material

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of people who have died in the last three years as a result of exposure to asbestos material; and (ii) what steps his Department has taken to raise awareness of the danger of this material in its various forms.

(AQW 1877/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below records the number of deaths from asbestos related disease in Northern Ireland in the three year period 2008/10.

Year	Mesothelioma	Asbestosis	Total
2008	38	3	41
2009	42	5	47
2010 ^p	35	4	39

p – provisional figures supplied by the General Register Office (GRO)

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI), has in the past three years, delivered a range of awareness raising initiatives to highlight the risks from exposure to asbestos and encourage compliance with legislation. These have included a campaign aimed at the 40,000 tradesmen who might encounter asbestos when working on buildings containing asbestos and a campaign aimed at those who own or manage some 60,000 non-domestic properties. These campaigns are supplemented by HSENI's Asbestos Advisory Service which offers free advice and guidance to the general public.

Go for It Programme

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why InvestNI withdrew the Go For It Programme from Enterprise Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2124/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest Northern Ireland has not withdrawn the contract to deliver the Go for It element of the Enterprise Development Programme from Enterprise Northern Ireland. Invest NI has developed a new programme specification and a procurement exercise was conducted by the Central Procurement Directorate(CPD) within DFP on behalf of Invest NI with a view to appoint suppliers to provide the management and delivery of the new programme. Following the evaluation of the tenders CPD issued an intention to award the contract to the successful tendering organisation. Enterprise Northern Ireland was unsuccessful in securing the contract and has now issued a legal challenge. As this matter is subject to legal proceedings I am not at liberty to comment further.

Department of the Environment

Procurement

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to procurement by his Department (i) on how many occasions since May 2007 a supplier has been secured through a single tender action in advance of authorisation by the Accounting Officer and the reasons; (ii) the level of expenditure in each case; (iii) the name of each supplier secured through each single tender action; and (iv) the date on which retrospective approval was granted by the Accounting Officer in each case.

(AQW 1155/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The requirement to secure Accounting Officer approval for all Single Tender Actions was formalised in June 2010 with the issue of Procurement Guidance Notes 02/10 and 03/10 by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Central Procurement Directorate.

Prior to the introduction of these Procurement Guidance Notes, there was no formal system in place in the Department to accurately capture the number of Single Tender Actions that may have taken place. In the absence of such a system, and due to the volume of contracts in place, it is not possible to provide an accurate assessment of the number of Single Tender Actions that may have been approved without first securing Accounting Officer approval for prior years without incurring disproportionate costs.

Since the introduction of the Procurement Guidance Notes, specifically 02/10, a formal system has been put in place to ensure all Single Tender Actions are subject to the Department's Principal Accounting Officer's approval. The Department now maintains a record of all Single Tender Actions which are reported to and monitored by the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee.

Since the introduction of the new system in 2010-11, only one contract did not have the appropriate Accounting Officer approval before awarding. This was in relation to a contract, at a cost of £11,000, awarded to Dr Les Brown for the monitoring and analysis at Fardrum Roosky, an area of special scientific interest. The work on this contract concluded in March 2011 and a case for retrospective approval is currently being finalised.

In addition to the above controls, I have now require that all Single Tender Actions in respect of consultancy projects must have my prior approval before awarding.

Planning System

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail what discussions his Department has had with its counterpart in Westminster on its plans for simplifying the planning system and what lessons could be learned for Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1589/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department is broadly aware plans for simplifying the English planning system, as it is of developments in planning in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. I am cognisant of these agendas in driving forward planning reform here in the North. I must say that some of the proposals emerging from London would not have my sympathy.

However, simplification and acceleration of the planning system and applications respectively are measures against which I will judge progress and judge myself.

George Best Belfast City Airport

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether there has been any postal or email correspondence between his Department and George Best Belfast City Airport during 2011 on a proposed indicative noise contour.

(AQW 1632/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There has been no postal or email correspondence between my Department and George Best Belfast City Airport during 2011 on a proposed indicative noise contour. My officials met with representatives of George Best Belfast City Airport on 3 February, 28 June, and on 4, 18 and 25 August 2011 to discuss planning issues at the airport including the establishment of an indicative noise control contour. I attended the meeting on 25 August 2011. I very much hope that I will be in a position to make an announcement in relation to this matter in the near future.

George Best Belfast City Airport

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has agreed or intends to agree an indicative noise contour for the George Best Belfast City Airport which would contradict the recommendation in the August 2006 report on the Examination in Public into the Belfast City Airport Planning Agreement as outlined in paragraphs 7.1.13.d and 5.7.49 of the report.

(AQW 1633/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have not agreed an indicative noise control contour for the George Best Belfast City Airport. This matter is under active consideration, have met the airport management and will meet resident representative to, as appropriate, ensure those with interest are kept informed of my approach to the issue

I very much hope that I will be in a position to make an announcement in relation to this matter in the near future.

Car Tax

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment why car tax cannot be paid for with a credit card, but can be paid for with a debit card.

(AQW 1688/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Vehicle licensing is an excepted matter which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport. It is administered in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) under a formal agreement between my Department and the Department for Transport (DfT).

Currently DVA and DVLA have separate IT systems and processes for administering vehicle registration and licensing services to their respective customers. These differences have resulted in inconsistent services being provided for British and NI customers. Customers in Britain have been able to pay car tax by credit card since 2005, but due to the decision to integrate the NI and IT systems in Britain, DVLA has not funded the work required to make this facility available in NI.

The integration project was suspended by DVLA in 2009 and since then the Department has pressed DVLA to extend to NI the full range of services available to customers in Britain. However, DVLA believes that the most efficient method of delivering these services in NI is through integration of the IT systems.

A feasibility study has been recently undertaken by DVLA to re-examine the potential for integrating the NI and IT systems in Britain. However, no final decisions have yet been taken on the outcomes of this study.

I have written to the Secretary of State for Transport, Philip Hammond about the issue of service provision in NI and I have also written to and met with Mike Penning, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DfT. I intend to continue to press for the establishment of parity of service provision at the earliest opportunity.

Wild Deer in Northern Ireland

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the current (i) number; (ii) location; and (iii) type of wild deer in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1720/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Wild deer are widely distributed across many habitats but are usually present in low densities. They are also secretive in their habits and are largely nocturnal. It is therefore extremely difficult to make accurate estimations of deer numbers, particularly on a countrywide scale.

NIEA commissioned a desk top study in 2002 of all available records. The resulting report did not give an overall estimate of the deer population in Northern Ireland but listed specific areas within each county which were attributed to population estimates.

The report concluded that there had been an increase in the rate of spread of deer in Northern Ireland over the preceding ten years.

The three resident deer species i.e. Red Deer, Fallow and Sika were recorded in each county in Northern Ireland except Down and Armagh which had no records for Sika.

Muntjac deer, an introduced species, have also been reported from various areas in Northern Ireland but only confirmed present in the Mountstewart area in County Down.

Planning Applications for Wind Farms in North Antrim

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of the number of planning applications for wind farms in the North Antrim area; (ii) how this number fits in with current renewable energy plans; and (iii) for his assessment of whether there are too many wind farms proposed, given the unreliability of wind in producing energy and meeting the energy production targets that exist.

(AQW 1742/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) The Department currently has 10 planning applications under consideration for wind farm developments in the North Antrim area. In addition there are a further 100 planning applications for the development of single wind turbines. This represents an encouraging response to the very challenging targets in relation to renewable energy production set out in the Strategic Energy Framework for Northern Ireland 2010.

- (ii) The Strategic Energy Framework confirms the Executive's target of 40% of electricity consumption coming from renewable sources by 2020. The 10 wind farm applications in North Antrim, if approved, would make a substantial contribution towards achieving that 40% target.
- (iii) There are currently in the region of 50 wind farm applications across Northern Ireland awaiting determination. If they were all approved they would contribute in the region of 50% of the output required to meet the 2020 targets. Such figures would not suggest that there are too many wind farms proposed. Furthermore the success or otherwise of these, and future, applications will be determined having regard to the merits of each individual site and taking account of all other material planning considerations.

Electricity generated by onshore wind farms is the most established, large-scale source of renewable energy in Northern Ireland. Wind farms will play a vital role in meeting the new renewable electricity target. But it has been recognised that the integration of renewable technologies will incur additional costs in terms of new grid network management requirements as a result of the intermittency of some renewable technologies. Nevertheless a more diverse energy mix is a more secure energy mix.

Rose Energy Poultry Litter Energy Plant

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment why the August 2010 Ministerial announcement on the intention to approve the Rose Energy poultry litter energy plant planning application has not received formal approval; and when a decision will be issued.

(AQW 1756/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The former Minister's announcement of August 2010 was the subject of judicial review proceedings. Lord Justice McCloskey adjourned the judicial review proceedings on 2 March 2011 on the basis that the application process had not been completed.

The applicants subsequently submitted further environmental information that is currently being considered by the Department. When the consideration of this information has been finalised the Department will then make a recommendation to the Minister on the way forward.

Convictions for Dog Fouling Offences

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many people have been convicted of dog fouling offences in the last twelve months; (ii) how much revenue was raised from the resulting fines; and (iii) what further measures he is taking to combat this problem.

(AQW 1784/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department obtains information concerning dog fouling offences from district councils on a financial year basis only. 89 people were convicted by the courts for dog fouling offences in 2010/11 and a total of £4,451 in fines and £88 in court costs were imposed. The Department does not hold any information on the fines subsequently paid.

In the same period, district councils issued 323 fixed penalty notices (£50) for dog fouling offences resulting in a total of £12,800 received in penalties. Such a notice may be given to a person offering that person the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the dog fouling offence by payment of a fixed penalty.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 will strengthen the law in relation to dog fouling by the introduction of a new system of dog control orders.

Under the new system, it will be an offence, subject to certain conditions, for anyone in charge of a dog on land to which a dog control order applies, not to remove the faeces deposited by the dog. A person guilty of the offence will be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,000 (currently £500 under the Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994). The district council will still be able to offer the person the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence by payment of a fixed penalty. The district council will have the flexibility, subject to upper and lower limits, to set their own fixed penalty rates, with the default rate being £75.

Tyres

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of the Environment what action he is taking to ensure the traceability of used tyres.

(AQO 300/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Controlled Waste (Duty of Care) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002 requires that waste tyres which are controlled waste are handled with due regard and that all reasonable steps are taken to keep the waste safe. The regulations require that a written description be retained, this is in the form of a waste transfer note. Breach of this Duty of Care is an offence, which on summary conviction is liable to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or, an unlimited fine if convicted on indictment.

Duty of Care provides an audit trail from the waste producer via carriers to suitably authorized facilities which NIEA can audit on the basis of routine inspection, intelligence received or suspected non compliance. There can be several transfer notes relating to any one waste movement as waste tyres pass through various carriers and waste transfer stations on their way to authorized recovery or export.

Environment Governance

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his Department's discussion paper on Environmental Governance.

(AQO 301/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department issued the Environmental Governance discussion document on 5th August 2011 setting out a number of options for consideration, seeking feedback from key interests by 9th September 2011. I am currently considering the way forward in light of the responses received, will advise the Environment committee and work to earn their support. Full public consultation will be required on any final proposals which may emerge from this initial exercise.

Recycling: Tyres

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment what percentage of tyres are currently recovered for recycling.

(AQO 302/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Waste Statistics Regulations requires the Department to provide a waste statistics report every 2 years. In 2008 NIEA recorded that 30,172 tonnes of rubber wastes (mainly end-of-life tyres) were generated and 5,224 tonnes were recovered. The percentage of rubber wastes recovered in 2008 in NI was estimated to be 17.3%.

The last waste tyre survey undertaken for Northern Ireland estimated that 16.10kt of waste tyres were generated in 2000, 30% were sent for retreading and 16% were reused by the farming community.

The Department intends to commission a new waste tyres survey to obtain current data on the quantity of waste tyres generated and the percentage of tyres being reused, recycled, recovered and disposed of by other means. This survey is expected to take 3 months to complete and the data collated will be used locally, nationally and to meet EU reporting requirements.

Listed Buildings

Mr Cree asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the assistance offered to private owners of listed buildings.

(AQO 303/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My assessment is that owners are provided with high quality specialist conservation based advice, by staff in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), and it is supplied free of charge. This is in addition to an appropriate level of grant-aid - which is recognised by organisations like

the Historic Houses Association - as the best central government based grant-aid scheme available for private owners of listed buildings in the UK.

The grant-aid takes full account of the additional cost of using appropriate conservation based materials, techniques and skills that are needed to preserve the character of listed buildings, and, as a result, to help secure all of the economic, social and other benefits, that accrue from a well maintained, utilised and promoted built heritage.

I would, of course, be delighted to provide yet more support, if the resources were available to do so. The Heritage Crime Summit I convened in mid August is to re-convene later this month to identify what actions have been taken in recent weeks and can be taken in the coming period to protect the built heritage, including in respect of our tourist offering.

Gorse Fires

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions he has had with his Executive colleagues in relation to a cross-departmental response to the future management of gorse fires.
(AQO 304/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Following briefing from my officials, meetings with representatives of the Mourne Heritage Trust and seeing for myself some of the wildfire damage this Spring in the Mourne mountains and elsewhere in Northern Ireland, I have written to my Ministerial colleagues in DARD, DRD and DHSSPS to establish an interdepartmental group on wildfires chaired by DOE.

The group held its first meeting on Monday 5 September where terms of reference were agreed and officials highlighted the actions that their Departments had taken since the Spring. Actions for group members to source additional information were agreed as well as a time frame for reporting back to Ministers.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the public enquiry into the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan; and when it will be published.
(AQO 305/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The BMAP Public Inquiry concluded in May 2008, and since this time the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) has been considering all the information before it prior to completing its report and making its recommendations.

To date, the PAC has delivered several parts of their report to my Department, including the part relating to Strategic Retail Issues (received in January 2009), the part relating to the Strategic Plan Framework (received in March 2011), and the reports on Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh Districts (received in July 2011). The Reports on Carrickfergus, North Down and Newtownabbey Districts remain outstanding together with the report on the proposals in the Lagan Valley Regional Park.

The delay in the receipt of the Report in its entirety has inevitably impacted on the process of adopting BMAP. The original timescale for the delivery of the PAC Report was early summer 2010. The Commission, however, stated that due to the number of objections and the complexity of the issues that they raise, it would not be possible to meet this timescale.

Senior officials from my Department have been liaising with the PAC to stress the urgency of receiving a completed report as soon as possible to allow BMAP to be progressed to adoption.

The date of adoption will be dependent on the date that the PAC Report is received in its entirety, and it is unlikely that the Plan will be adopted before the end of 2012. I share frustrations in this regard and am looking at how best to manage Development Plans in the future to reduce the risk of delay and doubt, which is an impediment to sustainable, thoughtful and proper planning.

Election Posters

Mr Brady asked the Minister of the Environment if he will commence a consultation process on legislation to ban the erection of election posters in public areas.

(AQO 306/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I wrote to registered Northern Ireland political parties over the summer in order to establish their views about the suggestion to restrict or ban election posters here. Once I have obtained the views of parties I will consider the merits of looking at the issue in more detail.

Reform of Local Government

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of the Environment when he expects the implementation of the Reform of Local Government to take place.

(AQO 308/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The reform of local government is a key priority and remains very much at the top of my agenda. I have been carefully considering all the key reform issues including boundaries and the implementation timetable as well as taking account of the views expressed by local government representatives and others over the summer period. I now want to engage with my Executive colleagues on the way forward and agree outcomes that provide the clarity and certainty that is required across local government and with those Departments that propose to transfer functions to it.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Service: Equality Monitoring

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what equality monitoring is carried out on the Civil Service workforce.

(AQO 315/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Equality monitoring data is collected from both existing employees and applicants for Civil Service jobs. The information is collected to enable the Northern Ireland Civil Service to meet its statutory obligations under anti-discrimination and equality legislation.

The categories of data currently collected are

- community background;
- gender;
- age;
- disability; and
- ethnic origin.

The collection and processing of equality monitoring data is undertaken to enable employers to determine if their employment policies and practices are fair and offer equality of opportunity to all. But I am conscious that a balance has to be struck between this aim, the requirement to meet statutory obligations, and the need to reduce as far as possible the cost and effort to employers of gathering and processing equality monitoring data. Therefore I have asked officials to ensure that the costs of equality monitoring are kept to a minimum.

Sham Marriages

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many sham marriages have been detected during the last two years.

(AQO 316/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In the last 2 years, suspicions concerning 18 marriages have been referred to the Home Office UK Border Agency (UKBA), all of which have been reported since May this year. UKBA have been active in investigating these reports and 9 were prevented from taking place, with others still under investigation.

Banks

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on his recent meetings with local banks.

(AQO 317/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My most recent meeting with the local banks was on 30th August which included representatives from the Ulster Bank, Bank of Ireland, First Trust, Northern Bank, Barclays, Santander and HSBC.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the implications of the current concerns in global financial markets around high levels of sovereign debt and slower than expected growth in major economies, particularly on local business confidence.

We also discussed the perceived lack of finance available for SMEs, the banks recent performance, and their progress in implementing the Business Finance Taskforce recommendations. In particular, I have been pressing for the implementation of an appeals panel for local businesses who feel they have been unreasonably denied access to credit and I hope to see progress on this in the near future.

I have also been liaising with the British Bankers Association to obtain regional data on bank lending in Northern Ireland which has now been provided. This reveals that new lending has decreased over the past three quarters which is clearly a concern.

Peace Funding

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions he has had with the Minister for Finance in Dublin to secure a further tranche of European Union peace funding.

(AQO 318/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Discussions between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on the possibility of a further round of EU PEACE funding have to date been primarily at official level. However, I have several times discussed the subject with the Republic's Minister of Finance, Michael Noonan. Naturally, a fourth EU-funded PEACE Programme is something our two administrations would welcome. However, we are at an early stage in the debate on future EU funding in general and all discussions thus far have necessarily been tentative.

Both Northern Ireland, and the Government of the Republic, have already advised the European Commission that we would favour a fourth PEACE Programme and the Commission has responded by saying that it would be highly supportive of such a proposal. But the Commission cannot itself take the initiative on PEACE IV Programme. It will have to be requested to do so by the relevant member states—the UK and the Republic of Ireland. We are therefore working at official and Ministerial level to influence the wider UK position on future EU Cohesion policy in order to ensure that this includes provision for a further PEACE Programme. Minister Noonan has advised me that the Republic's Government is doing the same.

Business Rates

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether his Department has had any discussions with, or has received representations from, retail traders located in Belfast or on the main arterial routes, in relation to Rate Relief initiatives to help combat the economic recession and the repercussions of shop closures.

(AQO 319/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Over the summer months my officials and I have met a wide range of representatives from the retail trade, individuals and groups, about the proposals to rebalance the business rates system and on other related issues. Meetings have taken place with the Federation of Small Businesses, the CBI, the Northern Ireland Retail Consortium, the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Asda, Sainsbury's and the NI Independent Retail Traders Association.

Ministers' doors are open to all who wish to look at practicable ways in which we, as an Executive and Assembly, can improve the very difficult business environment that exists at present. We cannot work miracles and immunise the business community from the effects of this prolonged recession. We do listen however and in terms of what I can do, my Department is nearing the end of a consultation on doubling rate relief to bring in more small businesses, funded by a levy of the largest shops and allowing window displays to be used in empty shops without triggering full rates. If these proposals find favour with the business community I will be asking the Assembly to help me get the required legislation in place for next year.

Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when the Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 will come into operation.

(AQO 321/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The commencement of the Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 will be further considered when the outcome of the appeal in relation to the corresponding legislation in Scotland is known. The UK Supreme Court heard the appeal from 13-15 June 2011 and it is hoped that the Court's judgment will be handed down in October.

Green New Deal

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether his Department has assessed the viability of the Green New Deal.

(AQO 322/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department for Social Development has lead responsibility for taking forward the Green New Deal; and I understand that a business case is currently being prepared to take forward the initiative. The business case has not yet been received by my Department.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, given the constraints on public sector pay, why he decided on 18 July 2011, to increase the upper salary limit for Band B Special Advisers to £90,000.

(AQO 323/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As the Minister with responsibility for pay matters in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, I took the decision to increase the upper limit of the Special Advisers' pay band B from £82,531 to £90,000 in recognition of the requirement to set pay bands at a level that will ensure that individuals with the requisite skills and abilities are attracted to and retained in these key posts.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Locum Appointment for Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of employing a junior doctor in the post of Locum Appointment for Service compared to Locum Appointment for Training, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1647/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The cost of employing junior doctors in Locum Appointment for Service (LAS) and Locum Appointment for Training (LAT) posts is determined by individual HSC Trusts, taking into account the individual appointee's competencies and experience, the level of work the appointee will be expected to undertake and the length of time they are likely to be in post. LAS based appointments will normally be paid using a short term locum scale which ranges from £548.13 to £883.20 per week, whilst LAT salaries will be placed on a longer term scale which ranges from £29,705 to £39,300 per annum. The range of different scales to be applied is clearly set out in a pay circular issued annually by the Department.

HSC Trusts have advised that it is not possible to extract this information from their payroll system without incurring disproportionate costs.

