

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 7 October 2011

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 7 October 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Electricity Providers

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what negotiations have taken place with electricity providers in relation to pricing.

(AQW 1625/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Utility Regulator has the lead role in regulating the electricity and natural gas markets here and this includes regulation of retail tariffs for consumers.

A tariff review process of the incumbent supplier has been established by the Regulator, who has carried out a rigorous analysis of the new Power NI electricity tariffs. As part of the recent tariff review process, DETI officials attended a number of meetings involving Power NI, the Utility Regulator, and the Consumer Council. We have also sought an urgent meeting with the Utility Regulator in view of the recent price rises.

Supplementary Brief on Recruiting People with Conflict-Related Convictions

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) when the supplementary brief on Recruiting People with Conflict-Related Convictions was issued by their Community Relations Unit; (ii) whether it obtained Ministerial approval; (iii) why it refers to 'politically motivated' ex-prisoners; and (iv) whether they endorse such language.

(AQW 1712/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The supplementary brief on Recruiting People with Conflict-Related Convictions was issued in the autumn of 2008 in response to feedback from the business community. The aim of that document was to summarise the key principles of the substantive Employers' Guidance on Recruiting People with Conflict-Related Convictions, which had been issued by OFMDFM in May 2007 prior to devolution and approved by the then Minister of State David Hanson MP. The supplementary brief did not require and did not seek Ministerial approval. It was developed in partnership with the business community and is intended to increase understanding of the principles of the Employers' Guidance, and clarify any areas of uncertainty regarding its implications for employers.

The supplementary brief uses the terms 'political ex-prisoners' and 'people with conflict-related convictions'. It is recognised that there are a number of interchangeable terms to describe individuals who acquired convictions.

Implementation of Section 75

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of Section 75.

(AQW 2151/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The implementation of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 is for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) to monitor. We have therefore asked the Chief Executive of ECNI to respond to you directly on this matter.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the cost benefit analysis of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

(AQW 2337/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are unaware of any such cost benefit analysis of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 having been carried out. However, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland carried out a review of the effectiveness of Section 75 which was published in May 2007.

This review has been reflected in the guidance under which current Equality Schemes, including the draft OFMDFM scheme, have been drawn up. The new guidance is a significant improvement on past practice.

Children and Young People: East Londonderry

Mr McClarty asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what plans they have to address the needs of children and young people in the East Londonderry constituency.

(AQO 367/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There are five key policies or strategies specific to children and young people being taken forward by this Department.

These include: the ten year strategy 'Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge'; the Play Policy Statement; driving forward the concluding observations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Child Poverty Strategy 'Improving Children's Life chances'; and the Childcare Strategy.

All of these are Executive strategies and policies which are intended to deliver improved outcomes and benefit all our children and young people including those in the Member's constituency.

OFMDFM's role is to ensure a co-ordinated approach and better integrate the work of all departments to maximise impact and best meet the needs of our young people in all areas of need.

We appreciate that this has not been an easy task but remain committed to making progress. Indeed, by way of example, we are pleased that Limavady council has worked with us over the last year to establish a play and leisure strategic partnership.

The focus of this is to ensure a joined-up approach to the future planning and delivery of play and leisure services in that council area and to ensure the services delivered meet the needs of the young people.

We hope other councils in the Member's constituency will avail of future opportunities in this field and indeed other key policy areas relating to children and young people.

Peace IV Programme

Mr McQuillan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps they have taken to secure the establishment of a Peace IV Programme.

(AQO 375/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We believe that there is need for a further round of assistance to consolidate the peace-building achievements of the previous 3 programmes. This is particularly so in a context where prolonged economic downturn could jeopardise what has been achieved thus far, and there remain those who continue to cultivate division and undermine the political institutions here.

For that reason, when we met with the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, in Brussels in December 2010, we stressed the need for a fourth Peace Programme post-2013 and while

we acknowledge that the final decision will be taken by the 27 Member States, we were pleased with the President's positive response nonetheless.

Junior Ministers have therefore pressed the need for a further Peace Programme at the Joint Ministerial Committee on Europe, chaired by the British Foreign Secretary.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister McGuinness also raised the issue with the British Prime Minister and the Taoiseach.

The British Government has now stated its agreement in principle to a further Peace Programme and we have written to the responsible Minister, Mark Prisk, urging him, in light of this, to ensure that the forthcoming Structural Funds Regulations include the necessary legislative provisions for further peace funding.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister McGuinness also pressed the case for a further round of peace funding with Commissioner Hahn when he opened the Peace Bridge in Derry in June, and they were greatly encouraged by his positive response.

While we cannot be confident of the outcome until negotiations are complete, we would hope and fully expect that, given the efforts made by Executive Ministers to secure a further Peace Programme, we will see financial provision for continued work in peace building post-2013.

Older People's Strategy

Mr Durkan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made on the development of a new Older People's Strategy.

(AQO 373/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The current Older People's Strategy 'Ageing in an Inclusive Society' was launched in March 2005.

Given the time elapsed since 'Ageing in an Inclusive Society' was developed, we have agreed to the development of a replacement Older People's Strategy.

OFMDFM officials have been working on the development of a framework for a new strategy in conjunction with the Older People's Advocate and the Older People's Advisory Panel.