Provision of Healthcare

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much each Health and Social Care Trust has paid to the private sector in the Republic of Ireland and in other parts of the UK for the provision of healthcare in Northern Ireland in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 1657/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

Family Planning Association

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 1547/11-15, given the Family Planning Association's 2009 Annual Report which stated "Our job is to give support and information to help them (mothers) decide whether to continue with the pregnancy, have an abortion or choose adoption" and its on-going Time For Change campaign on abortion law (i) for his assessment of the use of the funding provided to the Family Planning Association; and (ii) whether he can offer an assurance that this funding is not used to advocate abortion.

(AQW 1714/11-15)

Mr Poots: The use of my Department's funding to the Family Planning Association towards its central administrative costs has been satisfactorily assessed against the procedures in place for the provision of Departmental funding, including how the organisation's services contribute towards meeting the aim and objectives of the Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan. None of the funding provided by the Department is used to advocate abortion.

Rainbow Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much of the departmental funding allocated to the Rainbow Project is being spent on lobbying for an expansion of gay rights; (ii) for his assessment of the appropriateness of this expenditure; (iii) how much departmental funding is spent on staffing for the Rainbow project; (iv) whether his Department places restrictions on the activities of the staff employed through this funding; and (v) whether his Department places any other restrictions on the use of departmental funding by the Rainbow Project.

(AQW 1755/11-15)

Mr Poots: None of the funding allocated by my Department towards the central administrative costs of the Rainbow Project is spent on lobbying for an expansion of gay rights. Funding of £32,443 in 2011/12 has been made available, which the Rainbow Project uses as a contribution towards salary costs of the Director's post. The funding is awarded for the purpose of achieving objectives in support of Departmental policy in relation to sexual health promotion and HIV prevention. My Department monitors the funding against an agreed schedule of activities. Standard terms and conditions applicable to all grants awarded by my Department also apply.

Waiting Times for Cataract Surgery

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current waiting times for cataract surgery in each Health and Social Care Trust; and whether patients have been given specific timelines for these operations only to have them extended.

(AQW 1767/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of patients waiting for cataract surgery in each Health and Social Care Trust, and the length of time they were waiting at 30th June 2011, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, is outlined in the table below.

NUMBER OF PATIENTS WAITING FOR CATARACT SURGERY, BY LENGTH OF TIME WAITING, AT EACH HSC TRUST: POSITION AT 30TH JUNE 2011

HSC Trust	Waiting time (in weeks)						Total Waiting
	0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-36	>36	
Belfast	635	774	713	50	2	0	2,174
Northern	13	19	9	0	0	0	41
South Eastern	158	167	38	0	0	0	363
Southern	57	44	9	0	0	0	110
Western	238	191	79	4	0	0	512
Total Northern Ireland	1,101	1,195	848	54	2	0	3,200

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Time Dataset

Patients joining the waiting list are advised of the current waiting time and are given an indicative month when they can expect their surgery to be carried out.

Children From the Travelling Community

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is any Social Services intervention for children from the travelling community whose parents are subject to or have been subject to court proceedings for domestic violence, and whether is it possible for these children to be placed on the At Risk register.

(AQW 1799/11-15)

Mr Poots: All children in Northern Ireland who are deemed to be at risk of abuse, regardless of their family, community or ethnic background, may be added to the Child Protection Register. Social Services will assess the risk to the child or children involved in accordance with established child protection policy and procedure.

Patients with Dementia

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that 22,000 people have dementia and that this figure is expected to rise to 47,000 by 2051 (i) what are the minimum standards of training provided for those who work with patients with dementia and (ii) what qualifications are required for healthcare staff to work in the care of older people with dementia.

(AQW 1855/11-15)

Mr Poots: Dementia as a condition is included within all undergraduate healthcare professional training programmes. While there are no minimum standards of training or specific qualifications required for those working in dementia care, employers ensure that staff are trained appropriately for their role. Post graduate training is provided for those specialising in this area.

Antrim Area Hospital's MRI Suite

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the weekly working hours of the Antrim Area Hospital's MRI Suite in (i) 2008; (ii) 2009; and (iii) 2010.

(AQW 1862/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Health and Social Care Trust reported that the Antrim Area Hospital's MRI Suite was in operation 35 hours per week in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Causeway Hospital's and Antrim Area Hospital's CT Scanners

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the weekly working hours of the (i) Causeway Hospital's; and (ii) Antrim Area Hospital's CT scanners in (a) 2008; (b) 2009; and (c) 2010.

(AQW 1864/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Health and Social Care Trust reported that Causeway Hospital's CT scanner was in operation 35 hours per week in 2008, 2009 and 2010. The Antrim Area Hospital's CT scanner was in operation 35 hours per week in 2008, but this was increased to 49 hours per week in 2009 and 2010.

These CT scanners are used to provide a 24-hour / 365-day emergency out-of-hours service.

A second CT scanner for Antrim Area Hospital was commissioned in April 2011 providing an additional 35 hours scanning capacity per week.

MRI Scans

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many patient trips for MRI scans were undertaken by ambulances from the Causeway Hospital to the Antrim Area Hospital; (ii) what was the average (a) time taken (b) number of ambulance waits; and (c) cost for such trips in (iii) 2008; (iv) 2009; and (v) 2010.

(AQW 1869/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) During the last three years, 169 patient trips for MRI scans were made from Causeway Hospital to Antrim Area Hospital. Of which, 145 were undertaken by a Patient Care Service (PCS) vehicle (with No paramedic assistance) and 24 by an emergency response ambulance (A&E vehicle with paramedic assistance).

NUMBER OF PATIENT JOURNEYS FOR MRI SCANS BETWEEN CAUSEWAY AND ANTRIM AREA

Year	Number of Journeys
2008	51
2009	53
2010	65
Total	169

- (ii) (a) The time taken is not currently available for those trips made by PCS vehicles but is available for the 24 trips made by emergency response ambulances. The average time taken for these journeys refers to the time between the arrival of the ambulance at Causeway Hospital and the arrival at the Antrim Area Hospital. These are detailed for the last three years in the table overleaf.

AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME TAKEN FOR JOURNEYS BY EMERGENCY RESPONSE AMBULANCES FOR MRI SCANS BETWEEN CAUSEWAY AND ANTRIM AREA HOSPITALS

Year	Average Time Taken (HH:MM:SS)
2008	01:24:50
2009	01:08:10
2010	01:18:41
Total	01:17:16

- (ii) (b) Information on the number of ambulance waits is not available. However, information is available on the average turnaround time for an ambulance at Antrim Area Hospital only, i.e. the average time between the arrival of the ambulance at Antrim Area and the time the patient is cleared from the ambulance at Antrim Area Hospital.

AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME WAITED FOR AMBULANCE TO BE CLEARED AT ANTRIM AREA HOSPITAL

Year	Average Time of Ambulance Waits (HH:MM:SS)
2008	00:29:32
2009	00:13:54
2010	00:22:38
Total	00:21:41

- (iii) (c) Information is not currently available on the total cost of these trips. However, information is available on the cost per hour for these trips for each type of vehicle.

2011/12	Costs/hour
A&E	£61.58
RRV	£37.31
ICV	£43.52

People with Melanoma

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people with melanoma are on the waiting list for day surgery.

(AQW 1871/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on waiting times for cancer treatment is measured on the basis of how long patients waited for their cancer treatment, rather than how long they are currently waiting.

During the month of June 2011, the most recent month for which my Department holds provisional information, 15 patients were treated for a malignant melanoma at Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland. All of these patients were treated within 31 days of a decision to treat for cancer being taken.

The cancer waiting time information collected by my Department cannot identify the number of these patients that were treated for Stage 4 Melanoma.

Fire Fighters

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide a breakdown of fire fighters by (i) gender; (ii) age; and (iii) nationality.

(AQW 1879/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information in relation to Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service fire fighters is as follows:

GENDER

Male	Female	Total
1,852	47	1,899

BREAKDOWN OF STAFF BY AGE

16-25	41
26-35	407
36-45	763
46-55	614
55+	74
TOTAL	1,899

ETHNIC ORIGIN*

White European	Asian	Other
1,896 (99.8%)	2 (0.15%)	1 (0.05%)

(*The NIFRS has recently commenced monitoring its workforce and applicants by nationality; figures are, therefore, currently available only for ethnic origin.)

Volunteer Rescue Services

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what support is available to facilitate volunteer rescue services reaching the scene of an accident in an emergency.

(AQW 1881/11-15)

Mr Poots: The responsibility for coordinating or supporting the operational response of volunteer rescue organisations in the event of an emergency does not fall to my Department or to any of its agencies.

Patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis; and (ii) what treatment is available for them.

(AQW 1882/11-15)

Mr Poots: Details of the number of patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis is not available however the table below provides provisional details for 2010/11 on the number of people who have been admitted to hospital admission with ME by individual Trust area:

HSC Trusts	Admissions
Belfast HSC Trust	54

HSC Trusts	Admissions
South Eastern HSC Trust	30
Northern HSC Trust	4
Southern HSC Trust	24
Western HSC Trust	7
Total	119¹

1. N.B. It should be noted that any individual could have been admitted to hospital more than once during any given time period and would therefore be counted more than once in the above figures

Treatment for those people living with ME is, for the most part, provided by general practitioners; however, patients (both adults and children) have access to a wide range of care and support services in primary, secondary and community settings, including specialist medical, paediatric, neurology and mental health services.

Prison Hospital Treatment

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of prisoners who have (i) received prison hospital treatment; and (ii) been admitted to prison hospital in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1884/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no prison hospital in Northern Ireland. The healthcare centres in the 3 prison establishments, are primary care facilities that provide a range of services equivalent to those available from a Trust primary care facility in the community. While HMP Maghaberry and Hydebank Wood have the ability to accommodate prisoners within the healthcare centres for treatment and assessment, they are not hospital facilities. Any prisoner who requires inpatient hospital treatment or assessment would receive this in a Trust hospital.

The number of prisoners who have been admitted to a prison healthcare centre is detailed in the table below:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Prisoners who have been admitted to a prison healthcare centre	324	238	190	179	178

The healthcare centre in HMP Magilligan ceased accommodating prisoners in 2008.

The information on the total number of treatments for the last five years is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Hospital Treatment for Prisoners

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of prisoners who have (i) received hospital treatment in a hospital outside prison; and (ii) been admitted to a hospital outside prison in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1885/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information is set out in the table below:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Prisoners who have received hospital treatment in a hospital outside prison	657	774	783	742	578
Prisoners who have been admitted to a hospital outside prison	84	72	100	72	57

Hospital Treatment for Prisoners

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many prisoners required (i) hospital treatment; and (ii) hospital admission as a result of violence in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1886/11-15)

Mr Poots: I understand that neither the NI Prison Service nor the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust hold the information requested centrally and that it could only be produced manually from individual records at disproportionate cost.

Prisoners Hospital Stays

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the ten longest hospital stays by prisoners in each of the last five years; and the reasons for them.

(AQW 1887/11-15)

Mr Poots: The answer to this question is set out in the table below:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Length of stay(hours).	486.81	407.72	798.74	1637.23	725.21
	358.25	394.84	698	1148.78	205.72
	322	366.67	592.94	528.05	186.47
	271.9	362.77	484.52	370.39	171.2
	249.08	334	389.45	338.97	168.5
	242.95	296.72	295	316	147.9
	240.3	268.17	266.9	280.8	103.15
	238.36	263.25	253.16	238.92	91.4
	215.48	253.84	232.53	212.98	78.92
	197	247.5	222.56	196.45	68.03

The individual reasons for these stays in hospital are not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. In addition there would be potential issues of patient confidentiality in the provision of this information.

Prisoners Hospital Stays

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average or approximate cost of keeping a prisoner for one night in (i) a prison hospital; and (ii) a hospital outside prison.

(AQW 1888/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no prison hospital in Northern Ireland. The healthcare centres in the 3 prison establishments, are primary care facilities that provide a range of services equivalent to those available from a Trust primary care facility in the community. While HMP Maghaberry and Hydebank Wood have the ability to accommodate prisoners within the healthcare centres for treatment and assessment, they are not hospital facilities. Any prisoner who requires inpatient hospital treatment or assessment would receive this in a Trust hospital.

The cost of keeping a prisoner in a prison healthcare centre for one day, based on the overall cost per prisoner place, is approximately £202.

The average cost of keeping a prisoner in a HSC hospital facility is estimated at between £610 and £1049 per day. This is based upon the average bed day cost for all patients and the additional costs required to escort and securely transport the prisoner to the hospital.

Welfare Reform

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans his Department has to assess the impact of Welfare Reform on health and social services.

(AQW 1916/11-15)

Mr Poots: My officials are liaising with their counterparts in the Department for Social Development to identify issues for health and social care services arising from Welfare Reform. As Welfare Reform progresses my Department will consider the potential implications emerging and how they may be addressed, working with the Department for Social Development.

Self-Medication in Hospitals

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) on how many occasions in each of the last three years have patients in hospitals been permitted to self-medicate; and (ii) to detail the policy on self-medication in hospitals.

(AQW 1917/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) There is no information available relating to the number of occasions when patients in hospitals were permitted to self medicate during each of the past three years.
- (ii) There is no regional policy on self medication in hospitals. The circumstances in which self administration by patients is permitted are described in individual Trusts' medicines policies, medicines management codes or guidelines. These vary by Trust and detail the situations when patients may self administer their medicines in certain therapeutic areas where this is judged to be clinically safe.

Welfare Reform

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he had with the Minister for Social Development in relation to the implementation of Welfare Reform and its impact on people living with long-term health conditions.

(AQW 1919/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have met with the Minister for Social Development on a number of occasions to discuss a variety of issues, though to date we have not specifically discussed Welfare Reform. My officials are liaising with their counterparts in the Department for Social Development to identify issues for health and social care arising from the implementation of Welfare Reform. I will meet with my colleague, the Social Development Minister, to discuss the position as and when it is necessary to do so.

People Classed as Obese

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many people are classed as obese; and (ii) what actions his Department is taking to address this problem.

(AQW 1921/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The 2005/06 Health & Social Wellbeing Survey reported that overall 24% of adults were obese. A similar proportion of men (25%) and women (23%) were identified as having a BMI of 30 or over and therefore classified as obese.

The HSWB Survey 2005/06 also collected height and weight measurements for children aged 2-15 years. This survey indicated that using the International Approach 8% of these children were recorded as obese (8% of boys and 7% of girls).

The results from the 2010/11 Health Survey are expected to be released next month.

- (ii) My Department has led the development of a Framework for Preventing and Addressing Overweight and Obesity in Northern Ireland 2011-2021: A Fitter Future for All.

This Framework will incorporate and oversee the existing Fit Futures Implementation Plan which had a focus on children and young people and widen the scope to contain outcomes regarding food and nutrition, and physical activity throughout the life course of the population. It is anticipated that this Framework will be issued for final Ministerial and Executive approval in the autumn of 2011.

The successful implementation of the Framework will rely on close collaboration with DE, DCAL and other Departments. SportNI, through its Sports Matter Strategy, will also be a key delivery partner for many of the outcomes relating to increasing participation in physical activity.

The Public Health Agency currently undertakes a range of programmes and initiatives to address overweight and obesity across Northern Ireland, working in collaboration with other Departments and their agencies. Work in this area includes the following:

- Working to ensure that healthy weight and reducing obesity forms part of local action plans.
- Working with DE to support the development and implementation of the Food in School Policy; and
- Support enhanced opportunities for all age groups and abilities to be physically active, including collaborative work to build/enhance the infrastructure that supports activity in various settings.

Children on the At Risk Register

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the average number of home visits in each of the last three years to children on the At Risk Register or others who are subject to social services intervention; and (ii) of these, how many were unannounced.

(AQW 1939/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available either centrally from the DHSSPS or from the HSC Board, and HSC Trusts could only produce these figures at disproportionate cost.

Preventative Social Care Strategy

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of whether the introduction of a preventative social care strategy would generate large savings for his Department and provide a better standard of living for the growing elderly population.

(AQW 1953/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has developed a range of strategies to promote better health and wellbeing. These strategies aim to encourage healthier choices in a range of areas including mental health promotion, smoking, physical activity, food & nutrition, alcohol & drugs, home accident prevention, and sexual health,— all of which can lead to long term better health for the Northern Ireland population. In addition, the public health strategy Investing for Health promotes collaboration across government departments to address the wider social determinants of health.

Successful implementation of these strategies will contribute to a reduction in the numbers of people, particularly in later life, requiring hospital and community treatment for preventable chronic illness and mental ill health.

It is recognized that the potential cost savings to our integrated Health and Social Care sector of effective preventative action is significant. A wide range of social care services are also available to help support and maintain people in their own homes, independently for as long as possible which can meet their care preferences and represent a cost effective form of provision.

Stage 4 Melanoma

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people with Stage 4 Melanoma are waiting to be admitted to hospital for surgery.

(AQW 1955/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on waiting times for cancer treatment is measured on the basis of how long patients waited for their cancer treatment, rather than how long they are currently waiting.

During the month of June 2011, the most recent month for which my Department holds provisional information, 15 patients were treated for a malignant melanoma at Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland. All of these patients were treated within 31 days of a decision to treat for cancer being taken.

The cancer waiting time information collected by my Department cannot identify the number of these patients that were treated for Stage 4 Melanoma.

Mid-Ulster Hospital

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether any internal structural changes have been made to the Mid-Ulster Hospital in the last 12 months; (ii) whether he has any plans to change the internal structure of the hospital in the next 12 months; and (ii) why this information was not provided in his response dated 6 September 2011.

(AQW 2020/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Minor works were carried out earlier this year to erect partition walls in a vacated ward in the Mid-Ulster hospital. This was part of a scheme to provide new dental accommodation for a NHS dental service in the Mid-Ulster area. The work was completed in February 2011.
- (ii) The Northern Trust is in the process of developing proposals to refurbish elements of the Mid-Ulster Hospital which may or may not be inclusive of structural changes. These proposals are at a very early stage fuller detail will be available from the Trust in due course.
- (ii) My previous response of 6 September 2011 advised contacting the Trust regarding the detail of their plans.

Potential Pharmacy Closures

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the consequences of potential pharmacy closures on patient services.

(AQW 2027/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am committed and indeed required by law to provide a fair and reasonable system of remuneration to community pharmacists in Northern Ireland. There is no indication to date of any pharmacy closing as a result of the new remuneration and reimbursement arrangements put in place for community pharmacies.

I do not accept the assertions that are being made by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI). However, in light of the judicial review of the new remuneration arrangements successfully sought by CPNI, which was scheduled to be heard on 20 and 21 September, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further until the outcome of the hearing is known.

Potential Pharmacy Closures

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any strategy that will be put in place to manage the pharmacy closures that are expected as a result of the proposed cuts to the community pharmacy budget, so that the needs of vulnerable patients will be protected.

(AQW 2028/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am committed and indeed required by law to provide a fair and reasonable system of remuneration to community pharmacists in Northern Ireland. There is no indication to date of any pharmacy closing as a result of the new remuneration and reimbursement arrangements put in place for community pharmacies.

I do not accept the assertions that are being made by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI). However, in light of the judicial review of the new remuneration arrangements successfully sought by CPNI, which was scheduled to be heard on 20 and 21 September, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further until the outcome of the hearing is known.

Potential Pharmacy Closures

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the risk to pharmacy services in rural areas as a result of the proposed cuts to the community pharmacy budget.

(AQW 2029/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am committed and indeed required by law to provide a fair and reasonable system of remuneration to community pharmacists in Northern Ireland. There is no indication to date of any pharmacy closing as a result of the new remuneration and reimbursement arrangements put in place for community pharmacies.

I do not accept the assertions that are being made by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI). However, in light of the judicial review of the new remuneration arrangements successfully sought by CPNI, which was scheduled to be heard on 20 and 21 September, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further until the outcome of the hearing is known.

Job Losses in Community Pharmacies

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide an estimate of the number of potential job losses in community pharmacies as a result of the proposed cuts to the community pharmacy budget.

(AQW 2030/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am committed and indeed required by law to provide a fair and reasonable system of remuneration to community pharmacists in Northern Ireland. There is no indication to date of any pharmacy closing as a result of the new remuneration and reimbursement arrangements put in place for community pharmacies.

I do not accept the assertions that are being made by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI). However, in light of the judicial review of the new remuneration arrangements successfully sought by

CPNI, which was scheduled to be heard on 20 and 21 September, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further until the outcome of the hearing is known.

Pharmacies

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many pharmacies currently help patients manage their medication through the provision of a weekly medicines compliance tray and a monitored dosage system.

(AQW 2031/11-15)

Mr Poots: The provision of medicines by community pharmacies in compliance trays or monitored dosage systems is not an HSC contracted service and information on the number of pharmacies providing this type of service is not collected by the Department.

People in Portaferry Diagnosed with Cancer

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many people in Portaferry are currently diagnosed with cancer; and (ii) whether this figure is significantly higher than other areas.

(AQW 2032/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information was supplied by the NI Cancer Registry which was established in 1994. Therefore information on people diagnosed with cancer prior to 1993 is not available.

From NI Cancer Registry data, there were 250 people living in the Portaferry ward who were diagnosed with cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) between 1993 and 2009 that were still alive at the end of 2009. This may represent an undercount of the actual number of people living with cancer as those diagnosed prior to 1993 are not included. In 2009 there were 16 new incidences.

Prevalence figures at ward level are not large enough to produce robust rates to allow meaningful comparison to be made, therefore only differences at LGD and Northern Ireland level were analysed.

The overall prevalence rate for all cancers (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) in the Ards LGD area was not statistically higher than in other LGD's. In fact the prevalence rate was statistically lower than Belfast, Castlereagh, Larne, Lisburn and North Down LGD's as well as lower than the overall Northern Ireland rate in December 2009.

The information was provided by the Northern Ireland Cancer registry and is the most up to date available.

Results of Cardio Angiograms

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current waiting time for patients to receive the results of cardio angiograms, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 2033/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Board that the report outlining the results of a cardio angiogram is dictated and typed at the time of the procedure and the results discussed with the patient before they are discharged.

Patients are then discharged with a letter which they are to take to their GP. This outlines the results of the angiogram and identifies any further medication that may be required. This is followed up by a further letter sent from the Health and Social Care Trust to the patient's GP providing an in-depth explanation of the results.

Health and Social Care Trusts that perform this procedure have confirmed that they are all currently adhering to this process.

Suicide Prevention and Assistance

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures his Department has taken in relation to (i) suicide prevention; and (ii) providing assistance to families which have experienced suicide.

(AQW 2034/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) My Department currently invests £6.7m per annum for the provision of suicide prevention services, and I have ring-fenced this funding for 2011/12.

Specific measures progressed include:

- Community-led suicide prevention and bereavement support services such as counselling and training;
- Establishment of Lifeline 24/7 crisis response helpline;
- Provision of Independent Schools Counselling and peer support via Youth Services in the aftermath of a young person's death ;
- The Deliberate Self-Harm Registry which provides information to inform the delivery of accident and emergency services, and psychiatric follow up;
- Local research into suicide and self harm;
- Regional training on suicide awareness and mental health first aid;
- Enhanced mental health crisis intervention services;
- Public awareness campaigns;
- Media monitoring;
- Support to address alcohol/substance misuse.

As the causes of suicide are multifactorial, I am currently meeting with other Ministers to consider how best to progress relevant actions.

- (ii) Over £2m of the £6.7m funding is allocated for community support, which includes the provision of suicide bereavement support services. I am also meeting with local community/voluntary groups, which provide support for families bereaved by suicide, and all of this additional learning will feed into the refresh of Protect Life which is due for publication later this year.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Special Adviser is paid within Band A or Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale; and, if it is within Band B whether, in light of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000, there has been an increase in salary or an increase is planned.

(AQW 2039/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Special Adviser is paid within Band B of the Special Adviser salary scale.

There has been no increase in my Special Adviser's salary and no increased is planned in light of the increase to the Band B scale maximum.

Cancer Drugs Fund

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the Cancer Drugs Fund introduced in England, for his assessment of access to cancer treatments in Northern Ireland compared to England.

(AQW 2044/11-15)

Mr Poots: Cancer prevention, early intervention and access to appropriate effective treatment continues to be our biggest challenge and they remain a high priority for my Department.

Whilst around £22m recurrently is spent on a range of cancer medicines here, I acknowledge that further improvement in the availability of NICE approved medicines applicable to Northern Ireland is required.

In Northern Ireland the Drugs and Therapeutics Committee, led by the NI Cancer Network, has a regional process for the prioritisation of new drugs and therapies. The Committee includes clinical representation from both oncology and haematology and offers clear advice and guidance to the Health and Social Care Board on priorities for the commissioning of cancer drugs. A new revised process to speed up applicability of NICE approved drugs in NI will be effective from 28 September 2011.

In addition, I am currently exploring other options to increase resources available to fund access to specialist medicines.

Social Services Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what procedures are followed when Social Services staff are refused entry to a house where care proceedings are in place or pending, or when there is reasonable cause to suspect some form of abuse or neglect of persons. **(AQW 2057/11-15)**

Mr Poots: When Social Services staff are refused entry to a house where care proceedings are in place in respect of a child believed to be 'harboured' in that house Social Services can, under the provisions of Article 69 of the Children(Northern Ireland) Order 1995 make application to the Court for a Recovery Order in respect of that child.

If there is an immediate concern in relation to the welfare of the child Social Services can enlist the assistance of the PSNI who, under their own powers and duties, can enter the premises, search for and retrieve the child.

When Social Services staff are refused entry to a house where care proceedings are pending in respect of a child, Social Services can apply to the Court for an Emergency Protection Order in respect of that child and any other child in the household that may be at risk of harm. If there is an immediate concern in relation to the welfare of the child Social Services can enlist the assistance of the PSNI who, under their own powers and duties, can enter the premises, search for and retrieve the child.

When Social Services staff are refused entry to a house when there is reasonable cause to suspect some form of abuse or neglect of a child Social Services can apply for a range of legal orders that enable them to fulfill their duties to investigate under Article 66 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. In instance where it is believed that there is an immediate risk to the welfare of a child, Social Services can make application to the Court for an Emergency Protection Order and can also enlist the assistance of the PSNI to search for and remove the child.

Nurses Specialising in Parkinson's Disease

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of nurses specialising in Parkinson's Disease in each Health and Social Care Trust area. **(AQW 2059/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The information requested is provided in the table below.

Nurses specialising in Parkinson's Disease employed within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts at September 2011

Trust	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	2	1.80

Trust	Headcount	WTE
Northern	1	1.00
South Eastern	0	0.00
Southern	1	1.00
Western	2	2.00
Total	6	5.80

Source: Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

1. WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
2. The 2 (1.80 WTE) staff based at Belfast Trust also cover the South Eastern Trust area and parts of the Northern Trust area.

Parkinson's Disease or Diabetes

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether, since coming to office, he has given any consideration to the daily timing of medication to patients in hospital with conditions such as Parkinson's Disease or Diabetes.

(AQW 2060/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is important that patients in hospital receive their medication on time and Trusts are responsible for ensuring that there are Medicines Management Policies in place to support this. There is currently no regional policy on this subject.

Patients with Sleep Disorders

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) what provisions are in place to treat patients with sleep disorders other than sleep apnoea; and (ii) whether polysomnographs can be administered.

(AQW 2083/11-15)

Mr Poots: Individuals with sleep disorders may be managed by neurologists or by GPs depending on the severity of their condition.

Polysomnography tests for sleep related breathing problems and a wide range of sleep disorders are provided by the Neurophysiology Department at the Mater Hospital.

Hospital Referral: Waiting Times

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of people on the waiting list for a referral to a Neurologist at the Royal Victoria Hospital; (ii) the waiting time for referrals for the Rheumatology Department at Belfast City Hospital; and (iii) what action his Department is taking to reduce these waiting times.

(AQW 2084/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have advised me that, at 19th September 2011, there were 2,333 people on the waiting list for a first outpatient appointment in the Neurology specialty at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

The waiting time position for a first outpatient appointment in the Rheumatology specialty at Belfast City Hospital, at 19th September 2011, is outlined in the table below.

Specialty	Patients Waiting for a First Outpatient Appointment at Belfast City Hospital, by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0-6	>6-9	>9-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26	
Rheumatology	358	178	164	331	232	792	2,055

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

The Commissioning Plan Direction (Northern Ireland) 2011, issued by my Department in June 2011, contains targets which identify that, from April 2011; at least 50% of patients should wait no longer than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment and all patients should be seen for a first outpatient appointment within 21 weeks. The Health and Social Care Board is currently working with all HSC Trusts to address the issue of waiting times.

Support for Elderly Carers

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to provide extra support for elderly carers.

(AQW 2087/11-15)

Mr Poots: Carers, including elderly carers, are individuals with their own needs and need real choices based on their individual circumstances. Research shows that older carers are more likely to provide higher levels of physical and personal care and are more likely to experience social isolation and encounter difficulties maintaining their own health and wellbeing.

A carer's assessment is the gateway to accessing support services. The Department has introduced a regional "Carer's Support and Needs Assessment" tool which facilitates the assessment of each carer and provides them with the opportunity to discuss their own specific needs and allows Trusts to identify any support services that they may require. It is important that the needs of individual carers are properly understood and that service providers respond with flexibility, offering carers real choice as to how their needs will be met.

In response to assessment a range of supports can be put in place, including the provision of information and advice, putting carers in touch with support organisations and other carers, or more traditional support such as domiciliary care services or respite.

Referrals to the Royal Dental Hospital, Belfast

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of people on the waiting list; and (ii) the waiting list time for a referral to the Royal Dental Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 2097/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have advised me that, at 19th September 2011, there were 3,953 people on the waiting list for a first outpatient appointment in the Royal Dental Hospital
- (ii) The waiting time position for a first outpatient appointment in the Royal Dental Hospital is outlined in the table below:

Hospital	Patients Waiting for an Appointment, by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0-6	>6-9	>9-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26	
Royal Dental Hospital	936	282	365	697	362	1,311	3,953

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Medical Staff at the Royal Dental Hospital, Belfast

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number and grade of medical staff working at the Royal Dental Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 2099/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is provided in the table below.

DENTAL STAFF EMPLOYED WITHIN THE ROYAL DENTAL HOSPITAL, BELFAST BY GRADE AT 21 SEPTEMBER 2011

Grade	Headcount	WTE
Consultants	14	7.14
Staff Grade	6	4.10
Specialist Registrar	4	4.00
Dental Foundation Officer 2	8	8.00
Dental Practitioners	9	1.15
Total	41	24.39

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Notes:

- WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
- 8 (4.00 WTE) of the Consultants above hold joint contracts with Queens University, Belfast and 2 (0.30 WTE) run Ulster Hospital, Dundonald outreach clinics within the Royal Dental Hospital.
- In addition to the Consultants above, there are also 4 (3.30 WTE) Locum Consultants employed within the Dental Hospital, although one (1.00 WTE) of these Locums is due to leave at the end of September 2011.

Supplier Invoices

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many supplier invoices have been paid late by (i) Health and Social Care Trusts; and (ii) Health and Social Care Board since 1 April 2011.

(AQW 2122/11-15)

Mr Poots: The following table shows how many invoices have been paid late from 1 April 2011 to 31 July 2011, together with details of what percentage these represented of total invoices received.

INVOICES PAID LATE – 1 APRIL 2011 TO 31 JULY 2011(A)

	Cumulative total invoices paid late	% of total invoices received
Belfast HSC Trust	8,063	6.6%
Northern HSC Trust	2,304	5.5%
Southern HSC Trust	4,024	11.2%
S/E HSC Trust	3,835	9.3%
Western Trust	1,254	3.8%
NI Ambulance Service HSC Trust	184	3.6%
HSC Board	875	14.6%

Note (A): Latest available information.

Hospitals: Staffing

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to ensure that hospitals, such as the Downe Hospital, Downpatrick and Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry, have a full complement of trained and specialist staff.

(AQO 327/11-15)

Mr Poots: The recruitment of appropriately trained and specialist hospital staff is a matter for the relevant Trust, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) with regard to doctors-in-training. To achieve the complement of staff required to provide safe, effective and sustainable services, Trusts may use bank, agency or locum staff to fill short or long term vacancies.

At strategic level, my Department regularly reviews workforce requirements in order to plan for the future, and there is an annual significant investment in the postgraduate education and training of HSC staff.

Where there will be anticipated vacancies, appropriate action is instigated, for example in the junior doctor medical workforce, I have asked the NIMDTA to maximise recruitment in certain specialties and I am addressing one of the barriers to international recruitment, the immigration rules, with the Borders Agency.

Multiple System Atrophy

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what respite services are available for people with Multiple System Atrophy and their carers.

(AQW 2187/11-15)

Mr Poots: Respite services are provided by Health and Social Care Trusts commensurate with an individual's assessed needs, rather than solely according to their disability or condition. On this basis, people with Multiple System Atrophy and their carers can benefit from respite care, which can take many different forms, such as local flexible short term arrangements or, if appropriate, a stay in an alternative setting, including day facilities or a residential care home.

Looked After Children

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many looked after children have gone on to attend university in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2190/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures are not available in the format requested either centrally from the DHSSPS or from the HSC Board, and HSC Trusts could only produce these figures at disproportionate cost.

The only figures similar to those requested and available centrally relates to former care leavers known to be in higher education on or at the time of their nineteenth birthday. For the five years for which data have been collected, of 928 former care leavers aged nineteen, just below three per cent (26) were known to have gone on to higher education.

The latest release of National Statistics bulletin, 'Care Leavers aged 19 in Northern Ireland 2009/10', is available on the DHSSPS website at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats_and_research_cib_care_leavers_aged19.htm

MRI Scans

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many MRI scans were carried out by the South Eastern; (ii) Southern; (iii) Western; and (iv) Belfast Health and Social Care Trusts in (a) 2008; (b) 2009; and (c) 2010.

(AQW 2222/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of MRI scans carried out at the South Eastern; (ii) Southern; (iii) Western; and (iv) Belfast Health and Social Care Trusts in (a) 2008; (b) 2009; and (c) 2010 is outlined in the table below.

Health and Social Care Trust	Year		
	2008	2009	2010
South Eastern	4,956	5,200	5,783
Southern ¹	5,814	7,081	6,694
Western	6,049	6,771	6,964
Belfast	21,711	24,798	25,182

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

1 Data relate to financial years 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Whiteabbey Hospital and Antrim Area Hospital: Patient Numbers

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the change in patient numbers attending (i) Whiteabbey Hospital; and (ii) Antrim Area Hospital as a result of the closure of the Accident and Emergency Unit at Whiteabbey Hospital.

(AQW 2237/11-15)

Mr Poots: Emergency care services were reconfigured at both Whiteabbey and Mid Ulster emergency care departments on 24th May 2010, from consultant-led treatment services (Type 2 - emergency care departments) to nurse-led minor injury units with designated accommodation for the reception of patients with minor injuries and/or illnesses (Type 3 - emergency care departments). In addition, opening hours at both departments were reduced to 9am to 5pm, 5 days a week.

Information on the total number of new and unplanned review attendances each month at (i) Whiteabbey and (ii) Antrim Area emergency care departments is presented in the table overleaf.

MONTHLY ATTENDANCES AT WHITEABBEY AND ANTRIM AREA EMERGENCY CARE DEPARTMENTS (DECEMBER 2009 – MARCH 2011)

Emergency Care Dept.	Antrim	Change from previous Month	Whiteabbey	Change from previous Month	Northern HSC Trust	Change from previous Month
December 2009	5,495	-	1,402	-	11,421	-
January 2010	5,428	-67	1,450	48	11,354	-67
February 2010	4,869	-559	1,375	-75	10,373	-981
March 2010	5,802	933	1,589	214	12,308	1935
April 2010	5,554	-248	1,651	62	12,374	66
May 2010 ¹	6,052	498	1,256	-395	12,334	-40
June 2010	6,228	176	743	-513	11,405	-929
July 2010	6,185	-43	591	-152	11,333	-72
August 2010	6,167	-18	676	85	11,448	115
September 2010	6,104	-63	773	97	11,043	-405

Emergency Care Dept.	Antrim	Change from previous Month	Whiteabbey	Change from previous Month	Northern HSC Trust	Change from previous Month
October 2010	6,160	56	707	-66	10,960	-83
November 2010	5,596	-564	677	-30	10,048	-912
December 2010	5,541	-55	615	-62	9,708	-340
January 2011	5,873	332	687	72	10,405	697
February 2011	5,273	-600	629	-58	9,653	-752
March 2011	6,169	896	855	226	11,333	1680

1 Emergency Care Services at Whiteabbey were reconfigured on 24 May 2010.

Blood Donation: Homosexual and Bisexual Men

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will consider lifting the ban on homosexual and bi-sexual men donating blood.

(AQO 331/11-15)

Mr Poots: I take the view that the current position in Northern Ireland should not be altered.

The Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) has confirmed that the risk of HIV infection would, although by a small margin, increase as a result of a relaxation in the present lifetime deferral.

Safety must be my primary concern and I want to ensure the maximum public confidence.

Developing Better Services

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Developing Better Services strategy for hospitals remains the overarching strategy for his Department.

(AQO 332/11-15)

Mr Poots: Developing Better Services was about modernising hospitals and reforming structures. This document was published for consultation in 2002 by Bairbre de Brun - then Minister for Health. It is, therefore, nine years old and there are different ways of working now. That is why I have asked the Chief Executive of the Health and Social Care Board Mr John Compton to carry out a review of health and social care services. This Review is due to report in November 2011 and will replace the Developing Better Services document.

It is my intention to look at all issues which impact on the provision of treatment and care for the population of Northern Ireland. My focus will be on improvement in health outcomes, and the safety, quality and effectiveness of services.

Maternity Services

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to enhance maternity services.

(AQO 333/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department recently carried out a review of maternity services policy and has, as a result, developed a draft maternity strategy which will shape the future provision of maternity services. The Review considered the provision of services for women at each stage of their pregnancy, pre-conception, antenatal, delivery and postnatal care. I plan to launch the draft strategy, for 12 weeks public consultation, in the next few weeks.

Mental Health: Rural Communities

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he intends to increase further awareness of mental health issues amongst rural communities.

(AQO 335/11-15)

Mr Poots: In keeping with the Mental Health Promotion Strategy and the Suicide Prevention Strategy, initiatives have been implemented to promote mental health and wellbeing amongst the general population and amongst the rural community. The PHA will continue to support awareness raising aimed at rural communities.

The Agency is currently developing the next phase of the mental health promotion/suicide prevention public information campaign entitled "Signs and Symptoms" for launch in late 2011. The new campaign will encourage the early identification of mental health problems and will address the stigma that, unfortunately, can still be associated with mental ill health.

The new Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotion Strategy, currently being developed, will retain enhanced public awareness of mental health as a key outcome.

Hospitals: Omagh

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the range of hospital and GP services in the recently announced proposals for a new hospital in Omagh.

(AQO 336/11-15)

Mr Poots: The local hospital complex will provide a wide range of services for the local population. The enhanced local hospital will include an urgent care and treatment centre, intermediate care and palliative care services, a cardiac assessment unit, day surgery unit, imaging and diagnostic services, outpatient services, children's centre, women's health unit, renal services together with a range of support services including sterile supplies department and pathology services. There will also be a Health and Care Centre which will include GP accommodation.

Health and Social Care

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had with the Minister of Finance and Personnel about financial priorities for health and social care provision.

(AQO 337/11-15)

Mr Poots: I met with the Minister of Finance and Personnel in July to discuss capital funding for my Department. I have also had several discussions with the First Minister on the financial issues facing my Department at which Minister of Finance and Personnel was also present.

Group B Streptococcus

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he intends to take proactive steps to raise awareness of Group B Streptococcus and introduce routine screening of pregnant women to help protect the unborn child.

(AQO 338/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 6 September I met a number of families who have been affected by group B streptococcus (GBS).

Following that meeting my Department has taken a number of steps to increase awareness of GBS, both among healthcare professionals and the public.

The Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Nursing Officer have written to healthcare professionals to highlight the clinical management of GBS in pregnancy in order to ensure that those who are at risk are managed appropriately and to ensure all pregnant women are aware of this infection.

The Chief Medical Officer has asked the Public Health Agency to take forward work to raise awareness of GBS in pregnancy and to ensure that The Pregnancy Book is updated to accurately reflect Departmental policy on GBS infection.

The Chief Nursing Officer has written to the providers of nurse education for all pre- and post-registration students to highlight GBS.

The National Screening Committee (NSC) currently does not recommend screening for GBS. The NSC will be reviewing this policy recommendation in 2012. The Chief Medical Officer has written to the NSC asking them to give this matter their earliest consideration.

Also, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) is revising its guideline "Prevention of Early Onset Neonatal Group B Streptococcal Disease". The revised guideline is due to be published in the new year.

In addition, my Department has commissioned the Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN) to undertake an audit of GBS in Northern Ireland from an obstetric and neonatal perspective.

I will consider the outcome of the NSC review and the RCOG revised guideline before making a decision on screening for GBS in pregnancy.

Community Information System

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the procurement of a Community Information System for the north and west Belfast sector of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (i) whether the contract was put out to tender; (ii) whether the contract was for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust only; (iii) whether his Department or Hewlett-Packard is able to provide the evaluation documentation produced for each supplier; (iv) why the existing suppliers were not consulted during the evaluation process; (v) what is the approved spend for the Community Information System; (vi) to detail the process followed in relation to the awarding of the contract, including how it was documented; and (vii) whether he will make this information available to the public **(AQW 2339/11-15)**

Mr Poots:

- I. The contract falls within the remit of the Technology Partner Framework Agreement which was procured via a fully competitive European procedure.
- II. The Contract will be effected by placement of an order with HP and is only for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, although the Technology Partnership Framework Agreement can be used by all Trusts.
- III. In response to the Requirements issued by the Trust, HP provided a Contractor Solution Document describing the recommended approach. This can be made available.
- IV. There was no reason to consult existing suppliers during the evaluation process. The Belfast Trust's aim is to implement a system which meets the need of the Trust as a whole. Existing systems are not doing this.
- V. The approved baseline funding as detailed in the business case and approved by my Department for the Community Information System is £4.5m capital and £4.4m revenue.
- VI. The project is following standard project management procedures and all documentation relating to the awarding of the Contract is detailed. The Technology Partner Framework Agreement is based on a standard Public Sector ICT agreement and includes a number of Schedules which were used to define in detail each aspect of the Contract to be placed for the Belfast Trust. In relation to the Belfast Trust staff, every service group had an input into specifying the requirements. Following HP's selection of Civica as the provider of the Paris solution, Civica was required to respond to every requirement in the document issued by the Belfast Trust at the start of the procurement. The responses were then issued to each service group and the resultant comments were fed back to the supplier. This process was a timely but productive exercise and the Belfast Trust now has a comprehensive set of requirements and a system that meets the needs of Community Health

& Social Care staff. In addition, the project has been subject to a Gateway review which provided independent approval of the process and documentation.