Work on the document is well advanced and it is anticipated that the revised strategy will issue for public consultation in the next few months.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the establishment of a new Victims and Survivors Service.

(AQO 374/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are progressing with the establishment of the new Service for Victims and Survivors.

The Commission for Victims and Survivors and officials are working closely together to ensure that the Service is fit for purpose and appropriately resourced.

We are determined to meet key targets such as the phased introduction to individual assessments starting in April 2012.

This remains a key issue for this Department and all available resource is being used to ensure that when the Service is established it reflects the needs and demands of the Sector.

We are committed to establishing the new Service by April 2012 and to that end, the Junior Ministers are working closely with the Commission and officials to ensure that this deadline is met.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Buchanan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made on the development of a Childcare Strategy.

(AQO 377/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our Department is leading work across Government and with stakeholders to co-ordinate the development of a Childcare Strategy, including a range of essential supporting measures and actions, for consideration by the Executive.

In support of this approach, we have secured an additional £12m over the Budget period. Departments have already embarked on a range of measures to increase childcare provision here.

As the co-ordinating department, we anticipate issuing proposals on a draft Childcare Strategy for a period of public consultation early next year.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr McCartney asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the new Victims and Survivors Service will be established by April 2012.

(AQO 378/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Work is progressing towards the establishment of the new Service with key targets to be achieved in line with an April 2012 launch.

Public Appointments

Mr McGimpsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have refused to endorse any public appointments during this Assembly term.

(AQO 379/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have not refused to endorse any OFMDFM public appointments during this Assembly term.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Capital Assets

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail all the capital assets owned by her Department.

(AQW 2098/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The capital assets owned by the Department are detailed in the following table:

Category	Net Current Replacement Cost as at 31/03/11 £'000
Land and Buildings	268,243
Plant and Machinery	6,334
Transport Equipment	4,335
Information Technology	1,536
Rivers Agency Infrastructure Assets	505,456

Category	Net Current Replacement Cost as at 31/03/11 £'000
Growing Timber	124,185
Heritage Assets	1,167
Assets Under Construction	8,720
Forest Land Rights	450
Software	4,144
Software Licences	734
Assets Classified as Held for Sale	1,097
Financial Assets	23
Total	926,424

These figures have been extracted from the Department's audited Resource Account for the 2010-11 financial year.

Stock Levels of Sea Bass

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the stock levels of Sea Bass in the waters around Northern Ireland; and for an update on the regulations monitoring the fishing of Sea Bass.

(AQW 2126/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There is no stock assessment for Sea Bass in our territorial waters as it is not a significant commercial species. The Department however does keep records of Sea Bass landed at our ports. During the period 2008 – 2010 the total weight of Sea Bass landed was 281kgs.

The relatively low incidence of Sea Bass in our waters is not unexpected since the species tends to be more abundant in warmer waters. The proposed legislation is intended to prevent directed commercial fishing and restrict recreational fishing of the species, to ensure that any spread of Sea Bass into our waters, potentially as a result of climate change, is protected thereby allowing the stock in our waters to grow to its full potential. The proposed legislation permits by-catches from commercial trawl fisheries to be landed. This is essential to continue to obtain data about trends in the stock and is also consistent with our commitment not to introduce local legislation that contributes to fish discards. It is hoped this legislation will be in place by early 2012.

Rural Crime

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with the Minister of Justice in relation to the level of rural crime.

(AQW 2149/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My predecessor met with the Minister of Justice late last year to discuss issues relating to rural crime including, in particular, agriculture related crime. My officials have also been working with officials in the Department of Justice in identifying measures for inclusion in the Rural White Paper Action Plan which will help ensure that the needs of rural communities are taken account of in the development of community safety initiatives.

Welfare Problems and Animal Abuse in Circuses

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her Department's powers in regard to dealing with welfare problems and the abuse of animals in circuses.

(AQW 2180/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Welfare of Animals Act 2011 protects all animals here from unnecessary suffering. It is an offence under that Act to cause an animal to suffer, either through a deliberate action or by failure to act. However, my Department's role with regard to the inspection of animals in circuses is very limited as the welfare of non-farmed animals, including animals in circuses, is currently monitored and enforced by the PSNI. When the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 is fully commenced, in April 2012, this responsibility will transfer to Councils.

My Department has powers under the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 to introduce subordinate legislation to regulate any activity involving vertebrate animals, including the use of animals in circuses, should that be necessary to secure their welfare. The Act therefore provides the power to regulate the use of circus animals, or to introduce licensing or registration requirements for circuses. The Act also contains powers for inspectors to enforce any regulations made under it. Under the Act where there is reason to believe an animal is suffering or likely to suffer an inspector can, without a police presence, take immediate action to alleviate the suffering of an animal.

While I can assure you that I intend to consider how best to deal with the regulation of circuses, my priorities on animal welfare will continue to be the roll-out of the new provisions in the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, including new subordinate legislation on the welfare of farmed animals, dog breeding establishments and the exemption for the docking of working dogs' tails. Engaging with Councils as they prepare for their new enforcement role in relation to non-farmed animals is also a key priority.