VII. The information from this process can be made available to the public if required.

Department of Justice

Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Prison Service can deal internally with criminal matters, such as the possession of indecent images of children, without reporting the incidents to the police.

(AQW 1556/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) does not deal internally with criminal offences.

Misconduct may give rise to a criminal prosecution as well as internal disciplinary proceedings. The NIPS Code of Conduct and Discipline makes provision for the police to be informed if there is evidence of a criminal offence or an allegation to that effect.

Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice who made the decision not to report to the PSNI that Prison Service staff members had been caught in possession of indecent images of children and that the matter should be handled internally.

(AQW 1557/11-15)

Mr Ford: As a result of an investigation into the use of the NIPS internet and email facility it was discovered that an inappropriate image had been emailed by two members of staff. Prison Service Headquarters referred the matter to the appropriate Governing Governor who in turn instigated disciplinary procedures under the NIPS Code of Conduct and Discipline. Police involvement was not considered by those staff who dealt with the case and therefore at that time the PSNI was not informed.

When one of the officers appealed against the outcome of the internal disciplinary process NIPS did seek advice from the PSNI. However, the case was not formally referred to the police for investigation.

Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether legislation exists that exempts Prison Service staff from prosecution for the possession of indecent images of children.

(AQW 1559/11-15)

Mr Ford: Legislation does not exempt prison service staff from prosecution if they commit a criminal offence.

Legally Detailed Persons

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the recent adverse publicity about his Department resulting from incidents such as the escape from custody of legally detailed persons, the death in custody of legally detained persons, the release of Brendan Lillis and the difficulties arising from the Legal Aid dispute, if he will make a statement to the Assembly outlining the steps he has taken to restore confidence in his Department.

(AQW 1569/11-15)

Mr Ford: As Minister of Justice, I am committed to ensuring that all aspects of the work of the Department command public confidence.

In response to specific issues raised, I have commissioned the Prison Review Team to conduct a review of the conditions of detention for prisoners in Northern Ireland, and I await with interest their final report which is due to be published next month.

In the interim, I have officially launched the NIPS Strategic Efficiency and Effectiveness (SEE) Programme, which is the vehicle by which the Prison Service will deliver the end to end transformational change envisaged by the Prison Review Team. I am confident that the outcome of this programme will be a more efficient and effective organisation, with a renewed focus on getting the basics right; that puts the offender at the heart of service delivery; and, reduces the risk of re-offending on release. Through the SEE Programme NIPS aims to become a service that is respected and valued by the community.

I have taken seriously those incidents which have resulted in the erroneous release of prisoners. Lessons have been learned and a wide range of measures have been put in place to improve communications, ensure cross checks are made, and to strengthen staff resources. Where appropriate, disciplinary action has been taken. I have kept the Assembly informed of my Department's response to these issues as they have arisen.

NIPS has also put in place a wide range of measures in relation to safer custody, including the introduction in February 2011 of a revised policy on Suicide & Self Harm Prevention and the Safer Custody Forum which I chair. The provision of safe, decent and secure custody is a strategic aim for NIPS.

The decision to release Brendan Lillis on licence was a matter solely for the Parole Commissioners, and not for my Department.

The successful resolution of the legal aid dispute, resulting in the ending of the withdrawal action by Solicitors on Friday 19 August demonstrated the determination of the Department of Justice to tackle difficult issues and has, I believe, enhanced public confidence in my Department.

I see no need to make further statements to the Assembly on any of the incidents mentioned in the question.

Brendan Lillis

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice what steps are in place to monitor the health of Brendan Lillis to ensure that an improvement in his health is followed by due process regarding the outstanding criminal charges he is facing.

(AQW 1570/11-15)

Mr Ford: A decision on whether Brendan Lillis stands trial on the outstanding criminal charges against him is a matter wholly for the Court and the Public Prosecution Service. The Department of Justice has no role in this and therefore has no arrangements in place to monitor the health of Mr Lillis with a view to the timing of a possible future prosecution.

Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1557/11-15, whether he is aware of any other incidents of criminal offences being committed by Prison Service staff that have been dealt with internally and not reported to the PSNI; and to provide details of any such offences and when they occurred.

(AQW 1634/11-15)

Mr Ford: Discipline records, covering the last 3 years have been checked and indicate that the Northern Ireland Prison Service has dealt with a range of internal disciplinary issues, for example alleged fraud and alleged assault. However none have been considered appropriate for referral to the PSNI.

Convictions for Possessing Indecent Images of Children

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been convicted of possessing indecent images of children in each of the last five years; and how many of these people were not (i) placed on the sex offenders register; nor (ii) bound by a Sexual Offences Prevention Order.

(AQW 1636/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below gives the number convicted for the possession of indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of a child(ren), under Article 15 of the Criminal Justice (Evidence etc) (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, and possession with a view to distribution under Article 3(1)(c) of the Protection of Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

I would also refer the Member to the reply given to the Member on 8 July 2011 (AQW/1196/11-15).

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included. The table covers the calendar years 2002 to 2006, the latest year for which figures are currently available. This was due to changes in how such data are collected but steps are now being taken as a matter of urgency to derive data for subsequent years. It is hoped information for the period 2007 to mid 2009 will be available in the near future; work on data for 2010 is also progressing in parallel.

POSSESSION OF INDECENT PHOTOGRAPHS OR PSEUDO PHOTOGRAPHS OF A CHILD(REN) – NUMBER CONVICTED, 2002-2006

Year	Number convicted
2002	0
2003	3
2004	2
2005	2
2006	0

Sex offender notification requirements are set by statute. Anyone convicted of these offences will automatically be subject to notification if they are over 18. Anyone under 18 would only attract notification if sentenced to imprisonment for a term of at least 12 months.

No sexual offences prevention orders applied in these cases.

Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he is satisfied with the Prison Service's handling of the cases of Prison Service staff who were caught in possession of indecent images of children; and whether he intends to carry out an investigation in to why this matter was handled internally and not reported to the appropriate authorities.

(AQW 1699/11-15)

Mr Ford: As a result of an internal investigation two officers were disciplined on the basis that their actions constituted gross misconduct. While I do not intend to launch an investigation, following discussion with the current management of NIPS, this matter has now been referred to the PSNI.

Small Claims Court System

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what plans he has to increase the use of mediators in the small claims court system.

(AQW 1708/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Small Claims Court has been subject to a number of important reforms over recent years.

Small Claims Online allows claimants to make an application using the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service website. It also allows parties to track the progress of proceedings online.

In May of this year, following public consultation (Increasing the Jurisdictional Limit of the County Courts in Northern Ireland), the financial limit of the Small Claims Court was increased from £2,000 to £3,000.

The consultation exercise also sought the views on the continued exclusion of certain types of claims from the Small Claims Court namely personal injury cases; and road traffic accidents. The responses did not express a uniform view. The County Court Rules prescribe these exclusions and the Rules are made by the County Court Rules Committee and allowed by my department. The Committee are presently considering the responses and will be reporting their recommendations to me in due course.

In 2010 the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service investigated the court-based Small Claims Mediation Scheme introduced in England & Wales to evaluate what benefits it may provide if reproduced in this jurisdiction. England and Wales provide in-house mediators whom litigants may avail of.

The Scheme offers an alternative method for resolving disputed small claims in order to reduce the number of cases going to court. One of the main benefits has been a reduction in the average listing time for small claims cases (from 14 to 6 weeks). The average listing time in Northern Ireland is already considerably lower (8 weeks).

For these reasons it was felt that an in-house mediation scheme in Northern Ireland would not provide value for money, although this will be kept under review. In the meantime it is always open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so.

My Department has recently supported the publication of a leaflet on "Alternatives to Court" which has been led by the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's Office and Law Centre (NI). The leaflet is designed to demonstrate the options for dealing with many types of disputes and explains how alternatives to court work in practice and when they can be used. In particular, the leaflet deals with alternative dispute resolution which includes mediation. It is my view that Alternative Dispute Resolution should be seen as one of the first avenues to be considered by parties who find themselves at odds. It is a commonsense option which delivers speedy access to justice.

The Access to Justice Review, published on 13 September 2011, is very clear that one solution might be greater use of mediation, or other alternative dispute resolution approaches, and this is a recurring theme throughout the report. It states that many disputes do not necessarily need to be resolved in a court hearing, and recommends the use of mediation, collaborative interventions or other alternatives to court proceedings. As you will know, some of these alternatives are already in use in Northern Ireland, but the report recommends that they be developed further. I fully support this.

Small Claims Court System

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what research his Department has carried out, or intends to carry out, on the use of the mediation system in England as an alternative route for small claims in the court system.

(AQW 1709/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Small Claims Court has been subject to a number of important reforms over recent years.

Small Claims Online allows claimants to make an application using the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service website. It also allows parties to track the progress of proceedings online.

In May of this year, following public consultation (Increasing the Jurisdictional Limit of the County Courts in Northern Ireland), the financial limit of the Small Claims Court was increased from £2,000 to £3,000.

The consultation exercise also sought the views on the continued exclusion of certain types of claims from the Small Claims Court namely personal injury cases; and road traffic accidents. The responses did not express a uniform view. The County Court Rules prescribe these exclusions and the Rules are made by the County Court Rules Committee and allowed by my department. The Committee are presently considering the responses and will be reporting their recommendations to me in due course.

In 2010 the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service investigated the court-based Small Claims Mediation Scheme introduced in England & Wales to evaluate what benefits it may provide if reproduced in this jurisdiction. England and Wales provide in-house mediators whom litigants may avail of.

The Scheme offers an alternative method for resolving disputed small claims in order to reduce the number of cases going to court. One of the main benefits has been a reduction in the average listing time for small claims cases (from 14 to 6 weeks). The average listing time in Northern Ireland is already considerably lower (8 weeks).

For these reasons it was felt that an in-house mediation scheme in Northern Ireland would not provide value for money, although this will be kept under review. In the meantime it is always open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so.

My Department has recently supported the publication of a leaflet on "Alternatives to Court" which has been led by the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's Office and Law Centre (NI). The leaflet is designed to demonstrate the options for dealing with many types of disputes and explains how alternatives to court work in practice and when they can be used. In particular, the leaflet deals with alternative dispute resolution which includes mediation. It is my view that Alternative Dispute Resolution should be seen as one of the first avenues to be considered by parties who find themselves at odds. It is a commonsense option which delivers speedy access to justice.

The Access to Justice Review, published on 13 September 2011, is very clear that one solution might be greater use of mediation, or other alternative dispute resolution approaches, and this is a recurring theme throughout the report. It states that many disputes do not necessarily need to be resolved in a court hearing, and recommends the use of mediation, collaborative interventions or other alternatives to court proceedings. As you will know, some of these alternatives are already in use in Northern Ireland, but the report recommends that they be developed further. I fully support this.

Small Claims Court System

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans to reform the small claims court.
(AQW 1710/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Small Claims Court has been subject to a number of important reforms over recent years.

Small Claims Online allows claimants to make an application using the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service website. It also allows parties to track the progress of proceedings online.

In May of this year, following public consultation (Increasing the Jurisdictional Limit of the County Courts in Northern Ireland), the financial limit of the Small Claims Court was increased from £2,000 to £3,000.

The consultation exercise also sought the views on the continued exclusion of certain types of claims from the Small Claims Court namely personal injury cases; and road traffic accidents. The responses did not express a uniform view. The County Court Rules prescribe these exclusions and the Rules are made by the County Court Rules Committee and allowed by my department. The Committee are presently considering the responses and will be reporting their recommendations to me in due course.

In 2010 the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service investigated the court-based Small Claims Mediation Scheme introduced in England & Wales to evaluate what benefits it may provide if reproduced in this jurisdiction. England and Wales provide in-house mediators whom litigants may avail of.

The Scheme offers an alternative method for resolving disputed small claims in order to reduce the number of cases going to court. One of the main benefits has been a reduction in the average listing time for small claims cases (from 14 to 6 weeks). The average listing time in Northern Ireland is already considerably lower (8 weeks).

For these reasons it was felt that an in-house mediation scheme in Northern Ireland would not provide value for money, although this will be kept under review. In the meantime it is always open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so.

My Department has recently supported the publication of a leaflet on "Alternatives to Court" which has been led by the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's Office and Law Centre (NI). The leaflet is designed to demonstrate the options for dealing with many types of disputes and explains how alternatives to court work in practice and when they can be used. In particular, the leaflet deals with alternative dispute resolution which includes mediation. It is my view that Alternative Dispute Resolution should be seen as one of the first avenues to be considered by parties who find themselves at odds. It is a commonsense option which delivers speedy access to justice.

The Access to Justice Review, published on 13 September 2011, is very clear that one solution might be greater use of mediation, or other alternative dispute resolution approaches, and this is a recurring theme throughout the report. It states that many disputes do not necessarily need to be resolved in a court hearing, and recommends the use of mediation, collaborative interventions or other alternatives to court proceedings. As you will know, some of these alternatives are already in use in Northern Ireland, but the report recommends that they be developed further. I fully support this.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice whether he will extend the time limit for applications to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

(AQW 1719/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Part-Time Gratuity Scheme had to have a cut-off date due to the fact that all of the £20m provided by the government was ringfenced solely for the payment and administration of the scheme. Therefore the value of each payment was dependent on the number of verified applications. It has been necessary to have a deadline, in order that a value could be attached to each payment and therefore make it possible to make any payments.

Brendan Lillis

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what cognisance his Department gave to representations made by the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to Brendan Lillis.

(AQW 1749/11-15)

Mr Ford: No representations were received by me from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to Brendan Lillis.

Functions of the Parole Commissioners

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what consideration is being given to reviewing the functions of the Parole Commissioners and the public transparency of its decision making.

(AQW 1750/11-15)

Mr Ford: The functions of the Parole Commissioners are set out in the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. I recently appointed a new Chief Parole Commissioner and will be discussing with her any views she might have on possible changes to Commissioners' procedures including the availability of information on their decision making.

Brendan Lillis

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice whether Brendan Lillis received an unauthorised visit in Maghaberry Prison; and if so, by whom he was visited and for what reason.

(AQW 1751/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 2 August 2011 Mr Lillis received a visit from his partner Roisin Allsopp. Ms Allsopp was accompanied on the visit by Alison Morris, a journalist with the Irish News, and Doctor Sean O'Donhnaill.

The visit was booked by Ms Allsopp under the normal domestic/family visiting arrangements and as such was an authorised visit. However neither Ms Morris or Dr O'Donhail had requested, or were given, permission to visit in a professional capacity.

Subsequently the Irish News published an article written by Alison Morris based on her visit and Dr O'Donhail claimed to have carried out an examination of Mr Lillis.

Community Service Schemes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans to change the current community service schemes to impose stricter criteria and to ensure that the work undertaken is of benefit to the general community.

(AQW 1768/11-15)

Mr Ford: PBNI undertakes Community Service in conjunction with approximately 300 community based and voluntary organisations across Northern Ireland.

When surveyed, 97% of beneficiaries agreed that the community had directly benefited from the work undertaken through community service schemes.

A new strategy for Community Service was introduced in July 2010 with the objectives of increasing the prompt commencement of work and increasing the number of hours worked on a weekly basis. An audit of a sample of community orders, undertaken in June 2011, demonstrated an increase in both these measures.

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) will shortly introduce a Best Practice Framework, which will include more stringent enforcement procedures.

Legal Aid for Riot Related Convictions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1404/11-15, to detail the total spend on legal aid on cases relating to rioting over the Twelfth of July period in 2010.

(AQW 1769/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total spend to date in respect of representation in the Magistrate's Court is £46,346.98 (including VAT of £7,156.37)

The total spend to date in respect of representation of the Crown Court is £67,241.46 (including VAT of £9,666.56 and disbursements of £6,493.09). To date, bills in respect of proceedings at the Crown Court have only been submitted in relation to 18 out of 29 defendants.

The total spend to date with regard to Green Form/PACE payments, for advice given at the police station, which is not included in the standard fee, is £2,546.25 (including VAT of £378.56 and disbursements of £7.16).

The total paid to date in respect of the County Court is £318.00 (including VAT of £53.00)

Pardon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether a prison governor can apply for a pardon on behalf of a serving prisoner.

(AQW 1770/11-15)

Mr Ford: A prison governor can not apply for a pardon on behalf of a serving prisoner.

In the course of his duties a Governor would be able to provide a prisoner with information on how to apply for a pardon or assist the prisoner in the completion of an application for a pardon. However, the prisoner remains the applicant.

Anti-Social Behaviour in Towns and Villages

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice what steps he is taking to deal with anti-social behaviour in towns and villages, particularly amongst young people; and for his assessment of the usefulness of extending the PSNI's power of discretion so they could disperse groups of young people from public places.

(AQW 1774/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department works in partnership to address anti-social behaviour through a mixture of prevention, intervention and enforcement approaches.

I am currently considering the views received in response to the consultation on 'Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities', including powers of dispersal, and intend to publish a new Community Safety Strategy by the end of the year.

Pardon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether a pardon completely clears a criminal offence from a person's record.

(AQW 1787/11-15)

Mr Ford: A pardon, under the Royal Prerogative of Mercy, would not quash or annul a criminal offence. The offence would therefore remain on the person's criminal record.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the introduction of the information-sharing protocol for Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

(AQW 1795/11-15)

Mr Ford: The draft Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) will be considered at the inaugural meeting of the MARAC Operational Group on 26 September; and in early October will be distributed to partner agencies for final consultation and agreement. Once agreed the ISA will be reviewed regularly.

Rioting and Looting in England

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the sentences handed down by judges following the recent rioting and looting in England; and whether he will consider introducing similar sentencing guidelines.

(AQW 1824/11-15)

Mr Ford: The offence of riot was considered in the review of the sentencing framework legislated for in the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 which introduced public protection sentences. Riot was included in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Order as a specified violent offence and so can attract an indeterminate or extended public protection sentence. Under common law in Northern Ireland, the maximum sentence available for riot is life. Sentencing decisions, within the legislative framework, are a matter for the judiciary, taking account of all the factors pertaining in individual cases.

Last year, I issued a consultation which considered a range of potential mechanisms by which greater transparency, consistency and understanding of sentencing practice might be achieved. I hope to announce proposals later in the autumn on how best these might be delivered in a way that will promote public confidence.

Sentences for Knife Crime

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what plans he has to increase sentences for knife crime.

(AQW 1844/11-15)

Mr Ford: Sentencing itself is a matter for the courts, within parameters laid down by statute. Just this year the Justice Act completed the creation of a standard set of stringent maximum penalties available to the courts for a range of offences involving knives and other offensive weapons. These include mostly possession offences, for which prison terms of up to 12 months are available from magistrates' courts, with up to 4 years from the Crown Court. In addition, more severe penalties are available where a knife or weapon is used in an attack.

I have no plans to increase the current maximum sentences. However, I take knife crime very seriously and I do keep these matters under constant review.

Police Ombudsman

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many cases were concluded by the Police Ombudsman in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1868/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Ombudsman has advised that the number of cases (includes complaints and referrals) concluded in each of the last five years are as follows:

	Cases received	Cases closed
2006/07	3283	3091
2007/08	2996	3049
2008/09	3092	3286
2009/10	3542	3532
2010/11	3313	3592

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what investigation is planned into the breach of security in relation to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

(AQW 1870/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 22 August I instructed officials in the Department of Justice's Security Branch to undertake an investigation into the circumstances of this regrettable incident.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many successful applications were made to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

(AQW 1872/11-15)

Mr Ford: There were 6,157 successful applications made to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme. There were four applications rejected for reasons other than late applications. However there are 57 applications pending appeals panel decisions.

There have been 32 late applications received.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many applications to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme were rejected for reasons other than late application.

(AQW 1873/11-15)

Mr Ford: There were 6,157 successful applications made to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme. There were four applications rejected for reasons other than late applications. However there are 57 applications pending appeals panel decisions.

There have been 32 late applications received.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many late applications were received for the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

(AQW 1874/11-15)

Mr Ford: There were 6,157 successful applications made to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme. There were four applications rejected for reasons other than late applications. However there are 57 applications pending appeals panel decisions.

There have been 32 late applications received.

Court Filming

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of court filming being allowed in England and Wales and the broadcasting of Judges' remarks and sentencing; and whether he will consider allowing similar court filming in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1891/11-15)

Mr Ford: As I said in response to AQ0365/11-15, I have asked my Department to monitor how the plans recently announced in England and Wales in relation to filming in courts develop, and to consider whether there are any lessons to be learned.

As stated previously, I consider that there are a number of important factors which will need to be taken into account when assessing the merit of lifting the ban on filming in courts in Northern Ireland.

The potential impact which allowing filming in courts may have on victims and witnesses would have to be weighed very carefully against their particular needs.

The appetite of the public for the presence of cameras in courts, and the views of the judiciary and the legal profession, would be important factors in assessing the worth of the proposal.

Consideration would also have to be given to the cost to the public purse and the risk that cameras in courts could lead to sensationalism of proceedings.

Rioting in Ballyclare and Carrickfergus

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many arrests were made in relation to the rioting in Ballyclare and Carrickfergus on 9 July 2011; and (ii) how many people have been prosecuted and convicted in relation to the disturbances.

(AQW 1908/11-15)

Mr Ford: Fourteen arrests have been made by the PSNI, to date (15 September 2011), in relation to the rioting in Ballyclare and Carrickfergus on 9 July 2011.

The nature of many of the offences charged is serious and the cases concerned are under consideration by PPS prosecutors. Information is not yet available on convictions, therefore.

Number of Prisoners

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of prisoners currently in each jail; (ii) the number of prisoners in each jail for sexual abuse of children or similar offences; and (iii) the number of such prisoners who have re-offended in the last five years.

(AQW 1923/11-15)

Mr Ford:

Establishment	Maghaberry	Magilligan	Hydebank Wood	Total
(i) Prison Population	965	509	277	1751
(ii) Numbers in each jail for sexual offences against children or similar offences.	13	74	1	88
(iii) Numbers of prisoners in (ii) who have re-offended in the last five years.*	2	4	2	8

The table above provides details of prisoners who have committed sexual offences against children. The figures have been collated from electronic records held by Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

The figures in row (ii) relate to those prisoners sentenced for sexual offences against children. They do not include prisoners who are currently being held on remand for sexual offences against children.

* Of the 8 prisoners in row (iii) who have committed previous offences in the last 5 years, only one of these was in relation to a sex offence against a child.

Historical Enquiries Team Cases

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many Historical Enquiries Team cases were concluded by the Office of the Police Ombudsman in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1924/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Ombudsman has advised that the number of Historical cases concluded in each of the last five calendar years are as follows:

2007	19
2008	13
2009	7
2010	4
2011	4

Clare's Law

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the proposed 'Clare's Law'; and how beneficial it would be.

(AQW 1959/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department has not yet made any detailed policy assessment of this proposal. However, I am aware of the background and that the PSNI are following UK-wide developments through the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Category C Prisoners

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans to house Category C prisoners on any part of the Lisnevin site in Millisle.

(AQW 1970/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently conducting a Strategic Review. The Lisnevin site forms part of that review.

I can confirm that at present there are no plans to use any part of the Lisnevin complex to detain category C prisoners.

AccessNI Checks

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the total number of AccessNI checks that have been carried out in each of the last five years; (ii) the number of people who have had (a) one AccessNI check; (b) 2-5 AccessNI checks; and (c) more than 5 AccessNI checks over the last five years; and (iii) the total revenue generated by the AccessNI checks in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1995/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Listed below are details of the total number of AccessNI checks that have been carried out since the organisation became operational on 1 April 2008. These figures include all levels of disclosure certificate available (basic, standard and enhanced certificate):

1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009	115,313
1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010	146,886
1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011	127,127
1 April 2011 – 15 September 2011 (most up to date figures)	54,543

- (ii) AccessNI is unable to provide figures on the number of multiple applications that individuals have made. When an application is received by AccessNI a unique reference number is allocated and each application is treated afresh. There is no search facility for multiple applications.

- (iii) Listed below are details of the total revenue generated by the AccessNI checks in each financial year since the operational date of 1 April 2008:

2008/09	£2,829,613
2009/10	£3,292,178
2010/11	£3,079,564
2011/12(to 31 August)	£1,082,410

In terms of the revenue generated, it is important to note that AccessNI does not charge volunteers for applications in most circumstances. Those applications make up around 26% of all applications for enhanced disclosures.

AccessNI Checks

Mr Hussey asked Minister of Justice why people who go through an AccessNI check cannot use this authorisation for more than one organisation or position at a time.

(AQW 1997/11-15)

Mr Ford: AccessNI operates under Part V of the Police Act 1997 and the subordinate legislation made under it. The regulations require an application for employment or voluntary work with children or vulnerable adults or both in specified areas to be specific to that role. An applicant cannot apply for a certificate for general employment.

AccessNI certificates provide any known criminal history or, in the case of an enhanced certificate, other relevant information in regard to an applicant in respect of the particular position applied for. The information on the certificate is current at the date the certificate is prepared: criminal records

information could change after the certificate has been issued which is why at present certificates are not portable across "employment". In addition, legal requirements for certain types of employment require some employers to obtain a new AccessNI check for any new employee.

In March 2011 I asked Sunita Mason, the United Kingdom Government's Independent Advisor for Criminality Information Management, to carry out a review of the Criminal Record Regime in Northern Ireland. I asked her to consider the issue of how disclosures could be made more portable across different sectors of employment to reduce the number of applications made. Mrs Mason reported in August 2011 and her report has been published. She has recommended that a system of portable disclosures should be introduced and that this should be supported by introducing an on-line facility to enable employers to validate the portable check. I am currently considering the report.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Justice whether he has identified who was responsible for the breach of security in relation to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme notifications.

(AQW 2014/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am awaiting a Report from the review conducted into the circumstances of how this regrettable incident occurred.

Libel Cases

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many libel cases have been heard in each of the last three years; and (ii) how many writs for libel have been issued in the last 18 months.

(AQW 2035/11-15)

Mr Ford: The tables below set out (i) the number of libel actions heard in the High Court and County Court for each of the last three years, and (ii) the number of writs for libel that have been issued in the last 18 months.

(I) LIBEL CASES HEARD IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS

	2008	2009	2010
High Court Libel Disposed of at Court	11	22	64
County Court Libel/Slander Disposed of at Court	1	-	3

Notes: In the County Court there is no distinction between libel and slander cases.

In April 2008 a High Court practice direction set out new procedures for setting down an action for trial. A rolling exercise to dispose of old cases involved listing cases for court and disposing of them accordingly; this resulted in elevated figures for court disposals in 2009 and 2010.

(II) WRITS AND CIVIL BILLS FOR LIBEL ISSUED IN THE LAST 18 MONTHS

	01/03/10 – 31/08/2011
High Court Libel Writs	57
County Court Libel/Slander Civil Bills	1

Notes: Data for 2011 should be treated as provisional.

In the County Court there is no distinction between libel and slander cases.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost to his Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 2068/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice came into existence on 12th April 2010. Details of expenditure before that date are a matter for the previous department

The cost of arm's length bodies for the 2010/2011 financial year, are set out in the table below. The costs provided are the Resource DEL (Departmental Expenditure Limit), Resource AME (Annually Managed Expenditure) and Capital DEL for each body, based on their 2010/2011 outturn.

DOJ ARM'S LENGTH BODIES EXPENDITURE 2010/2011 (£'000S)

Name of Body	Resource DEL	Resource AME	Total Resource	Capital DEL
Executive NDPBs				
Police Service of Northern Ireland	901,193	-368,284	532,909	42,067
Probation Board for Northern Ireland	20,877	-1,816	19,061	224
Northern Ireland Policing Board	8,320	-103	8,217	358
Office of the Police Ombudsman Northern Ireland	8,596	-40	8,556	229
Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland	1,484	0	1,484	0
Northern Ireland Police Fund	1,995	0	1,995	0
RUC George Cross Foundation	133	0	133	0
Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission	98,198	1,200	99,398	743
Advisory NDPBs				
Independent Assessor for PSNI Recruitment Applications	18	0	18	0
Northern Ireland Law Commission	1,047	0	1,047	0
Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households				
Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust	3,107	0	3,107	0
Independent Statutory Office Holder				
Parole Commissioners / Remission of Sentences Commissioners	1,331	50	1,381	28
Prisoner Ombudsman	660	0	660	0

Name of Body	Resource DEL	Resource AME	Total Resource	Capital DEL
Commissioner for Hearings Under Prison Rule 109B	0	0	0	0
Voluntary Support Bodies				
RUC Widows Association	40	0	40	0
Independent Monitoring Boards				
Independent Monitoring Boards	174	0	174	0
Others				
Prison Service Trust	298	0	298	0
Northern Ireland Prison Service Sports Association	14	0	14	0
Central Benevolent Fund	12	0	12	0

Capital Assets

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail all the capital assets held by his Department. (AQW 2095/11-15)

Mr Ford: Capital assets held by the Department of Justice, excluding Executive NDPBs, as at 31 March 2011 are set out in the table below.

This information is taken from the Department's Resource Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011, which are available from the Assembly Library and from the Department's website at the following link,

http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-departmental-business/departments_of_justice_resource_accounts_2010-11.htm

£'000s	Cost or Valuation as at 31 March 2011	Depreciation / Amortisation as at 31 March 2011	Net Book Value as at 31 March 2011
Property, Plant and Equipment			
Land	38,838	-	38,838
Buildings and Dwellings	444,743	77,192	367,551
Vehicles, Plant and Machinery	65,023	37,865	27,158
Information Technology	46,029	29,053	16,976
Assets Under Construction	10,902	-	10,902
Total Property, Plant and Equipment	605,535	144,110	461,425
Total Intangible Assets	31,236	20,968	10,268
Total Capital Assets	636,771	165,078	471,693

Efficiency Plans

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what efficiency plans his Department has outlined for the next four years.

(AQW 2096/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice published its budget for the financial years 2011 to 2015 on 10 March 2011. The table below provides an overview of the savings targets factored into budgets over the next four years.

Further detail on the savings plans will be published on the DOJ Internet following a presentation to the Justice Committee on 6 October 2011.

SAVINGS TARGETS FACTORED INTO FINAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS - RESOURCE DEL £M

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Justice Delivery	0.6	2.6	4.1	5.1
Justice Policy	0.0	1.4	1.9	2.5
Policing and Community Safety	2.6	2.7	2.9	3.0
NI Prison Service (1)	(13.0)	5.4	23.5	23.3
Compensation Agency	0.2	1.0	7.6	7.6
Forensic Science NI	-	-	-	0.1
Youth Justice Agency	1.2	2.0	2.3	2.3
NI Courts and Tribunals Service	5.5	4.7	6.3	6.8
Police Service of NI	37.0	63.9	74.8	85.6
Police Ombudsman	0.5	0.8	1.2	1.6
Policing Board	0.4	1.1	1.2	1.6
Probation Board for NI	0.9	1.5	2.7	3.1
Criminal Justice Inspection NI	-	0.1	0.2	0.3
NI Legal Services Commission	0.4	1.0	3.4	3.7
Total savings targets	36.3	88.2	132.1	146.6

Note 1: The £13m in brackets indicates a net injection of £13m into the NI Prison Service budget to fund an 'invest to save' programme from which savings will flow in future years.

Police Officers Suspended from Duty

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many police officers are currently suspended from duty because they are facing prosecution, broken down by court division.

(AQW 2134/11-15)

Mr Ford: The suspension of police officers from duty is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board. You may therefore wish to direct your question to the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Currency Seizures from Visitors to Prison Establishments

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice (i) on how many occasions have there been currency seizures from visitors to prison establishments from 1 January 2009 to date; (ii) how much has been seized; and (iii) to detail the dates, amounts and locations of the seizures.

(AQW 2215/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Service has not seized any currency from visitors to prisoners from January 2009 to date.

There has been one recent case when a seizure was made by PSNI. The circumstances of that case are a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to consider extending the time limit for applications to the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme to allow additional applications.

(AQO 359/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme has had to operate within a strictly limited amount of funding, and in the context of a desire to maximize the use of that funding. Therefore, the calculation of the amounts to be paid out has been based upon the number of applications. This has been to ensure that the full amount has been used. It is not, therefore, possible to reopen the existing scheme because all the available money has been allocated to those who did apply on time.

To open a new scheme would require Executive approval and the identification of funding from within the DOJ budget. Neither is likely to be possible.

Office of the Police Ombudsman

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Justice what safeguards are in place to ensure that his Department does not interfere with the independence and effectiveness of the Office of the Police Ombudsman.

(AQO 361/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department has a Framework Document in place which governs the relationship between us and the Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPONI). This framework is based on a model set out by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and it applies to all Arms Length Bodies (ALBs).

The framework does not give the Department any locus to intervene in the operational and investigative side of OPONI. The Ombudsman has an independence of action with regard to the investigation of cases which I fully respect. The Department however needs to be able to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office given the responsibility that we have for corporate governance, OPONI's responsibility to me and in turn my responsibility to the Assembly and Executive.

Legal Aid: Non-molestation Orders

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the effects the removal of the financial eligibility limits for people applying for legal aid has had on their ability to take a Non-Molestation Order through the court system.

(AQO 362/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since the introduction of the waiver on 22 December 2010, the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has granted 82 applications under the waiver scheme, none of whom would have qualified for legal aid before the introduction of the waiver.

Although in some of the cases a financial contribution may be required, the waiver has allowed legal assistance to be provided to 82 individuals who needed help urgently in difficult circumstances, and who otherwise may have found it difficult to access the courts.

The waiver provides a good example of the kind of change I want to make to improve the justice system. Many more ideas are set out in the final report of the review of Access to Justice in Northern Ireland, which I published last week.

Police Museum

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the creation of a new Police Museum.
(AQO 363/11-15)

Mr Ford: I fully support the creation of a Police Museum. However there are still some issues to be resolved before the outline business case can be submitted to Department of Finance and Personnel including planning issues, and further consideration by PSNI of scale, location, access and throughput issues.

I have appraised the RUC GC Foundation and other key stakeholders regarding the matters to be addressed and my officials are working with the Foundation to address the outstanding issues as a matter of priority so as the business case can be completed.

Office of the Police Ombudsman: Criminal Justice Inspection

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the inspection by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate of the Office of the Police Ombudsman, particularly in relation to the Loughinisland Massacre.
(AQO 364/11-15)

Mr Ford: I welcome the CJINI report of their inspection of the Office of the Police Ombudsman and I recognise that there is essential work to be done to improve the operation of the Police Ombudsman's office and to ensure it is capable of securing widespread public confidence, particularly in dealing with historic cases.

I note, however, that the Chief Inspector did not address individual cases or specific investigations. Neither he nor I would seek to comment on the implications of the findings of his inspection in respect of the Loughinisland Massacre or any other report.

I have accepted the recommendation that no historic cases should be commenced or completed until CJINI has indicated that the recommendations are essentially complete and the way is free to resume with confidence. I also recognise the challenge that the investigation of historic cases poses for the Police Ombudsman. In the absence of a consensus politically about the past makes it hard to envisage the early creation of an alternative mechanism to address these cases. I re-iterate my call for a public debate on these issues and urge the Secretary of State, First Minister and deputy First Minister to consider how that debate can most effectively be taken forward.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Justice how many part-time RUC Reserve Officers had their security breached by his Department when notifications of the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme were issued.
(AQO 365/11-15)

Mr Ford:

6157 letters were issued to recipients of the Part-Time reserve Gratuity, some of which showed the subject matter of the letter with the address.

157 people have contacted the Department to express concern.

A security assessment has been sought arising from this incident generally and in respect of those who contacted the Department in particular.

Office of the Police Ombudsman

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans to change the remit of the Office of the Police Ombudsman in respect of dealing with the past.

(AQO 366/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have no plans to change the remit of the Police Ombudsman in respect of dealing with the past. Our compliance with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) requires us to have a mechanism for the independent investigation of these cases, and the Police Ombudsman still has critical responsibilities in this area.

However, I recognise that there is essential work to be done to improve the operation of OPONI and to ensure it is capable of securing widespread public confidence in the investigation of historic cases. I believe that no more investigations should be initiated or concluded until the recommendations of the recent CJINI report have been implemented.

I also recognise the challenge to the Office of the Police Ombudsman in investigating historical cases. The absence of a political consensus about the past makes it hard to envisage the early creation of an alternative mechanism to address those cases. I, therefore, welcome a public debate on these issues, and I have urged the Secretary of State, the First Minister and the deputy First Minister to consider how that debate can be taken forward most effectively.

Department for Regional Development

Severe Winter Weather Conditions

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to deal with any potential severe winter weather conditions in the Foyle constituency.

(AQW 1561/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department's Roads Service has in place sufficient finance, labour and materials to satisfactorily carry out the Winter Service programme for the incoming winter season of 2011/12.

Although Roads Service has no statutory obligation to salt roads, it does earmark funds to provide a salting service with the aim of helping main road traffic to move safely and freely in wintry conditions, through the removal of snow and the gritting of the salted network across Northern Ireland.

Prior to the start of each winter service season, Roads Service undertakes a significant amount of pre-planning to ensure a state of readiness for the coming winter. As well as a number of routine pre-season checks, planning incorporates ensuring that adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, there is an adequate supply of salt and winter service equipment is in working order.

It is Roads Service's policy to salt main through routes carrying more than 1,500 vehicles per day and other busy through routes, where there are difficult circumstances such as steep hills, carrying more than 1,000 vehicles per day. In applying the criteria, buses get a high weighting. For example, a 40 seater bus is counted as 40 vehicles. This policy results in the provision of a salted network of approximately 7,000 km (4,300 miles) covering 28% of roads in Northern Ireland, targeting Roads Service's resources to the busier routes carrying most traffic.

Efforts are also made to ensure that small settlements of more than 100 dwellings have a treated link to the salted network and consideration is given to placing grit piles or salt bins at hills, bends or junctions on roads that are not salted.

In addition, Roads Service has introduced improvements to its operational response around rural schools regularly affected by adverse weather conditions. These improvements have ensured better communications between Roads Service and schools which experience difficulties and has allowed Roads Service to provide a more flexible and timely response as and when road conditions necessitate.

Whilst it is never possible to completely counteract the full forces of nature, based on the information currently available, it is my assessment that Roads Service is well prepared to deal with the incoming winter season.

Following its publication on 3 March 2011, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) has been working to implement the recommendations made in the Report of the Investigations into the Freeze/Thaw incident 2010/11. These recommendations, covering communications, contingency planning, assets, governance and leadership and resilience, are intended to ensure that NIW is better prepared to handle the effects of severe weather conditions similar to those experienced last Christmas. NIW currently plans to have approximately 90% of the short/medium term recommendations complete by December 2011, with the final 10% being completed by June 2012. There are a further ten actions that are of a long term nature and will be completed by 2015.

NIW's response to severe winter weather conditions will be based on its Major Incident Plan (MIP) which has been revised following lessons learnt from last winter. It reflects current water industry best practice and incorporates lessons learned from wider industry events. The MIP aims to provide a fully planned response to all types of emergency. NIW emergency planning also includes a range of contingency plans for specific types of event including severe weather conditions during the winter months. NIW will be testing these before the winter.

Improvements to NIW's arrangements include: staff availability; transport; contractors; fuel; water storage; liaison with third parties; alternative water supplies and telephone communications. In addition, NIW will be launching a winter publicity campaign to help customers prepare for the winter. This will include advice and information on lagging pipes and on dealing with burst pipes.

Rail Services on the Larne Line

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the potential savings over the next five years as a result of the proposed reductions in rail services on the Larne Line.
(AQW 1562/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Timetables for the Larne line are still in draft. However Translink have informed me that the proposed reduction in services between Whitehead and Larne, are expected to yield operational cost savings in the region of £500,000 to £700,000 per year over the next five years.

Larne Line Passengers

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average number of passengers who have travelled daily on the Larne Line during off-peak hours over the last six months.
(AQW 1563/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: NI Railways report that under their fare system the time of day is only captured when the ticket is sold to the customer, not when the ticket is used to travel. There is therefore no means of electronically recording when every passenger journey is made. NI Railways however has provided an estimate of 451,000 passenger journeys on the Larne Line during off-peak hours over the last six months from 1st March 2011 to 31st August 2011. Over the same period NI Railways operated 5,980 off peak services. This is an average of 230 services per week. On this basis the estimated daily average number of passenger journeys on the Larne Line during off-peak hours over the last six months is around 2,470.

The large bulk of the daily passenger journeys on the Larne line travel on the Belfast-Carrickfergus-Whitehead section.

Residents' Parking Schemes

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development why he is piloting residents' parking schemes in Belfast despite past opposition to the schemes and while opportunities exist to pilot such schemes in other towns such as Bangor.

(AQW 1564/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2015 identified a number of locations where there should be parking restraint and initial focus has been in areas where the problems have been assessed to be most critical and long standing. The introduction of residents' parking schemes within the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) is currently focused in areas close to Belfast city centre.

My Department's Roads Service is currently engaged with a number of local communities with a view to developing and implementing schemes in those areas. These are not pilot schemes, but the first in a number of schemes to be developed, consulted upon and hopefully implemented in due course.

As the design and consultation process in these areas is well advanced, I believe there is merit in continuing with this work with a view to having schemes implemented as soon as possible.

In addition, it is Roads Service's intention to work towards the introduction of Residents' Parking Schemes, where appropriate, within all areas of parking restraint identified within the BMTP. I would hope that, in due course, schemes could be progressed in Lisburn, Bangor and Carrickfergus, subject to the availability of resources and public acceptance.

Flags and Advertisements on Street Light Posts

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 1537/11-15 (i) who owned the unauthorised signs that the Department removed from lampposts in Cloughy in May 2011; (ii) if he is aware of how much the owners spent on the signs; and (iii) whether the Department asked those responsible for posting the unauthorised signs to remove them before departmental officials were instructed to do so.