My Department also has powers under Commission Regulation (EC) No 1739/2005, which lays down animal health requirements for the movement of circus animals between Member States, and which requires circuses to be registered in the Member State where they are resident before moving to another Member State. While we have no circuses based in the north of Ireland, there are a number of circuses registered in the south some of which regularly travel here. My Department has an agreed protocol with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food which provides for inspection of animals at these registered circuses to ensure that they are clinically healthy.

Welfare Problems and Animal Abuse in Circuses

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the level of welfare problems and animal abuse in circuses.

(AQW 2181/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's role with regard to animals in circuses is limited as it does not have powers of entry in respect of animal welfare in circuses. Under the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, the PSNI currently has responsibility for the welfare of non-farmed animals, including circus animals and they are responsible for investigating any welfare problems or suspected cases of abuse. I would therefore encourage you to contact the PSNI for an assessment of the present level of welfare problems and animal abuse in circuses.

The Welfare of Animals Act 2011 provides a range of new powers to regulate any activity involving animals should that be necessary to secure their welfare. This allows my Department to bring forward subordinate legislation if that was considered necessary to regulate the use of animals in circuses.

While we have no circuses based in the north of Ireland, there are a number of circuses registered in the south some of which regularly travel here. I am aware of recent concerns regarding the use and welfare of wild animals in circuses in Europe and Britain. Before making any decision to bring forward a proposal for subordinate legislation in respect of circuses, I plan to take the time to assess the available evidence in relation to developments in Britain, the south of Ireland and Europe and also to engage with stakeholders, including circus operators and their representatives, to ensure that their views are properly considered.

Laying Hens Directive

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) for her assessment of the Laying Hens Directive which comes into effect on 1 January 2012; (ii) what percentage of producers are in a position to comply with the legislation; and (iii) how this compares to other EU countries.

(AQW 2266/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) I take the welfare of animals very seriously and fully support the ban on the use of conventional cages for laying hens that will be introduced by Council Directive 1999/74/EC from 1 January 2012. I share the concerns of the industry that progress in converting out of conventional cages may not be as well advanced in a number of other Member States as it is here. It is important that local egg producers who have invested in enriched cage or alternative systems are not disadvantaged by imports of illegally produced eggs from non-compliant Member States. I believe that there needs to be a consistent application of the ban across all Member States from 1 January 2012 and measures put in place to protect producers who are compliant by the deadline.
- (ii) Approximately 80% of producers here are already in a position to comply with the ban. I understand that the majority of the remaining producers have indicated that they will replace their conventional cages with compliant systems by 1 January 2012, while the others will cease production.
- (iii) Earlier this year all Member States were asked to provide an update to the European Commission on their progress towards compliance as of 1 April 2011 and a forecast of the position as at 31 December 2011. From the data collated it is expected that there will be large-scale non-compliance in Spain, Poland, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, France, Romania and Bulgaria. Sweden, Austria, Germany and Luxembourg, have already banned conventional cages and are therefore compliant. Denmark, the Czech Republic, Britain and the south of Ireland have indicated that they will be in a position to comply with the legislation by January 2012.

Illegal Substances

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures are in place to prevent the use of illegal substances like clenbuterol.

(AQW 2267/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are strict protocols in place to ensure that any findings of illegal substances, such as clenbuterol are dealt with effectively. While food safety is the responsibility of the Food Standards Agency (FSA), under EU law, DARD implements the National Residues Control Plan – a surveillance scheme designed to detect the presence of residues of veterinary medicines and illegal substances in food products of animal origin. This testing regime is vital in underpinning European and wider international trade, with exports being so important for our agri-food industry.

In addition to this mandatory EU requirement, DARD also operates three other testing schemes: the Meat Inspection Scheme; Bovine Quality Assurance Scheme and the Pig Testing Scheme, as an added safeguard to public health.

All residues surveillance programmes in the north are overseen by the Residues Action Group (RAG) which consists of representatives from DARD, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute and the Food Standards Agency. When residues of illegal substances are detected, RAG initiates appropriate action to ensure the public are protected against contaminated food entering the food chain. Follow-up investigations are carried out to identify the source of the problem and prevent recurrence.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she will make it her Department's policy to provide accurate measurements of the level of greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture industry and ensure that the industry is not disadvantaged by climate change legislation.

(AQW 2271/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is co-ordinating an extensive research programme to assist the agriculture sector in reducing GHG emissions. In conjunction with DEFRA, the Scottish and Welsh Governments, DARD is currently contributing to a £12.6m, 5 year project to improve the accuracy of the agriculture inventory. Accurate assessment of emissions from a wide range of production systems is an essential prerequisite for development of future specific mitigation measures.

Climate change presents a challenge to agriculture worldwide – how to produce more food and non-food products while having a reduced impact on the local and global environment.

We must also jointly accept our responsibility to future generations and reduce the net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture production alongside other sectors of the economy while managing the increasing demand for food, water and energy in the face of a changing climate.

Influencing the sector is a complex undertaking: it includes many small businesses, widely spread geographically, each responsible for different types of GHG emissions (nitrous oxide and methane). Furthermore, the ability of different soils and plants to sequester carbon varies by farm; the impacts of climate change and the adaptations required also vary.

My aim is to continue to work closely with the agriculture and forestry sector to smarten the measurement of emissions to include local circumstances, research scientifically the potential for locking in more carbon in soil, grass and peatland and help implement a series of measures that we know can achieve emissions reductions and keep working on others we would want to implement in the future.