(AQW 1565/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my previous response (AQW 1537/11-15) when I advised him that my Department's Roads Service did not remove any unauthorised advertising signs in the Cloughy area during the month of May 2011. However, I did confirm that 16 such signs were removed during June 2011, details of which are as follows:

- The Corner Kitchen, Fish & Chips, (9)
- Cloughey Holiday Village, (2)
- Sunbeds now open, Main Street, Kircubbin, (1)
- Chip Ahoy, The Harbour, Portavogie, (1)
- Coal For Sale, (1)
- JK Estate Agents, Kircubbin, (2)

I am not aware of how much the owners spent on the signs removed.

My Department is under no obligation to contact offenders prior to the removal of unauthorised signs from a public road. Consequently, officials did not contact those responsible for posting the unauthorised signs to request their removal in advance of taking action.

Footpaths on the Kilcooley Estate in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development in which areas of the Kilcooley Estate in Bangor do footpaths need replaced.

(AQW 1574/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that following the completion of a programme to replace flagged footways in the Kilcooley Estate, it has no further plans to replace footways in this Estate. All Roads Service footways within the Estate are considered to be in a safe and serviceable condition and are subject to routine cyclic safety inspections.

Monthly Estate Walkabouts

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the policy on the attendance and participation of Roads Service officials in monthly estate walkabouts that are organised by community groups.

(AQW 1582/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that no formal policy exists in relation to attendance at community group walkabouts.

Monthly community walkabouts within the North Down area are a relatively new initiative introduced by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Roads Service officials have attended a number of these to establish the benefits to the local community and to Roads Service.

I am informed that, in the opinion of local Roads Service officials, while a considerable amount of staff time has been expended in support of this initiative, many of the issues raised do not fall within the responsibilities of Roads Service. To ensure finite staff resources are used as efficiently as possible, local officials would be willing to meet on site to progress matters that are specific to Roads Service.

I should add that Roads Service has already undertaken regular safety inspections and operates a policy to respond to written or verbal enquiries raised through local representatives and the general public.

Attendance by Roads Service staff at regular community group meetings will also continue to act as a forum for discussions on issues of concern and the exchange of information.

My Department's Roads Service strives to provide a quality service to the local community and the local office remains focused on this objective, in so far as the staffing resources available permit.

A6 from Castledawson to Derry

Mr Dallat asked Minister for Regional Development to outline the current position on the plans to upgrade the A6 from Castledawson to Derry; and whether there has been a decision taken on the decoupling of the plans for a by-pass at Dungiven.

(AQW 1600/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member may be aware, the preliminary assessment of the A6 Castledawson to Londonderry dualling scheme recommended that the western section of the route, including the Dungiven Bypass, should be taken forward at an early stage. Other sections of the A6 should be implemented as demand dictates and depending on the availability of funding.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that it expects to publish an Environmental Statement, draft Direction Order and draft Vesting Order later this year for the 30 kilometre dual carriageway from Londonderry to Dungiven, including a dual carriageway bypass of Dungiven. Publication of these Orders will invite formal comment and objection, which will most likely lead to a Public Inquiry in the spring of 2012 and examine the case for and against the scheme.

There is no merit at this stage in 'decoupling' the Dungiven Bypass element of the overall project. If deemed necessary, this could be done at a later date.

Given the reduction of two-fifths in the Executive's overall capital funding, the funds currently allocated to my Department in the 2011-2015 budget would not allow construction of the Londonderry to Dungiven dual carriageway, or Dungiven Bypass, to commence before 2014-2015, at the earliest.

NI Railways Personnel

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of personnel with managerial responsibilities employed by NI Railways; and to outline the cost of these personnel in salaries, pension contributions and national insurance.

(AQW 1604/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have informed me that the number of personnel with managerial responsibilities currently employed by NI Railways is 35. This covers staff in railway operations, fleet engineering and railway infrastructure. It excludes managers who provide services across Translink particularly in capital projects.

Monthly salaries for this group of employees amount to £114,351. Relevant National Insurance contributions total £9,563, with corresponding pension contributions of £20,583.

Invasive Plant Species

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development whether Roads Service has a strategy for managing invasive plant species such as Japanese Knotweed.

(AQW 1639/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has no specific statutory obligation to remove weeds, other than in relation to the control of noxious weeds. Roads Service policy and procedures in relation to weed control are aimed at ensuring the safety of road users and preventing the deterioration of the road pavement.

However, Roads Service will treat invasive weeds, such as Japanese Knotweed, found growing on lands within its control, if required, by taking specialist advice from either the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, or specialist contractors.

Residents Only Parking Schemes

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on residents only parking schemes.

(AQW 1640/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is currently finalising a review of the economic appraisal that was used to calculate the permit charge. The new appraisal will identify a more up to date permit charge. At present, progress on schemes can not resume until this work is complete.

I should further advise that, despite considerable effort by Roads Service, these schemes have encountered difficulties with any attempts at implementation in Belfast being unsuccessful. Whilst acknowledging the potential value of such schemes to residents, I must consider the justification for continuing to pursue such schemes, bearing in mind the time, effort and resource expended to date in trying to introduce them.

As such, I intend to reassess my Department's commitment to implementing such schemes, when I have received the revised economic appraisal.

Water and Sewerage Infrastructure Investments

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the nature and cost of all the water and sewerage infrastructure investments scheduled by NI Water for the Strangford constituency in this financial year.

(AQW 1641/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it does not hold specific details of capital projects by parliamentary constituency. However, it is believed that the capital works programme

for the 2011/12 financial year contains around £7.5 million for projects within the Strangford constituency as detailed below.

Project	Estimated cost in 2011/12 (£000s)
Ballykine Gravity Distribution	57
Newtownards Southern Relief Road	42
Ballynahinch Operational Schemes	107
Carrowreagh Road Dundonald Storm Sewer	33
Ballyhalbert Wastewater Treatment Works Interim Solution	1,508
Portavogie Wastewater Treatment Works Interim Solution	944
Millisle Drainage Area Plan Stage 2	276
Meadowbank Park / Reaville, Dundonald Flood Alleviation	114
Moneyreagh Wastewater Treatment Works	286
Portaferry Wastewater Treatment Works	72
Ballygowan Wastewater Treatment Works	319
Saintfield Wastewater Treatment Works	411
Crossgar Sewage Pumping Station improvements	271
Greyabbey Drainage Area Plan Phase 1	616
South Street, Newtownards Wastewater Pumping Station refurbishment	1,524
Main Street, Cloughey, Pumping main, Foul and Storm Sewer extensions	34
Donaghadee Road, Newtownards, Storm Sewer Extension	43
Copeland Road, Comber, Tank Sewer	119
Old Grand Jury Road, Saintfield, Storm Sewer Extension	30
Millisle Road, Donaghadee, Foul and Storm Sewer Requisition	42
Upper Crescent Wastewater Pumping Station Comber Pumping Main Replacement	123
Killyleagh Wastewater Treatment Works Upgrade	492
Ballydrain Road Comber Foul Sewer Extension	33

Land Deemed as Surplus to Requirements

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development what land Roads Service has deemed as surplus to requirements in the Strangford constituency.

(AQW 1642/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service collates details of land for sale on the basis of its four Divisional areas as opposed to on a constituency area basis. However, I am able to provide you with extracts from Eastern and Southern Divisions' databases, which contain details of lands/properties declared surplus by my Department, in or around the Strangford constituency. This land is currently in the process of being disposed of in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Department of

Finance and Personnel's Land and Property Services. The locations of the surplus lands/properties are listed in the following table:

Division	House No	Street	Town	Property Description
Eastern	72	Kingsdale Park	Dundonald	Dwelling
Eastern	4	Grahamsbridge Road	Dundonald	Land
Eastern	132	Ravenswood Park	Belfast	Land
Eastern		Lower Newtownards Road	Belfast	Land
Eastern	278	Comber Road	Belfast	Land
Eastern	276A	Comber Road	Dundonald	Land
Eastern	2	Green Lane	Conlig	Land
Eastern	14	Ballylenaghan Road	Belfast	Land
Eastern		Church Road	Moneyreagh	Land
Eastern	1-31	Comber Road	Dundonald	Land
Eastern	4	Gransha Road Terrace	Dundonald	Land
Southern		Comber Road	Newtownards	Land
Southern		Jubilee Road	Newtownards	Land
Southern	6	Newtown Gardens, Donaghadee Road	Newtownards	Land
Southern	10	Chesterbrook Crescent	Newtownards	Land
Southern		Movilla Road	Newtownards	Land
Southern		Ballycloughan Road	Saintfield	Land
Southern		Frederick Street/ Corporation Street	Newtownards	Land
Southern	199	Belfast Road	Dundonald	Land
Southern	11	Rademon Court	Crossgar	Land
Southern	1	Rademon Court	Crossgar	Land
Southern	4	Saintfield Road	Crossgar	Land

NI Water

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether NI Water is equipped to deal with potential severe winter weather conditions.

(AQW 1659/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Following its publication on 3 March 2011, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) has been working to implement the recommendations made in the Report of the Investigations into the Freeze/Thaw incident 2010/11. These recommendations, covering communications, contingency planning, assets, governance and leadership and resilience, are intended to ensure that NIW is better prepared to handle the effects of severe weather conditions similar to those experienced last Christmas. NIW currently plans to have approximately 90% of the short/medium term recommendations complete by December 2011, with the final 10% being completed by June 2012. There are a further ten actions that are of a long term nature and will be completed by 2015.

NIW's response to severe winter weather conditions will be based on its Major Incident Plan (MIP) which has been revised following lessons learnt from last winter. It reflects current water industry best practice and incorporates lessons learned from wider industry events. The MIP aims to provide a fully planned response to all types of emergency. NIW emergency planning also includes a range of contingency plans for specific types of event including severe weather conditions during the winter months. NIW will be testing these before the winter.

Improvements to NIW's arrangements include: staff availability; transport; contractors; fuel; water storage; liaison with third parties; alternative water supplies and telephone communications. In addition, NIW will be launching a winter publicity campaign to help customers prepare for the winter. This will include advice and information on lagging pipes and on dealing with burst pipes.

Severe Winter Weather Conditions

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to ensure that Roads Service is fully prepared to deal with potential severe winter weather conditions.

(AQW 1660/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Prior to the start of each winter service season, my Department's Roads Service carries out a significant amount of pre-planning to ensure a state of readiness for the coming winter. As well as a number of routine pre-season checks, planning includes ensuring that adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, winter service equipment is in working order and there is an adequate stock of salt.

Salt barns, which are strategically placed in depots throughout Northern Ireland, are normally stocked to hold sufficient quantities of salt to provide the winter service programme for a full season without the need to restock. Following last year's severe weather, Roads Service has reviewed these levels and has increased stocks significantly in order to be best prepared in the event of potential, prolonged wintry weather. If necessary, Roads Service has arrangements in place to supplement stocks of salt during the winter period.

In addition, salt bins or grit piles may be provided for use by the public, on other routes adopted or maintained by Roads Service, which do not qualify for inclusion on the gritting schedule. Roads Service currently provides approximately 4,200 salt bins and 39,500 grit piles on public roads.

You will appreciate there are many roads in Northern Ireland and it is not practical nor would it represent an effective use of resources to salt all of them, given the many other competing demands placed on Roads Service, much of them safety related. Nevertheless, I can assure the Member that Roads Service commits significant resources to its winter service programme. Every night, from the end of October 2011 until the middle of April 2012, Roads Service will have over 300 people on standby ready to salt main roads, helping drivers across Northern Ireland cope with the wintry conditions.

I have also asked Roads Service to work with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), to develop a broad framework of principles which will set out the basis of partnering

arrangements between Roads Service and Councils for the removal of snow and ice from busy town centre footways, during prolonged periods of wintry weather. When finalised, it is hoped that agreements based on the broad framework, specifically tailored for each individual council, can be put in place. I would hope that such arrangements could be agreed before the winter season starts, however, each individual Council will have the final decision on whether or not it signs up to provide this valuable service to the public.

In conclusion, I am confident that my Department's Roads Service will be able to deliver a high standard of service delivery and ensure that Northern Ireland network remains open for business regardless of the prevailing weather conditions.

A6 Dungiven-Derry Dual Carriageway

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the £107m previously identified for the A6 Dungiven-Derry dual carriageway is included in the 2011-15 budget period.

(AQW 1672/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The additional £107m allocated to my Department following the Budget consultation was not wholly assigned to roads schemes. It permitted additional investment in water and sewerage infrastructure, roads and public transport.

Over £60 million of additional capital funding was received for major road projects, predominantly in year four (2014/15) of the budget period. This will be considered for a range of competing priorities.

However, decisions to start schemes in 2014/15 will be dependent on the funding made available beyond the current budget period. Schemes such as the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling will take several years to complete and, I could not give approval for construction to commence unless I have confirmation that the required funding will be in place in the subsequent years.

The funding, beyond the budget period, will become clearer once further work has been completed to develop the third edition of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, which I understand is due to conclude later this year.

I have also received numerous requests to meet a wide range of bodies and elected members interested in progressing Strategic Road Improvement schemes across Northern Ireland. I will use these meetings as an opportunity to listen to opinions before forming a view as to the way forward. This will coincide with the work being undertaken to develop the Investment Strategy beyond this budget period.

In the meantime, development work continues on a range of schemes across Northern Ireland which are included in the Strategic Road Improvement Programme. In particular, development work on the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven project has been progressing well and I anticipate that the draft Orders and Environmental Statement will be published later this year, and will potentially lead to a Public Inquiry being held in 2012.

Severe Winter Weather Conditions

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to deal with any potential severe winter weather conditions in the North Down constituency.

(AQW 1675/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has in place sufficient finance, labour and materials to satisfactorily carry out the Winter Service programme for the incoming winter season of 2011/12.

Although Roads Service has no statutory obligation to salt roads, it does earmark funds to provide a salting service with the aim of helping main road traffic to move safely and freely in wintry conditions, through the removal of snow and the gritting of the salted network across Northern Ireland.

Prior to the start of each winter service season, Roads Service undertakes a significant amount of pre-planning to ensure a state of readiness for the coming winter. As well as a number of routine

pre-season checks, planning incorporates ensuring that adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, there is an adequate supply of salt and winter service equipment is in working order.

It is Roads Service's policy to salt main through routes carrying more than 1,500 vehicles per day and other busy through routes, where there are difficult circumstances such as steep hills, carrying more than 1,000 vehicles per day. In applying the criteria, buses get a higher weighting, for example, a 40 seater bus is counted as 40 vehicles. This policy results in the provision of a salted network of approximately 7,000 km (4,300 miles) covering 28% of roads in Northern Ireland, targeting Roads Service's resources at the busier routes carrying most traffic.

Efforts are also made to ensure that small settlements of more than 100 dwellings have a treated link to the salted network and consideration is given to placing grit piles or salt bins at hills, bends or junctions on roads that are not salted.

In addition, Roads Service has introduced improvements to its operational response around rural schools regularly affected by adverse weather conditions. These improvements have ensured better communications between Roads Service and schools, which experience difficulties, and has allowed Roads Service to provide a more flexible and timely response, as and when road conditions necessitate.

Whilst it is never possible to completely counteract the full forces of nature, based on the information currently available, it is my assessment that Roads Service is well prepared to deal with the incoming winter season.

Following its publication on 3 March 2011, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) has been working to implement the recommendations made in the Report of the Investigations into the Freeze/Thaw incident 2010/11. These recommendations, covering communications, contingency planning, assets, governance and leadership and resilience, are intended to ensure that NIW is better prepared to handle the effects of severe weather conditions similar to those experienced last Christmas. NIW currently plans to have approximately 90% of the short/medium term recommendations complete by December 2011, with the final 10% being completed by June 2012. There are a further ten actions that are of a long term nature and will be completed by 2015.

NIW's response to severe winter weather conditions will be based on its Major Incident Plan (MIP) which has been revised following lessons learnt from last winter. It reflects current water industry best practice and incorporates lessons learned from wider industry events. The MIP aims to provide a fully planned response to all types of emergency. NIW emergency planning also includes a range of contingency plans for specific types of event including severe weather conditions during the winter months. NIW will be testing these before the winter.

Improvements to NIW's arrangements include: staff availability; transport; contractors; fuel; water storage; liaison with third parties; alternative water supplies and telephone communications. In addition, NIW will be launching a winter publicity campaign to help customers prepare for the winter. This will include advice and information on lagging pipes and on dealing with burst pipes.

Article 41 of The Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how many times his Department has exercised its powers under Article 41 of The Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, as amended by The Street Works (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, since the legislation was introduced. **(AQW 1676/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department's powers under Article 41(3) of The Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (the Order) relate to cases where the undertaker has failed to afford reasonable facilities, to my Department's Roads Service, for ascertaining whether its apparatus is maintained to Roads Service satisfaction. I can advise the Member that Roads Service has not found it necessary to exercise these powers.

My Department's powers under Article 41(4) of the Order provide the Street Authority entitlement to execute emergency works needed in the consequence of any failure of the undertaker to maintain their apparatus. The preferred approach and practice in such cases has been to alert the undertaker to any defective apparatus and require the undertaker to remedy the defect within specified timescales, depending on the severity of the defect. A period of two hours is permitted in circumstances of high risk. In 2010/11 Roads Service notified undertakers of over 6,000 cases of defective apparatus, of which some 1,700 were deemed to be high risk.

Where there is felt to be immediate danger, Roads Service may take action to guard the defect by erecting barriers or placing a steel road plate, pending response by the undertaker. However, these occasions are rare, and no records are kept of the numbers of cases.

Article 39(2) of The Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how many times his Department has exercised its powers under Article 39(2) of The Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 which states that 'The records shall be kept up to date and shall be kept in such form and manner as may be prescribed', since the legislation was introduced.

(AQW 1677/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Article 39(4) of The Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (the Order) makes it an offence for a street works undertaker to fail to comply with his duties under Article 39, including those duties under Article 39(2) as prescribed in The Street Works (Records) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004.

My Department's Roads Service has advised me that it is not aware of any offences committed under Article 39(4) of the Order to date and has not therefore found it necessary to take forward any prosecutions under these powers.

The Street Works (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development, under The Street Works (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, what financial contribution utility companies have made to his Department in each of the last four years for the repair of the roads network as a result of the failure of utility companies to reinstate the roads.

(AQW 1678/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service advises that it does not carry out repairs of the road network as a result of the failure of utility companies to reinstate the roads. Utility companies are required to reinstate the road network to the standards set out in the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Roads (2nd Edition). Where a reinstatement fails to comply, the utility company must carry out remedial works to bring the reinstatement to the required standard.

The Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and The Street Works (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 do make provision for my Department, either to require a contribution from street works undertakers towards the cost of reconstruction or re-surfacing of a street, or for the street works undertaker to resurface a street, with the Department making a contribution towards the cost. These provisions, or associated regulations, have not been brought into operation and do not apply to cases of failure of utility companies to reinstate the roads.

Spraying of Weeds in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to ensure that there will be no repeat of the significant delay that occurred in the spraying of weeds on footpaths and roads in the North Down area.

(AQW 1716/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the one year contract for weed control for part of its Eastern Division was not extended to the 2011 season as it was not providing adequate value for money.

Roads Service has advised that there is a lead-in time for developing and awarding contracts of between 8-12 months and in view of the timescales and the costs involved, it decided to bring weed control in the North Down back in-house to be carried out by its internal contractor, Roads Service Direct (RSD).

Unfortunately, given the relatively short notice of this decision, and the need to provide appropriate training to the workforce, weed spraying in some areas fell behind schedule, in spite of the best efforts of Roads Service to keep ahead of demand. However, Roads Service has advised that every effort is being undertaken to catch up on outstanding work now that staff training is complete and new equipment is available.

Roads Service acknowledges that it is late in the season for weed spraying and that some areas will require additional effort to remove large and unsightly weeds, but that work is being prioritised and it is hoped that results of these efforts will be soon evident.

Weed control measures in North Down during the 2012 season will be again be carried out by RSD and it is anticipated that the start up difficulties experienced this year will not reoccur.

Footpath Resurfacing Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what footpath resurfacing schemes are planned for the Bangor area over the next two years.

(AQW 1717/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that while the normal planned Spring presentation to North Down Borough Council was cancelled due to the timing of the elections earlier this year, the Council was provided with copies of its Spring Report. This Report includes details of resurfacing works programmed for the current financial year and can be viewed at my Department's website at the following address:

<http://applications.drndi.gov.uk/publications/document.asp?docid=21894>

Roads Service officials are currently preparing the Autumn Report, which will include the updated programme for the current financial year. This Report will be presented to the Council on 18 October 2011 and thereafter be available at the above web address.

With regard to next financial year, programmes have yet to be finalised as financial allocations are still to be agreed.

A2 Between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the A2 project between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus.

(AQW 1721/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I acknowledge the need to undertake improvements to the A2 Shore Road at Greenisland and my Department's Roads Service has, in recent years, progressed the development of this scheme.

A reduction of 40% in the Executive's overall capital funding from the Treasury over the 2011-2015 period, has meant that there are now funding constraints. When competing priorities for the maintenance, management and development of the transport network are taken into consideration, I am, unfortunately, unable at this stage to progress plans to start construction on the A2 Shore Road Greenisland scheme during this budget period.

However, I am determined to ensure that improvements are made to the Strategic Road Network that enhance safety, reduce journey times and provide value for money. On that basis, I intend to consider

the proposed investment across my Department, including the impact of Budget 2010 on the strategic roads programme, and to explore opportunities to bring forward schemes, such as the A2 Shore Road Greenisland scheme.

A2 Between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total amount spent to date on the A2 project between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus.

(AQW 1722/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the overall expenditure to date on the A2 Shore Road Greenisland scheme, is approximately £16.8 million.

This includes £12 million on property purchased under Planning Blight (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, £4.3 million in Consultancy fees associated with the design and development of the scheme and £0.5 million in advance geotechnical and archaeological surveys.

A2 Between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the daily traffic volume on the A2 between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus.

(AQW 1723/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the most recent traffic volume information available for the A2 between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus was collected during 2010. On this section of road, the average daily, week-day, two-way traffic volume, north of Greenisland, is 26,000 vehicles per day, rising to 33,000 vehicles per day south of Greenisland.

Road Surfacing Projects

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any road surfacing projects which have been identified for the Carrickfergus Borough Council area over the next three years.

(AQW 1724/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service presented its Spring Report to Carrickfergus Borough Council on 12 May 2011. The report included details of programmes for both footway reconstruction and carriageway resurfacing schemes.

This report can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtypesresults.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

Northern Ireland Water (NIW) subsequently published proposals for extensive water main renewal across the Borough and this has, unfortunately, necessitated the deferral of the proposed carriageway resurfacing at the A2 Larne Road.

Roads Service plans to present its Autumn Progress Report to Carrickfergus Borough Council on 14 November 2011. As well as providing an update on the progress of schemes, the report will set out details of any changes to the works programmes.

Due to uncertainty surrounding NIW's proposals and future funding levels, it is difficult to prepare a meaningful three year programme at the present time. However, Roads Service will endeavour to develop an indicative three year programme and this will be presented to Carrickfergus Borough Council in due course.

Properties on the A2 Between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of properties on the A2 between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus that have been vested by his Department.
(AQW 1759/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, to date, two Statutory Notices relating to the development of the A2 Shore Road Greenisland scheme have been published. These are the Direction Order and the Notice to Proceed. The final Statutory Notice, the Vesting Order, to affect the compulsory purchase of land required for this scheme has not been completed due to funding constraints. Therefore, no properties have been vested on the A2 between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus.

However, under The Planning Blight (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, Roads Service has been required to purchase a number of properties along the Shore Road, Greenisland. To date, 25 properties have been purchased under Planning Blight Legislation with a further three properties under consideration. The purchase of all properties has been at the owners' request.

A2 Between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of vacant properties along the proposed route of the A2 scheme between Silverstream Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus.
(AQW 1760/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: To date, my Department's Roads Service has been required to purchase 25 properties along the Shore Road, Greenisland under The Planning Blight (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. Purchase of a further three properties is currently under consideration. It is important to note that all of these properties have been purchased at the request of their owners.

Of the 25 properties purchased by the Department, 21 are vacant. Seven of the properties purchased are subject to demolition and, to date, four have been demolished. Of the remaining 18 properties, eight are currently being processed for disposal. However, a portion of the gardens belonging to these remaining properties will be retained by the Department as the land will be required for the A2 Shore Road, Greenisland scheme.

I understand that a number of other properties, not owned by the Department, along this section of road are also vacant.

Portavo Reservoir

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed sale of Portavo Reservoir.
(AQW 1761/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that Portavo Reservoir has been declared 'no longer required for future use' and will be disposed of in accordance with the general authorisation given by my Department on 20 March 2007, the terms of NIW's Licence and its Asset Disposal Policy.

At present, the sale of Portavo Reservoir has not been initiated and it has not been placed on NIW's list of assets to be disposed of in 2011/12 or 2012/13.

Reservoirs at Ballysallagh

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's position on the future of the reservoirs at Ballysallagh.
(AQW 1763/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the Ballysallagh Reservoirs have been declared surplus to requirements and can be considered for disposal. However, at present there are no plans to dispose of the reservoirs prior to the 2013/14 financial year.

Sale of Reservoirs

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's policy or position on the sale of reservoirs.

(AQW 1764/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The disposal of land, including reservoirs, owned by NI Water is a matter for the company subject to its regulatory Licence, the general authorisation given by my Department on 20 March 2007 and the company's own Asset Disposal Policy. Amongst other things these require NIW to ensure that it achieves value for money and maintains high standards of propriety. Disposing of assets which are no longer required for future use can help the company to reduce costs which benefits NIW's customers and the taxpayers.

Congestion Caused by Road Works

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the annual cost to the local economy that results from congestion caused by road works.

(AQW 1780/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has not attempted to estimate the annual cost to the local economy resulting from congestion caused by road works. However, it does try to quantify the impact of delays on specific sections of the road network, when assessing the costs and benefits of proposed major capital works. These are scheme specific assessments and do not provide a basis for assessment of overall congestion costs.

Estimates in relation to the cost of congestion caused by road works in GB vary significantly, with the highest estimate being around 10 times the size of the lowest estimate. However, I understand that in GB, it is considered that traffic congestion caused by works on roads, including those carried out by local road authorities and utility companies, is estimated at only one tenth of total traffic congestion.

Utility Companies Operating on Roads During Peak Times

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department charges utility companies for operating on roads during peak times; and if not, would he consider imposing a charge.

(AQW 1781/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not charge utility companies for operating on roads during peak times and, at present, there are no plans to introduce such charges.

Pilot schemes were carried out in England between 2002 and 2004. However, I understand that they did not prove to be an effective model for reducing congestion and other disruption caused by utility company street works.

Roads Service endeavours to prevent works taking place during peak times on roads which have been designated as traffic sensitive. Where such work is unavoidable, Roads Service works with utility companies to ensure that the duration and impact of these works is kept to a minimum.

Road Lighting Schemes

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any road lighting schemes proposed for the Carrickfergus Borough Council area over the next four years; and the wards in which they will take place.

(AQW 1782/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not record information on proposed street lighting schemes by ward area. However, information on completed and proposed street lighting schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Street Lighting Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the new street lighting schemes that are planned for Bangor in the next two years.

(AQW 1816/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised it has no plans for new street lighting schemes in the North Down Council area within this financial year. However, details of replacement street lighting schemes, proposed for this financial year, are contained with Roads Service's Spring Report to North Down Council. The Report can be viewed on my Department's website at the following address: <http://applications.drdni.gov.uk/publications/document.asp?docid=21894>

The programme for future years is not yet developed and will depend on budget allocations and other priorities at that time.

Transport Policy

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development which groups representing people with disabilities does his Department consult before it formulates transport policy.

(AQW 1821/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As part of the development of transport policy my Department formally consults with a wide range of groups representing people with disabilities included within its Section 75 consultee list. This includes: Action Mental Health, Alzheimer's Society, Action on Hearing Loss, Asperger's Network, Autism NI, British Deaf Association (Northern Ireland), Carers Northern Ireland, Community Transport Association, Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance, Disability Action, Down's Syndrome Association, Employers Forum on Disability, MENCAP, Mobilise, NI Association for Mental Health, North West Forum of People with Disabilities, RNIB, Sense NI, The Omnibus Partnership, The Cedar Foundation, The Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

Where policy consultations relate to specific local areas or to a narrowly defined issue relating to people with disabilities, additional organisations may be included, where appropriate.

Londonderry Trains

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether Ballymoney will be the passing point for Londonderry trains when services are reduced in January 2012; and if so, whether Ballymoney has the necessary infrastructure to ensure passenger safety.

(AQW 1851/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that it is not the case that the service changes on the Londonderry line will be implemented in January 2012. However, when these changes do come into force later in 2012, Ballymoney will benefit from a significant increase in service levels to hourly services in each direction. Ballymoney will be the proposed passing point for trains, meaning that both platforms will be in use throughout the day.

From late 2012 access to the down platform (Coleraine direction) will be via a newly constructed, fully accessible footbridge/cycle bridge. During the interim period access to the down platform will be via the temporary footbridge structure currently in place or via the public pathway at the south end of the platforms. An additional gated pathway exists at the north end of the platforms and is available for use but only with staff assistance. Translink has advised that the station is staffed for most of the operational day.

Translink Uniform

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of supplying a Translink uniform to an employee.

(AQW 1852/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that the cost of a uniform ranges between £180 to £200 depending on the grade of the employee, the function that they undertake and the different items of uniform required for that role. Translink has also advised that it provides uniforms to around 3,700 staff in order to satisfy health and safety requirements and to promote the company with customers. Costs incurred in any one year will depend on the required numbers of uniforms.

Coleraine to Londonderry Railway Line

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what impact the reduction in service provision on the Coleraine to Londonderry railway line will have on the employment of signallers; and whether redundancy packages are under consideration.

(AQW 1853/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that the current planned reduction to rail service provision between Coleraine and Londonderry to complete necessary safety improvement works will have no impact on signallers.

However when the track is fully re-laid and re-signalling work on the Coleraine-Londonderry line is eventually completed (in accordance with the hourly service plan), this will have an impact on signallers.

The Economic Appraisal for this project shows all signalling operations being concentrated in Coleraine cabin. This will result in the signalling functions at Waterside Station, Castlerock and Bann Bridge becoming redundant.

In such circumstances discussions between the organisation and relevant Trade Union officials would take place and in the first instance the normal approach is to seek to implement suitable redeployment for any affected staff. Staff in the North-West are aware of future plans.

Line Managers Employed by NI Railways

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of line managers employed by NI Railways and their annual income broken down by salary, bonuses, company car expenses and additional travelling expenses.

(AQW 1854/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer you to the answer given recently to John Dallat, (East Londonderry) AQW 1604/11-15. Translink has advised that there are currently 35 line managers directly employed by NI Railways. This excludes managers who provide services across Translink.

The annual salary cost of these 35 staff is estimated at £39,206 per person. This excludes National Insurance contributions and pension contributions estimated at £10,336 annually.

Translink have indicated that these staff do not receive bonuses.

Of the 35 staff, 10 are provided with cars by virtue of the requirements of their positions. That is, Permanent Way and Signaling Engineers who require access to sites, some of which are remote, and who are permanently on call and need to be readily mobile to attend meetings or carry out inspections. These users are provided with fuel cards and the relevant fuel card costs for the year to date (April-August 2011) are £7,704 (exclusive of VAT).

In relation to travelling expenses, Translink do not capture this information in the manner requested. Therefore these figures could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Londonderry to Belfast Railway Service

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amount spent on (i) advertising and promoting; and (ii) maintaining the Derry to Belfast Railway Service in each of the last three years. **(AQW 1875/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) The table below shows the amount spent by Translink Northern Ireland Railways to promote local rail travel for the financial years 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11. The table also details spend which is specific to the Belfast to Londonderry inter-city service.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	£000's	£000's	£000's
NI Railways local rail marketing spend	98,386	176,781	138,167
NI Railways Londonderry line- specific marketing spend	-	15,000	1,581

Marketing spend includes tactical advertising campaigns, promotional publications and direct mail. Advertising campaigns cover all local lines, including the Londonderry Line service. Tactical campaigns strategically target each of the rail corridors including the Londonderry Line. The annual direct mail targets households close to rail stations on each of the lines.

The marketing activity for the Belfast to Londonderry inter-city service in September / October 2009/10 consisted of an advertising campaign aimed at encouraging rail users back to the train following the line closure due to the track upgrade work (30 March–28 June 2009). In 2010/11 a tourism publication was produced promoting “One of the World’s Great Railway Journeys”, Coleraine – Londonderry.

Specific marketing activity for the Belfast to Londonderry rail service has been greater than that of the other local lines.

- (ii) The Belfast to Londonderry railway service is operated by the Class 3000 fleet. The fleet operates throughout the NI Railways network. Individual trains are not allocated to specific services thus it is not possible to provide details of fleet maintenance for the Belfast to Londonderry service in isolation.

Coleraine to Londonderry Railway Line

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Regional Development why the cost of the upgrade of the Coleraine to Derry railway line has risen substantially over the past three years. **(AQW 1930/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Translink advice that the cost of the upgrade has not risen substantially over the last 3 years.

During the Inception Stage of this project, Translink produced its Project Identification Document. This report estimated the cost of the project at £65.3m, at 2007 prices. It also estimated the cost at 2012 prices as £73.2m.

A Feasibility Study was carried out during the period of January 2009 to March 2010. This looked at the project in greater detail than had been the case at Inception Stage. After the Feasibility Study, an Economic Appraisal was carried out by KPMG. The appraisal recommended proceeding with Option 3a, at an estimated cost of £75m, which included an Optimism Bias of £12.6m.

Coleraine to Londonderry Railway Line

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Regional Development whether farmers will be compensated for the closure of accommodation crossings while the upgrade to the Coleraine to Derry railway line takes place.

(AQW 1932/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink assure me that the accommodation crossings will not be closed during the upgrade of the line. The contractor and Translink will work together to ensure that farmers will always have access over the accommodation crossings. The contractor will have to remove the permanent crossing surface at the crossings at certain stages during the works and temporary crossing surfaces will be provided at those stages. The contractor will engage with each farmer during programming and planning of works at his/her accommodation crossing and ensure that the farmer is not disadvantaged during the project. Thus farmers will not be compensated for closure of accommodation crossings.

Independent Review Team

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the meetings his predecessor held between 23 February and 25 February 2010 in relation to the Independent Review Team, including who was in attendance and whether minutes were taken.

(AQW 2023/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is not appropriate for me to answer in relation to any discussions my predecessor may or may not have had on this issue in the course of the previous mandate.

Department for Social Development

Emergency Maintenance for Housing Executive Properties

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether contingency plans have been made to provide emergency maintenance for Housing Executive properties if there are severe weather conditions this winter.

(AQW 1668/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to ensure that both Housing Executive staff and their Contractors will be in a position to respond effectively and speedily if there are severe weather conditions this winter.

The Housing Executive has advised that the following plans have been put in place:

- Enhanced their pool of staff resources willing and able to respond to an emergency across the province;
- Reviewed the “triggers” which provide pre warning of a potential emergency-such as volume of calls coming in to their Customer Services Units and the number of calls not being answered
- Reviewed all emergency plans at District, Area and Central level and put in place a formal annual review procedure;
- Reviewed all of the All Trades and Heating Contractor Emergency/ Contingency plans and put in place a formal annual review procedure;
- Put in place priority call handling (“silver numbers”) for use by emergency services, public representatives and community representatives;

- Carried out tests of plans and procedures in three Housing Executive Areas, involving Area and District staff, Contractors and Community Representatives; these were successful but all involved learned small lessons from putting the theory into practice.
- Identified a range of technical improvements (particularly in relation to boilers/heating) and included these in ongoing work, for example, relocating gas condensate pipes internally, providing a frost stat (which will trigger the pump to circulate water around the system) at each new oil heating installation, etc;
- Agreed a menu of services including, sharing mobile contact numbers, opening Community facilities, assisting in identifying those who might be vulnerable, which community groups might provide - to be agreed locally (at District Office level) during September;
- Developed a series of information pages which can be activated at short notice on their web, dependant on the type of emergency, to provide clear advice and guidance to tenants.

Capital Projects in East Antrim

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development what capital projects his Department has planned for the East Antrim constituency in each of the next five years.

(AQW 1670/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Over the course of the next five years, my Department has included capital investment projects in its urban regeneration programme for East Antrim as follows:

ReStore Programme in Larne town centre - 2011/12

Public Realm Scheme Dunluce Street and Point Street, Larne – 2011/12

Public Realm Scheme in Carrickfergus – 2012/13

ReStore Programme in Carrickfergus – 2013/14

Public Realm Scheme in Larne town centre – 2014/15

In addition, my Department has included a number of capital investment Housing projects for East Antrim as follows:

Eden, Carrickfergus, Phase 3B, 22 units – 2011/12

Ards Drive, Monkstown, Newtownabbey, 12 units – 2011/12

Craigyhill, Larne, 31 units – 2012/13

Taylor's Avenue, Carrickfergus, 24 units – 2012/13

A further scheme at Sunnylands/Sunnylands Grove, Carrickfergus is currently undergoing initial feasibility investigations.

It should be noted that these schemes are all subject to the necessary approval processes being completed.

New Builds in the Loughview Estate, Holywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development at what stage are the plans for new builds in the Loughview Estate, Holywood.

(AQW 1690/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A Housing Association will be nominated to take this new scheme forward in the coming weeks. They will be expected to appoint their own design team who will need to engage with the local community before submitting a formal planning application for the site.

I anticipate that subject to that planning approval, work could start during the next financial year (2012/13) and am pleased to confirm the necessary funding has already been committed to allow that scheme to commence at that time.

Community House in the Loughview Estate, Holywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development if there are any plans for a new community house in the Loughview Estate, Holywood.

(AQW 1691/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are no current plans for the provision of a new community house in the Loughview area and taking into account the demand for housing within the locality it is unlikely that any such request would be accommodated by a Housing Association in West Green.

Housing Schemes for the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what housing schemes are planned for the North Down area in the next two years.

(AQW 1692/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the following schemes are in the Social Housing Development Programme for the current financial year in the North Down area:-

Bloomfield Road/South Circular Road, Bangor	43 dwellings	(General Needs)
Clifton Special Care School, Old Belfast Road Bangor (Surplus lands)	53 dwellings	(General Needs)
Primacy Road, Bangor	13 dwellings	(General Needs)

Information on 2012/13 is not available as the programme for that year has not been approved yet.

Housing Estates with Economic and Social Problems

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what plans there are for housing estates that fall outside the criteria for Neighbourhood Renewal, Small Pockets of Deprivation and Areas at Risk, but which still have economic and social problems.

(AQW 1718/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive is currently involved in the Alpha Programme which covers Belfast, Lisburn and South Antrim only. This environmental grants programme invites community groups who wish to transform their local surroundings to apply for a grant and is funded through Landfill Tax Credits generated from the Mullaghglass landfill site operated by Alpha Resource Management.

The Housing Executive has a representative on the decision making panel that determines which applications qualify. Also represented are Alpha Resource Management, Groundwork NI, Belfast City Council and Lisburn City Council. The panel is chaired by an independent Chairperson.

Depending on the nature of each individual project a grant of between £10,000 and £50,000 is available and can be allocated under one of two categories: Community-based projects and Biodiversity. The criteria for successful projects are:

- Positive environmental impact;
- Targets disadvantaged groups;
- Community support and involvement;
- Sustainability after initial funding;
- Complement other local initiatives;

To date 35 projects have received total funding of over £1 million.

Community Based Projects in the Carrickfergus Borough Council Area

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development which community based projects in the Carrickfergus Borough Council area currently receive funding from his Department.

(AQW 1725/11-15)

Mr McCausland: DSD currently provide funding to community based projects in the Carrickfergus Borough Council area through both the Community Support Programme and the Community Investment Fund.

Projects funded through the Community Support Programme which is run in partnership and administered by the local Council include;

- Glenfield PAKT
- Whitehead Community Association
- Greenisland Community Council
- Windmill and Minorica Drive Assoc.
- Woodburn Residents Association
- Carrickfergus Neighbourhood Development Group
- Carrickfergus Community Forum
- Carrickfergus Women's Forum
- Carrickfergus Drug & Alcohol Advisory Group.
- Glenfield Residents Association
- Mount Vernon Community Development Group
- CITHRAH
- Carrick YMCA - Woodburn PAKT
- Carrickfergus Women's Aid
- Pregnancy Resource Centre
- Shopmobility

One local organisation, Carrickfergus Community Forum, is funded through the Community Investment Fund programme to provide sub-regional support to voluntary and community organisations across the local Council area.

Funding for Cross-Community Projects

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of funding allocated to cross-community projects in the East Antrim area in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1726/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive delivers neighbourhood renewal funding through the DSD Small Pockets of Deprivation programme to three areas in the East Antrim constituency - Greenisland estate, Sunnylands estate in Carrickfergus and Larne town centre areas. The Small Pockets of Deprivation Programme along with other programmes like Areas at Risk is often used to build capacity and begin to address inter and intra community relations. The Craigyhill/Antville, Seacourt and Ferris Park areas of Larne have been included in the Areas at Risk programme and although funding is not specifically targeted to Cross Community projects, such activities are encouraged.

The Voluntary & Community Unit, through its Community Support Programme, works in partnership with local Councils to develop communities. The East Antrim constituency covers 3 district council areas, namely Larne, Carrickfergus and part of Newtownabbey. Two of these councils, namely Newtownabbey

and Carrickfergus Borough Councils have allocated DSD community support programme monies to cross community projects and details are included in the table below.

The table also includes details of funding through the Voluntary & Community Unit's Community Investment Fund Programme to Carrickfergus Community Forum and Larne Community Development Programme whose catchment areas are in the East Antrim Constituency. Whilst this programme's emphasis is on building cohesive communities, again inter and intra community initiatives would be supported as part of the overall intervention.

The table below sets out funding details for the above programmes.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Small Pockets of Deprivation	£115,052	£60,365	£53,693
Areas at Risk	£49,042.08	£66,258.10	£117,748.53
Community Support Programme	£99,792.25	£120,852.02	not yet finalised
Community Investment Fund	£117,500	£112,143	£111,021

Community Investment Fund

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development when he will announce his decision on the applications to the Community Investment Fund.