I will not support any climate change legislation that targets the agriculture industry unfairly, limits its potential for growth or exports production and jobs to other less efficient countries.

Fuel Poverty

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans her Department has to protect people involved in agriculture and living in rural areas from the effects of fuel poverty over the coming winter months.

(AQW 2272/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Responsibility for leading on tackling fuel poverty lies with the Department for Social Development (DSD) and in March 2011 DSD published a new Fuel Poverty Strategy: Warmer Healthier Homes.

I have concerns about the impact that rising fuel costs are having, particularly on the vulnerable in rural areas who are limited in the choice of fuel that they can avail of and do not have access to cheaper alternatives such as mains gas.

My Department's 2008/11 Rural Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion programme, which is specifically targeted at rural dwellers including those involved in agriculture, has made a positive impact on the lives of the most vulnerable in our society. In the 3 year period of the Programme, over 15,000 rural people have benefitted from various initiatives.

For example, my Department collaborated with DSD and NIE to target rural fuel poverty issues with 1000 homes in rural areas having received home energy efficiency measures such as insulation and central heating systems. My Department has also undertaken a joint initiative with the Public Health Agency to maximise access to services, grants and benefits, initially in the most deprived rural areas. Significant outcomes have already been achieved including a further 560 rural households benefitting from energy efficiency measures and over 50 individuals obtaining new or increased state benefits. It is my intention that this highly successful and significant project will be rolled out across the North.

A further £16 million has been allocated to addressing poverty and social isolation in rural areas in this current budget period. My officials are developing a number of measures to tackle rural poverty and are engaging with stakeholders and other Departments to bring forward initiatives that will help those experiencing poverty and social isolation. I am committed to taking action to address the challenges

facing people living in rural areas and to improving their quality of life and will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that action is taken to target fuel poverty in rural areas.

Woodland Coverage

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department is taking to increase the volume of woodland coverage.

(AQW 2294/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's Forest Service provides grant aid and advice to encourage more farmers and landowners to create woodland, through the Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme. Grant rates were increased by up to 30 per cent in November 2009. In addition, woodland creation has been encouraged through:

- Implementing beneficial changes to the Single Farm Payment (SFP) Scheme allowing farmers to continue to receive SFP, as well as forestry grant payments, on land converted to woodland;
- Engaging with a wide range of landowning bodies, such as local councils, and other central Government Departments, encouraging them to consider woodland as a viable economic alternative to their current land use;
- Engaging with afforestation stakeholders to identify barriers to woodland creation and assist in the development of proposals for future mechanisms to support woodland creation;
- Extending the funding of the Short Rotation Coppice Scheme until the end of the current Rural Development Programme in 2013;
- Publicising the Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme through Balmoral Show and other shows, talks with interested groups and press articles.

In addition to the Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, participants in agri-environment schemes may avail of funding for planting small areas of native trees on farmland and managing existing woodland. These schemes include the Countryside Management Scheme and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme.

The Northern Ireland Ploughing Match and the Irish National Ploughing Championships

Mr Kinahan asked Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the financial support her Department has provided to (i) the Northern Ireland Ploughing Match; and (ii) the Irish National Ploughing Championships in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2400/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has provided financial support to the north of Ireland Ploughing Match by purchasing advertising in the Show programme, hiring trade space and sponsorship. This is as follows for each of the last 5 years;

2007	£645
2008	£870
2009	£550
2010	£650
2011	£575

My Department has provided financial support to the Irish National Ploughing Championships by means of hiring trade space and electrical services, and the purchase of exhibitor tickets. This is as follows for each of the last 5 years;

2007	£5179
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2008	£3935
2009	£4960
2010	£4098
2011	£3733

Ministerial Drivers

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) when her Ministerial Driver first took up employment as a driver for Executive Ministers; (ii) the total amount of expenses and other related payments claimed by her driver since May 2011; and (iii) whether her driver was a civil service appointment or a political party appointment.

(AQW 2405/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) My Department has no involvement with the employment arrangements for the Driver;
- (ii) The Driver has not submitted any claims for expenses or other related payments to the Department; and
- (iii) The Driver is not a civil service employee.

Departmental Grants Available to Farmers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to list the departmental grants which are available to farmers.

(AQW 2429/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The following table lists the grants available to assist the farming community (subsidy schemes such as Single Farm Payment and Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances have been excluded from this information):-

Title of Grant Available to Farmers	Brief Description of Purpose/Objective of Grant
Farm Modernisation Programme	To provide financial support of up to £4k maximum towards investment in eligible plant, machinery or equipment to improve the competitiveness of the farm business.
Augmentation grant as part of Focus Farm funding	Focus Farmer is paid grant at 50% rate on a range of items up to a max of £7,250 to enhance their farms for visitors. A further assistance of up to £1,500 at 100% funding is available to provide analytical data that can enhance the visitor experience.
Assistance with Succession advice as part of the Farm Family Options programme	Assistance of up to £250 is available to a farm business to avail themselves of legal and/or financial advice as part of the Mentoring element of the Farm Family Options programme.
Supply Chain Development Programme Co-operation support Study Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 50% funding to a maximum of £2,500 for professional advice to groups to establish the group as a legal entity. ■ 75% of the cost per participant to a group maximum of £3,000 to avail themselves of study tours linked to the groups needs.

Title of Grant Available to Farmers	Brief Description of Purpose/Objective of Grant
Manure Efficiency Technology Scheme (METS) Tranche 2	The Manure Efficiency Technology Scheme (METS) provides grant aid to encourage farmers to invest in advanced slurry spreading systems. Investment in this technology will contribute to the overall objective of developing a more sustainable environment.
Agriculture and Forestry Processing & Marketing Grant Scheme (PMG)	The PMG Scheme provides grant aid to improve the economic performance and international competitiveness of the agri-food processing, horticulture and forestry sectors through the use of technology together with sound manufacturing and environment management practices.
NI Rural Development Programme measures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3	<p>Farmers may avail themselves of funding under these measures, which aim to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assist farm households to diversify into non-agricultural activities and, as a consequence, maintain or increase the income of farm households and create employment opportunities (all on-farm applications must be under this measure). ■ Create employment opportunities through promoting entrepreneurship and developing the economic infrastructure in rural areas by providing support to existing micro-enterprises or to persons wishing to set up a new micro-enterprise in a non-agricultural sector. ■ Use the natural resources in the north of Ireland's rural areas to attract visitors and create new employment opportunities through the sustainable development of the rural economy by providing support to existing rural tourism enterprises or to persons wishing to set up a new sustainable tourism enterprise.
NI Rural Development Programme measures 3.4, 3.4 and 3.6	<p>Farmers and rural dwellers may avail themselves of funding under these measures, which aim to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support the improvement of basic services in rural areas, including cultural and leisure facilities and related small-scale infrastructure. ■ Support animation and capacity-building within and between villages and surrounding rural areas in the formulation of integrated action plans to define the role of the village and fully develop the potential of villages and surrounding areas. ■ Use the natural resources in the north of Ireland's rural areas to create new employment opportunities and develop the rural economy through supporting local village initiatives to preserve and upgrade their rural heritage.
*NI Countryside Management Scheme	This scheme aims to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, enhance the landscape and mitigate climate change.
*Countryside Management Scheme	This scheme aims to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, enhance the landscape and mitigate climate change.

Title of Grant Available to Farmers	Brief Description of Purpose/Objective of Grant
*Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme	This scheme aims to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, enhance the landscape and mitigate climate change.
*Organic Farming Scheme	The Scheme provides payments to help farmers with the additional costs and loss of income that occurs during the conversion period to organic production. It aims to help protect and enhance the rural environment, and help producers meet consumer demand for organic produce.
*Habitat Improvement Scheme	Participants receive funding to manage areas on their farm to create, protect or enhance wildlife habitats.
*Countryside Access Scheme	Participants receive funding to maintain walkways on their land.
European Fisheries Fund (Aquaculture Measure)	To support the construction, extension, equipping and modernisation of aquaculture production installations, in particular with a view to improving working conditions, hygiene, human or animal health and product quality, while reducing negative impacts or enhancing positive effects on the environment.
Biomass Processing Challenge Fund	To support the purchase of a range of technologies and approaches that improve business efficiency and sustainability at farm level, utilising cost effective and sustainable methods of processing agricultural wastes and other appropriate biomass material to generate renewable energy primarily to aid agricultural production.
Woodland Grant Scheme; Farm Woodland Premium Scheme ; and Short Rotation Coppice Scheme.	Grant aid to farmers and other landowners for creation of new woodland.
Woodland Environments Grant	Grant assistance to support woodlands owners to encourage the management of woodlands to contribute to biodiversity objectives.
Sustainable Forest Operations Grant	To encourage good management of existing woodlands.
Replanting Grant	Grant assistance to support replanting of existing woodland after clearfelling.

* These agri-environment schemes are funded under Measure 2.2 of the NIRDP 2007 – 2013 and are not open to applications, however existing participants in these schemes claim funding annually.

Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has implemented the action in the Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan which states that Departments must explore the implementation of domestic violence workplace policies with private and public sector employers; and if her Department will meet the target implementation date of December 2011.
(AQW 2434/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: An NICS wide Workplace Policy for Domestic Violence and Abuse is in place and covers employees in all Government Departments. The “Tackling Violence at Home Strategy” launched

jointly by DHSSPS and NIO in 2005 is a cross-departmental strategy that targets all victims of Domestic Violence. The strategy and associated action plans were developed through inter departmental collaboration along with working in close partnership with other statutory agencies and non-governmental organisations. As the operational arm of the strategy, Local Domestic Violence Partnerships (LDVPs) have been at the forefront in delivering on actions with regards to workplace policy initiatives and have lead responsibility on exploring the implementation of domestic violence workplace policies with private and public sector employers.

The strategy which was due to end in September 2010 has been extended to June 2013.

Agriculture Greenhouse Gas Reduction Framework and Action Plan

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Agriculture Greenhouse Gas Reduction Framework and Action Plan.

(AQW 2512/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has been developing an Agriculture and Forestry Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Framework in partnership with the GHG Stakeholder Group. The Framework will include farmer based case studies to show how existing farm practices that improve efficiency can also help reduce GHGs. The work is at an advanced stage and the Stakeholder Group will be considering a revised draft of the Framework document at its next meeting. A communication plan on how to effectively launch the framework has also been developed.