(AQW 1808/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Applications have been received by the Department's Voluntary Community Unit from the 34 individual organisations currently funded under the Community Investment Fund programme to support sub-regional and local voluntary and community sector organisations. These applications are currently being assessed through the normal system of economic appraisals. On completion of this process, the Department will be in a better position to advise, but it is anticipated that funding decisions for 2012 to 2013 will be communicated to individual organisations in January 2012 at the latest

Boarded Up Houses

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses have been boarded up and have been unoccupied for six months or more.

(AQW 1812/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume that the Member is referring to social housing and the table below details those houses which have been boarded up and have been unoccupied for six months or more.

NIHE	795
Housing Associations	102
Total	897

Capital Projects in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what capital projects his Department has planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next five years.

(AQW 1818/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Over the course of the next five years (subject to funding), my Department has included capital projects in its urban regeneration programme for North Down as follows:

Town Centre Regeneration

- Public Realm Scheme in Bangor during 2013/14 and 2014/15
- Public Realm Scheme in Holywood during 2014/15
- Public Realm Scheme in Donaghadee during 2014/15
- Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme in Bangor during 2014/15
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- The second phase of the Kilcooley Allotments project during 2012/13
- Two further projects, a Multi Functional Centre and a 3G football are currently undergoing initial feasibility investigations.
- In addition, my Department has included a number of capital investment Housing projects for North Down as follows:

Social Housing Development Programme – 2011/12

- Bloomfield Road/South Circular Road, Bangor – 43 dwellings
- Clifton Special Care School, Old Belfast Road, Bangor - 53 dwellings
- Primacy Road, Bangor – 13 dwellings
- Information beyond 2011/12 is not available as the programme has not been approved yet

Environmental Schemes – 2013/14

- Clanmorris, Bangor
- Lisnabreen, Bangor
- Rathgill Zone 6, Bangor
- Rathgill Zones 4 & 5, Bangor
- Breezemont, Bangor
- Bloomfield, Bangor
- Clandeboye Road, Bangor
- Kilcooley Zone 3, Bangor

There are no other capital schemes programmed for North Down beyond 2013/14.

It should be noted that these schemes are all subject to the necessary approval processes being completed.

Lone Pensioner Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of claims for Lone Pensioner Allowance in each constituency in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1819/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate statistical data by parliamentary constituency. However, the table attached gives the details by Housing Executive area.

Belfast Area	08/09	09/10	10/11
	755	914	714
Total	755	914	714

South East Area	08/09	09/10	10/11
Bangor	291	352	284
Newtownards	220	270	212
Castlereagh	223	285	220
Lisburn	319	384	301
Poleglass	12	23	13
Downpatrick	148	179	134
Total	1213	1493	1164

South Area	08/09	09/10	10/11
Banbridge	116	141	113
Newry	134	143	129
Armagh	132	153	122
Lurgan	130	152	129
Portadown	94	119	95
Total	606	708	588

North East Area	08/09	09/10	10/11
Ballymena	215	244	196
Antrim	125	136	119
Newtownabbey 1 & 2	253	332	242
Carrickfergus	156	201	153
Larne	109	139	103
Ballycastle	40	51	41
Ballymoney	63	75	66
Coleraine	196	222	196
Total	1157	1400	1116

West Area	08/09	09/10	10/11
Londonderry	152	198	148
Limavady	40	52	37
Magherafelt	53	68	48
Strabane	41	57	38
Total	286	375	271

Omagh Area	08/09	09/10	10/11
Omagh	75	87	78

Omagh Area	08/09	09/10	10/11
Cookstown	40	55	42
Dungannon	76	87	71
Fermanagh	126	129	103
Total	317	358	294

Householders Who Detect Asbestos Material in Their Homes

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has to assist householders who detect asbestos material in their homes when carrying out vital maintenance improvements relating to energy conservation, the installation of new boilers and other works to reduce fuel poverty.

(AQW 1876/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to energy conservation under the Warm Homes Scheme provisions, there are regulations which enable scheme managers to include the removal of asbestos products which are impacting upon the energy conservation works being undertaken. It should be stressed that the existence of asbestos products does not necessarily mean that they require to be removed. Where such products are identified, scheme managers undertake an assessment of the type and condition of the asbestos before determining whether it should be removed or not.

With regards to the boiler replacement scheme I would advise that an allowance of up to £1,500 is allowed towards the replacement of the inefficient boiler. In the situation where defective asbestos products have been identified which require removal, any costs involved in its removal cannot be considered as part of the replacement boiler. It is the responsibility of the individual householder to fund any costs associated with asbestos removal.

In the normal working of schemes, or through the programmed inspection of its stock, the Housing Executive becomes aware of the presence of asbestos in some of its properties. While in many cases the appropriate response is to leave the asbestos undisturbed as it presents little risk, in some instances, its removal can be recommended and the appropriate arrangements are made via a specialist contractor.

People Living with a Long-Term Condition

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are living with a long-term condition which restricted their ability to work full-time or part-time in 2010/11.

(AQW 1915/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not hold this information.

Job Seekers Allowance

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in the East Antrim area received Job Seekers Allowance in each of the last four years.

(AQW 1920/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is set out in the table below. The figures quoted show the number of people in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance at the dates of extract for the East Antrim Parliamentary Constituency.

Parliamentary Constituency	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11
East Antrim	900	1,909	2,374	2,315

Flats in Suffolk Road, Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive plans to upgrade the flats in Suffolk Road, Belfast.

(AQW 1934/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the flats at Suffolk Road, Belfast are included in a window replacement scheme which is due to start this month. The scheme will involve work to 216 properties at an estimated cost of £493,000. The flats are also included in a heating replacement scheme provisionally programmed to start in November 2011 subject to the availability of finance.

Rising Fuel Costs

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department will work with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to address the problem of rising fuel costs and introduce a social price support scheme for vulnerable and disadvantaged older people.

(AQW 1954/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department launched its new fuel poverty strategy in April 2011 entitled 'Warmer Healthier Homes'. This strategy places significant emphasis on the partnership approach required to tackle fuel poverty and I believe no one government department or organisation can do this singlehandedly. My department is committed to working, not just with Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, but with all government departments and the wider energy and voluntary sector to target those most in need. In our strategy we reaffirm our commitment to continue to explore options for the introduction of a social tariff

Assistance with Mortgage Payments

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what assistance his Department can offer to people who have lost their jobs and cannot afford to pay their mortgages.

(AQW 1981/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Anyone who thinks they are in danger of losing their home due to debt secured on it should seek advice immediately. During the summer, I launched the contracted Mortgage Debt Advice Service; this has increased the level of advice available to people experiencing difficulty making mortgage payments. The extended Service now includes an online advisor and evening opening on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The specialised service is preventing, where possible, people here from becoming homeless as a consequence of housing related debt.

The Northern Ireland Social Security Agency provides financial assistance to meet payments of mortgage interest costs where a claim is made to Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance. Customers must serve a qualifying period of 13 weeks before they are entitled to any help with mortgage costs and it is limited to the first £200,000 of the mortgage owing. The current Standard Mortgage Interest rate, 3.63%, is used to determine the amount payable to the mortgage lender.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Internet Speed and the Phone System in Parliament Buildings

Mr Dickson asked the Assembly Commission what plans are currently in place to upgrade (i) internet speed; and (ii) the phone system in Parliament Buildings.

(AQW 1667/11-15)

Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):

- (i) The Assembly Commission recently procured an independent internet connection for use by Assembly Members, Party staff and Secretariat staff on Assembly business installed in March

2011. The 20 Mbps synchronous connection is performing optimally with no delays or congestion detected.

If you are experiencing difficulties accessing a specific website or using a specific piece of Assembly provided equipment please contact the IS Service desk (028 905 21000), the Head of the Information Systems Office or the Director of Information and Outreach, who will be happy to assist.

- (ii) At present there are no plans to upgrade the telephone system in Parliament Buildings. However, it is likely that the Assembly will move towards modernising / upgrading the existing system with a view to taking advantage of modern ICT technologies in the near future. This will of course be dependent upon future work schedules and the availability of financial resources.

Lower East Car Park at Parliament Buildings

Mr Kinahan asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) the works that were carried out on the Lower East car park at Parliament Buildings during summer 2011; (ii) the number of spaces that were added to the car park; and (iii) how this will affect the number of cars that previously parked along the northern part of the car park.

(AQW 2000/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): During the summer recess the Assembly Commission completed a programme of construction work in an attempt to ease the ongoing difficulties with parking, particularly on Sitting days.

This included some minor improvements to the existing Lower East Car Park; however, the main element of the work was the creation of an additional overflow car park facility. The overflow car park provides an additional 42 parking spaces which will significantly reduce the need to park on the roadways of the estate.

The work to the Lower East Car Park consisted mainly of rationalising the previous layout in order to prevent parking in an unsafe manner which often resulted in cars being 'blocked in'. This was a particular problem at the northern end of the car park and the revised layout will help to eradicate such issues.

In total the revised layout does also provide 2 additional spaces. It had been anticipated that further additional spaces could be created in this car park but difficulties associated with existing underground services meant that was not financially viable.

The Lower East Car Park and the new overflow facility will be managed by Assembly Security staff, Monday to Thursday during Assembly term time, and those staff will be on hand to ensure that the parking space available is used as efficiently as possible, and that inconvenience and obstruction is minimised or avoided.

Initial feedback from car park users in relation to these new arrangements has been positive and Facilities Directorate staff will continue to liaise with DFP colleagues in an effort to identify further improvements where possible.

Car Parking in and Around Parliament Buildings

Mr Kinahan asked the Assembly Commission to what extent have they have resolved the issue of inadequate car parking in and around Parliament Buildings; and for its assessment of whether there are adequate car parking facilities for Assembly (i) staff; and (ii) visitors.

(AQW 2001/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission fully recognises the difficulties experienced in parking within the car parks, particularly on Sitting days.

During the summer recess period, some works were carried out within the Lower East Car Park and a new overflow car park was also created adjacent to existing car park, for use by Assembly staff and visitors (it is not currently possible to differentiate between Assembly staff and visitors using

the car parks). These measures have provided a combined additional 44 parking spaces, and whilst it is anticipated that this will go a significant way towards resolving the problems experienced, it will nonetheless still be necessary for some persons to continue to park on Prince of Wales and Massey Avenues for the foreseeable future.

The Lower East and overspill car parks will continue to be managed by Assembly Security staff, Monday to Thursday during Assembly term time, and those staff will be on hand to ensure that the parking space available is used as efficiently as possible, and that inconvenience and obstruction is minimised or avoided.

Whilst initial feedback from car park users in relation to these new arrangements appears positive, this will be kept under review, and Facilities Directorate staff will continue to liaise with DFP colleagues in an effort to identify further improvements if possible.

Written Answers Index

Department for Regional Development	146	Transport Policy	161
A2 Between Silverstream		Utility Companies Operating	
Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus	157	on Roads During Peak Times	160
A2 Between Silverstream		Water and Sewerage Infrastructure	
Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus	158	Investments	150
A2 Between Silverstream		Department for Employment and Learning	89
Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus	158	Arm's-Length Bodies	91
A2 Between Silverstream		Educational Funding for Kilcooley	
Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus	159	Women's Centre, Bangor	91
A6 Dungiven-Derry Dual Carriageway	154	Northern Regional College Campus at	
A6 from Castledawson to Derry	149	Ballymoney	89
Article 39(2) of The Street Works		Student Fees in Great Britain	91
(Northern Ireland) Order 1995	156	Students Enrolments	90
Article 41 of The Street Works		Students from Northern Ireland	
(Northern Ireland) Order 1995	155	Studying in the Republic of Ireland	89
Coleraine to Londonderry Railway Line	162	Department for Social Development	164
Coleraine to Londonderry Railway Line	163	Assistance with Mortgage Payments	172
Coleraine to Londonderry Railway Line	164	Boarded Up Houses	168
Congestion Caused by Road Works	160	Capital Projects in East Antrim	165
Flags and Advertisements on		Capital Projects in North Down	168
Street Light Posts	148	Community Based Projects in the	
Footpath Resurfacing Schemes	157	Carrickfergus Borough Council Area	167
Footpaths on the Kilcooley Estate		Community House in the Loughview	
in Bangor	148	Estate, Holywood	166
Independent Review Team	164	Community Investment Fund	168
Invasive Plant Species	150	Emergency Maintenance for Housing	
Land Deemed as Surplus		Executive Properties	164
to Requirements	151	Flats in Suffolk Road, Belfast	172
Larne Line Passengers	147	Funding for Cross-Community Projects	167
Line Managers Employed by NI Railways	162	Householders Who Detect Asbestos	
Londonderry to Belfast Railway Service	163	Material in Their Homes	171
Londonderry Trains	161	Housing Estates with Economic	
Monthly Estate Walkabouts	149	and Social Problems	166
NI Railways Personnel	150	Housing Schemes for the	
NI Water	153	North Down Area	166
Portavo Reservoir	159	Job Seekers Allowance	171
Properties on the A2 Between Silverstream		Lone Pensioner Allowance	169
Banks and Seapark, Carrickfergus	159	New Builds in the Loughview Estate,	
Rail Services on the Larne Line	147	Holywood	165
Reservoirs at Ballysallagh	159	People Living with a Long-Term Condition	171
Residents Only Parking Schemes	150	Rising Fuel Costs	172
Residents' Parking Schemes	148	Department of Agriculture and Rural	
Road Lighting Schemes	160	Development	73
Road Surfacing Projects	158	Angling Trust's Legal Challenge	
Sale of Reservoirs	160	to the Water Framework Directive	76
Severe Winter Weather Conditions	146	Forest Service's Business Plan 2011/12	76
Severe Winter Weather Conditions	153	Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy	75
Severe Winter Weather Conditions	154	Rural Development Programme	73
Spraying of Weeds in North Down	156	Rural Development Programme	74
Street Lighting Schemes	161	Rural Development Programme	76
The Street Works (Amendment)			
(Northern Ireland) Order 2007	156		
Translink Uniform	162		

Student Fee Freeze	75	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	105
Veterinary Degree Courses in Northern Ireland	75	Antrim Area Hospital's MRI Suite	108
Village Renewal Funding	73	Blood Donation: Homosexual and Bisexual Men	125
Village Renewal Funding	73	Cancer Drugs Fund	118
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	77	Causeway Hospital's and Antrim Area Hospital's CT Scanners	108
Chairperson of Libraries NI	77	Children From the Travelling Community	107
Fish Stocks	77	Children on the At Risk Register	114
Refurbishment of Windsor Park	77	Community Information System	127
Department of Education	78	Developing Better Services	125
1979/10 Circular: The Greater Involvement of Young People in Northern Ireland	80	Family Planning Association	106
1979/10 Circular: The Greater Involvement of Young People in Northern Ireland	87	Fire Fighters	110
Arm's-Length Bodies	85	Group B Streptococcus	126
C2k Contracts	86	Health and Social Care	126
Current Deficit in Schools	78	Hospital Referral: Waiting Times	120
Education Network for Northern Ireland	86	Hospitals: Omagh	126
Education Network for Northern Ireland	87	Hospitals: Staffing	123
Enrolment Numbers in the East Derry Area	82	Hospital Treatment for Prisoners	111
Home to School Transport Policy	88	Hospital Treatment for Prisoners	112
Language Strategy	82	Job Losses in Community Pharmacies	116
Maghera High School Site	82	Locum Appointment for Service	105
Non-Executive Director	81	Looked After Children	123
Register of School Premises and Accommodation	81	Maternity Services	125
Schools Sharing Resources or Classes	88	Medical Staff at the Royal Dental Hospital, Belfast	122
Teaching Posts	80	Mental Health: Rural Communities	126
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	92	Mid-Ulster Hospital	115
Cruise Liners	94	MRI Scans	108
Exploratory Drilling of Shale Gas	93	MRI Scans	123
Exposure to Asbestos Material	96	Multiple System Atrophy	123
Go for It Programme	97	Nurses Specialising in Parkinson's Disease	119
Hydraulic Fracturing	93	Parkinson's Disease or Diabetes	120
Invest NI Funding	92	Patients with Dementia	107
Invest NI Start A Business Programme	92	Patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis	110
Northern Ireland Tourist Board	96	Patients with Sleep Disorders	120
Proposed Hydraulic Fracturing in Fermanagh	93	People Classed as Obese	114
Unemployed Trained Teachers	93	People in Portaferry Diagnosed with Cancer	117
Department of Finance and Personnel	103	People with Melanoma	109
Banks	104	Pharmacies	117
Business Rates	104	Potential Pharmacy Closures	115
Civil Service: Equality Monitoring	103	Potential Pharmacy Closures	116
Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011	105	Potential Pharmacy Closures	116
Green New Deal	105	Preventative Social Care Strategy	114
Peace Funding	104	Prisoners Hospital Stays	112
Sham Marriages	103	Prisoners Hospital Stays	112
Special Advisers	105	Prison Hospital Treatment	111
		Provision of Healthcare	106
		Rainbow Project	106
		Referrals to the Royal Dental Hospital, Belfast	121
		Results of Cardio Angiograms	117

Self-Medication in Hospitals	113	Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme	145
Social Services Staff	119	Police Museum	145
Special Advisers	118	Police Officers Suspended from Duty	143
Stage 4 Melanoma	115	Police Ombudsman	136
Suicide Prevention and Assistance	118	Prison Service	128
Supplier Invoices	122	Prison Service Staff	128
Support for Elderly Carers	121	Prison Service Staff	128
Volunteer Rescue Services	110	Prison Service Staff	129
Waiting Times for Cataract Surgery	107	Prison Service Staff	130
Welfare Reform	113	Rioting and Looting in England	135
Welfare Reform	113	Rioting in Ballyclare and Carrickfergus	137
Whiteabbey Hospital and Antrim Area Hospital: Patient Numbers	124	Sentences for Knife Crime	135
Department of Justice	128	Small Claims Court System	130
AccessNI Checks	139	Small Claims Court System	131
AccessNI Checks	139	Small Claims Court System	132
Anti-Social Behaviour in Towns and Villages	135	Department of the Environment	97
Arm's-Length Bodies	141	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan	102
Brendan Lillis	129	Car Tax	98
Brendan Lillis	133	Convictions for Dog Fouling Offences	100
Brendan Lillis	133	Election Posters	103
Capital Assets	142	Environment Governance	101
Category C Prisoners	138	George Best Belfast City Airport	98
Clare's Law	138	George Best Belfast City Airport	98
Community Service Schemes	134	Gorse Fires	102
Convictions for Possessing Indecent Images of Children	130	Listed Buildings	101
Court Filming	137	Planning Applications for Wind Farms in North Antrim	99
Currency Seizures from Visitors to Prison Establishments	144	Planning System	98
Efficiency Plans	143	Procurement	97
Functions of the Parole Commissioners	133	Recycling: Tyres	101
Historical Enquiries Team Cases	138	Reform of Local Government	103
Legal Aid for Riot Related Convictions	134	Rose Energy Poultry Litter Energy Plant	100
Legal Aid: Non-molestation Orders	144	Tyres	101
Legally Detailed Persons	128	Wild Deer in Northern Ireland	99
Libel Cases	140	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission	172
Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences	135	Car Parking in and Around Parliament Buildings	173
Number of Prisoners	137	Internet Speed and the Phone System in Parliament Buildings	172
Office of the Police Ombudsman	144	Lower East Car Park at Parliament Buildings	173
Office of the Police Ombudsman	146	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	71
Office of the Police Ombudsman: Criminal Justice Inspection	145	Budget Review Group	72
Pardon	134	Draft Childcare Strategy	71
Pardon	135	Head of the Civil Service	72
Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme	133	Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland	71
Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme	136	Maze/Long Kesh: Peace-building and Conflict Resolution Centre	72
Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme	136	Social Investment Fund	71
Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme	136		
Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme	137		
Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme	140		
Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme	144		

Revised Written Answers

Friday 23 September 2011

(AQW 939/11-15)

In June this year you raised a written Assembly question (AQW 939/11-15) which asked “whether Stranmillis University College has been within budget in each of the last three years”. I answered the question using information supplied by Stranmillis University College. For the 2009/10 academic year my reply stated that the College had an actual surplus of £891,000. However, this figure is incorrect as the College’s audited financial statements for the year report a surplus of £870,000, some £21,000 lower than the College reported to my officials when the answer was being prepared.

The impact of this was that I went on to state that the adjusted surplus for the year would have been £23,000 had conversion funding and a pension credit been excluded from the College’s reported surplus figure. Using the correct surplus figure would give an adjusted surplus of £2,000 as opposed to £23,000.

I apologise for the error and I would stress that the figures reported in the original answer were provided in good faith on the basis of information provided by the College.



Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,
Belfast: The Stationery Office

and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

TSO

PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/General enquiries: 0870 600 5522

Fax orders: 0870 600 5533

E-mail: customer.services@tso.co.uk

Textphone 0870 240 3701

TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents

ISSN 1463-7162

Daily Editions: Single copies £5, Annual subscriptions £325

Bound Volumes of Debates are issued periodically during the session: Single copies: £90

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited

© Copyright Northern Ireland Assembly Commission 2011

ISBN 978-0-339-70219-6



9 780339 702196