This Greenhouse Gas Reduction Framework, implemented with the voluntary co-operation of industry, will play an important part in ensuring we have a sustainable agri-food sector and when the framework is agreed with stakeholders I will ensure it is made available to the ARD Committee.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Library Opening Hours

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given that children are one of the largest groups of library users and that the consultation process is not open to people under 16 years old, for her assessment of whether the current public consultation process on the reduction of library opening hours is in breach of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Northern Ireland Act 1998 on the basis of age discrimination.

(AQW 2277/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The draft Equality Impact Assessment carried out as part of the Libraries NI consultation on opening hours identifies that children and young people under 16 make extensive use of libraries and that they are likely to be affected if their local library reduces opening hours.

Accordingly Libraries NI have developed a strategy to ensure participation by children in the consultation, in line with consultation best practice. This will include a separate (child-friendly) questionnaire. Libraries NI also intend to hold a number of engagement groups to which children will be invited.

Libraries NI have undertaken to amend their online consultation site to make it clearer how children can contribute in the consultation process.

Capital Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the projects that have received capital funding from her Department in each of the last five years including the funding for each project broken down by (i) art works; (ii) arts centre, including performing art centres; and (iii) art production, including performing art productions .

(AQW 2291/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Projects that have received capital funding from my Department, through the Arts Council, in each of the last five years are detailed in the attached annexes. The information is broken down as follows:

- (i) Annex A – artworks (including public art); and
- (ii) Annex B – art centres, including performing art centres.

Performing art productions do not receive capital funding.

Annex A

ART WORKS (INCLUDING PUBLIC ART)

Finance Year	Type	Organization Name	Grant Amount (£)
2010-2011	Public Art	Western Health & Social Care Trust	11,500
2010-2011	Public Art	Craigavon Borough Council	37,500
2010-2011	Public Art	Craigavon Borough Council	37,500
2010-2011	Public Art	Mourne Heritage Trust	25,000
2010-2011	Public Art	Down District Council	41,892
2010-2011	Public Art	Coleraine Borough Council	49,824
Total			203,216
2009-2010	Public Art	Sticky Fingers Early Years Arts	50,000
2009-2010	Public Art	Moyle District Council	25,000
2009-2010	Public Art	Mute Meadow	750,000
Total			825,000

Annex B

ARTS CENTRES, INCLUDING PERFORMING ART CENTRES

Finance Year	Type	Organization Name	Grant Amount (£)
2010-2011	Building	Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich	503,000
Total			503,000
2009-2010	Building	Maydown Ebrington (Waterside Theatre)	353,000
2009-2010	Building	The Lyric Theatre	150,000
2009-2010	Building	Belvoir Players Amateur Dramatic Society	82,230
2009-2010	Building	Castle Hill Development, Dungannon	500,000
2009-2010	Building	Antrim - Redevelopment of Old Courthouse	480,407
2009-2010	Building	Conway Mill Preservation Trust Ltd	79,843
2009-2010	Building	Mossley Mill Civic Arts Centre	371,309
2009-2010	Building	Down Arts Centre	600,510
2009-2010	Building	Newcastle Glees Musical Society	80,424

Finance Year	Type	Organization Name	Grant Amount (£)
2009-2010	Building	Antrim – Castle Gardens Integrated Arts Provision	236,862
2009-2010	Building	Oh Yeah Music Centre	90,000
2009-2010	Building	Ormeau Avenue Gallery	17,524
2009-2010	Building	U3A Foyle	181,435
2009-2010	Building	Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich	308,508
2009-2010	Building	Playhouse (North West Play Resource Centre)	140,000
Total			3,672,052
2008-2009	Building	Playhouse (North West Play Resource Centre)	216,000
Total			216,000
2007-2008	Building	The Lyric	9,380,000
2007-2008	Building	Crescent Arts Centre	4,500,000
2007-2008	Building	Playhouse (North West Play Resource Centre)	416,000
2007-2008	Building	An Gaelaras	483,000
2007-2008	Building	Waterside	837,000
2007-2008	Building	Verbal Arts Centre	45,000
2007-2008	Building	The Nerve Centre	1,000,000
Total			16,661,000
2006-2007	Building	Gasyard Development Trust	328,000
Total			328,000
2005-2006	Building	The Metropolitan Arts Centre	10,760,000
Total			10,760,000

Child Participation in Culture and Sport

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of cuts to funding, what action her Department intends to take to encourage and ensure child participation in culture and sport.

(AQW 2362/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department and its associated Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) continues to support a number of programmes and initiatives that promote and encourage the participation of children in culture and sport.

For example:-

- The 'Sport Matters' NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019 has specific targets to encourage the participation of children and young people in sports and leisure activities e.g. to provide every child in over the age of 8 years with the opportunity to participate in at least two hours per week of extra-curricular sport and physical recreation; and by 2019 every pre-school child will experience quality play opportunities either at home and/or through formal play groups, leading to early development of physical literacy skills;

- DCAL 2012 Games Legacy Unit provides financial support to the Young Ambassadors project – this recruits young people to be ambassadors, working in their schools and communities to champion sport and the values of the Olympic and Paralympic Games;
- Arts Council NI supports a number of Youth Arts organisations and programmes (e.g. Youth Action NI, Replay Theatre Company and Drake Music Project) ensuring its funding contributes to increasing the participation of young people in the arts as audiences, performers and creators and promotes the development of skills training and development initiatives;
- Libraries NI provides access to culture through their core activities of lending books and other items to children. In addition a number of programmes, such as Bookstart, are aimed at encouraging children to develop their literacy skills; and
- National Museums NI (NMNI) provide a wide range of programmes across its sites to appeal to a broad audience of children and families to encourage children to explore, engage and enjoy the national collections.

Furthermore, PRONI; Foras na Gaelige; Ulster-Scots Agency; W5; Armagh Planetarium and Observatory also provide a number of programmes and schemes to encourage and ensure child participation in culture.

Ministerial Drivers

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) when her Ministerial Driver first took up employment as a driver for Executive Ministers; (ii) the total amount of expenses and other related payments claimed by her driver since May 2011; and (iii) whether her driver was a civil service appointment or a political party appointment.

(AQW 2403/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has no involvement in the recruitment or other employment arrangements for my driver as he is not a civil service employee.

Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department has implemented the action in the Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan which states that Departments must explore the implementation of domestic violence workplace policies with private and public sector employers; and if her Department will meet the target implementation date of December 2011.

(AQW 2435/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Although my Department was not a signatory to the Tackling Violence at Home Strategy and Action Plans, we fully support the Strategy's aims of adopting a consistent and long-term approach to the prevention of domestic violence and an effective response where it occurs.

My Department implements the NICS Workplace Policy for Domestic Violence and Abuse which provides advice to Departments, line managers and individuals on how to deal with domestic violence situations when they arise.

Arts Educational Capital Projects

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what consideration has been giving to jointly funding arts educational capital projects with the Department for Employment and Learning.

(AQW 2448/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are no proposals with either department at present so no projects are currently being considered. All funding is fully committed for the current budget period so it is unlikely that any such proposals would be funded if they did come forward at this time.

The only previous consideration for joint funding involving my Department and the Department for Employment and Learning for arts educational projects was a Cathedral Quarter arts centre proposal. The preliminary investigations into the proposal were not taken forward.

Ulster-Scots Cultural Events

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how she plans to promote Ulster-Scots cultural events during her time in office.

(AQW 2474/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The two main organisations funded by my Department that are involved in the promotion of Ulster-Scots heritage and culture are the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Ministerial Advisory Group which is currently developing the Ulster-Scots Academy approach.

The Ulster-Scots Agency's statutory remit is specified in the legislation (The North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (NI) Order 1999) and has responsibility for the promotion of Ulster-Scots language and culture. Using its approved budget of £3.3m the Agency funds projects and programmes which promote Ulster-Scots culture and heritage activities. I have arranged to meet with the Chief Executive of the Agency to discuss its remit and responsibilities.

The work of the Ministerial Advisory Group which is currently developing the Ulster- Scots Academy approach includes three work strands- one of which is Heritage and Culture. Under this strand there are a number of projects currently under way and further projects are being identified which will contribute to the promotion of Ulster- Scots heritage.

Funding is also available from departmental mainstream programmes for projects which may have an Ulster-Scots language, heritage or culture dimension, which cannot be separated from the primary funding objectives.

I have stated my intention to bring forward a strategy for Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.

Grants for Re-Imaging in Working Class Areas

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants are available from her Department for re-imaging in working class areas.

(AQW 2481/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are currently no grants available for re-imaging. However, Arts Council has applied for Peace III funding to enable the Re-imaging Communities Programme to continue.

Northern Ireland/Scottish Cultural Events

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether Northern Ireland/Scottish cultural events with no Republic of Ireland involvement are not eligible to receive funding from the Ulster-Scots Agency; and if so, to outline the reasons for this.

(AQW 2504/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Agency has an agreed protocol in place which allows it to fund activity and travel outside the island of Ireland.

The Agency has funded Ulster-Scots cultural events which have not had any element of involvement in the South of Ireland.

The Ulster-Scots Agency's budget is made up of 75% of funding from the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and 25% from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Agency's Board comprises eight members – four from the North and four from the South of Ireland. The Board assesses and determines funding applications made to the Agency.

Library Opening Hours

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what is the consultation period on the proposed reduction in the opening hours of libraries.

(AQW 2546/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The consultation period on the proposed reduction in the opening hours of libraries started on 12 September 2011 and runs until 2 December 2011.

Odyssey Trust Company Limited

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the control mechanisms for the Odyssey Trust Company which were set out in the 1998 funding agreement with her Department.

(AQW 2551/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The control mechanisms for the OTC set out in the 1998 funding agreement with the Department are summarised at Annex A.

Annex A

Summary of Provisions from the Funding Agreement of 21 December 1998 between the Department of Education and OTC.

- i Prohibits borrowing in connection with the Project or the Project Assets without the Department's consent other than a specified overdraft facility;
- ii. Prohibits creating any Encumbrances on any of its interest in any of its assets or revenues other than certain specified securities;
- iii. Prohibits any sale, transfer, lease, or other disposal of any or all of its interest in any of the Project Assets without the consent of the Department;
- iv. Provides that the Company shall set admission charges for the Science Centre and Arena and ancillary public amenity areas to meet reasonable costs of operating, maintaining and repairing such areas;
- v Provides that the Company shall procure that all trustees, directors, members and employees of the Company are persons with suitable experience and qualifications and who demonstrate no conflicts between their own interests and those of the Company;
- vi. Requires the Company to procure that none of its Trustees, directors, employees or service providers are paid salaries, fees or emoluments which exceed reasonable and proper open market and arm's length commercial rates;
- vii. Requires the Company to apply rental payment towards operation, maintenance and enhancement of the public good areas of the Project;
- viii. Requires the Company to promptly notify the Department if an Event of Default or a Potential Event of Default occurs;
- ix. Requires that if at the expiry of any period of three consecutive months the sums standing to the credit of the Reserve Fund exceed £10m, and have exceeded £10m for such three months period the Company shall if the Department decides to pay such proportion of the excess as determined by the Department;
- x Requires that the Company opens and maintains a bank account which may not be changed unless the Department agrees;
- xi. Requires the Company to send the Department quarterly bank statements in respect of the account and any other information related to the account as the Department may require;
- xii. Requires the Company to establish and maintain Internal Audit arrangements and provide assurance to the Department;
- xiii. Provides a right for the Department to nominate a person to attend Board meetings of the Company as an observer;

- xiv. Prohibits the Company from altering its Memorandum and Articles of Association without the prior written consent of the Department;
- xv. Provides that DCAL approval is required for the Company to incur expenditure on property and assets exceeding £200,000 in the aggregate and to acquire assets or property not immediately required for the purposes of the project or its expansion;
- xvi. Requires the Company to provide DCAL with audited financial statements prepared on a true and fair basis and sent to DCAL within six months of the year end;
- xvii. Provides for the Company, if required, to deliver to the Department a copy of the OTC auditor's advice concerning the adequacy of internal controls and systems;
- xviii. Provides for OTC to furnish, if required, the Department with copies of cashflow and forecasts and documentation of the financial viability of OTC;
- xix. Provides that access is granted to the books and documents of OTC by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Odyssey Trust Company Limited

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much public money the Odyssey Trust Company Limited has received to date for the provision of the science centre, W5 Ltd; and how much it is scheduled to receive during this budgetary period.

(AQW 2553/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Odyssey Trust Company (OTC) Limited is a charity and an independent company limited by guarantee.

The following table shows the money received to date by the OTC for the provision of the Science Centre, W5 Ltd. The Budget figure for 2011/12 of £604,000 can be considered as fixed with further adjustments only possible through the normal procedure of in-year monitoring rounds.

W5 Year Ended	DCAL Total
Year 1: 31 March 02	300,000
Year 2: 31 March 03	313,497
Year 3: 31 March 04	483,079
Year 4: 31 March 05	675,000
Year 5: 31 March 06	450,000
Year 6: 31 March 07	450,000
Year 7: 31 March 08	150,000
Year 8: 31 March 09	800,000
Year 9: 31 March 10	900,000
Year 10: 31 March 11	1,000,000
Total	5,521,576

The figures for the subsequent three years are not confirmed as they are indicative at this stage.

Ulster Orchestra

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much grant aid her Department has provided to the Ulster Orchestra in each of the last three years; and to detail the number of public performances given by the Orchestra during that period when the public were charged an admission fee.

(AQW 2581/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Ulster Orchestra has received the following funding from my Department through the Arts Council in the financial years between 2008 and 2011:

Finance Year	Grant Amount
2010-2011	£2,246,670.00
2009-2010	£2,150,113.00
2008-2009	£2,136,973.00

You should note that these figures include Lottery funding of £34,950, £100,000 and £86,860 respectively.

The Ulster Orchestra performed 159 concerts in the 3 financial years from 2008/09 to 2010/11 where the public were charged an admission. This excludes all BBC concerts, education concerts and community concerts where no admission was charged.

Odyssey Trust Company Limited

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the adequacy of the detail contained in the Odyssey Trust Company Limited Annual Accounts for the 2010/11 financial year, including how the establishment costs of £3 million per annum and miscellaneous and sundry expenses of £100,000 per month arose.

(AQW 2595/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I refer to your question asked to the Minister for Social Development which has been passed to me for reply.

I would refer you to my response to AQW 1859/11-15 at Annex A.

Annex A

The Odyssey Trust Company (OTC) Limited is a charity and an independent company limited by guarantee. The OTC therefore publishes annual accounts in line with company law and under charities regulations. These accounts are independently audited and available from company registry.

OTC has no ongoing reliance on public money other than the money for the provision of the science centre, W5 Ltd.

As with any other charitable organisation, those responsible for OTC are duty bound to ensure that they operate efficiently and effectively within the framework of its Memorandum and Articles, and in full accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Gaelic Games

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an estimate of the average number of people who attend Gaelic Games on a weekly basis at (i) County level; and (ii) club level.

(AQW 2613/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Neither my Department nor Sport NI routinely estimates the average number of people who attend Gaelic Games on a weekly basis either at County or club level. This is a matter for the governing body of the sport, the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 1976/11-15, whether her Special Adviser is in receipt of a salary and under which salary band her Special Adviser is being paid.

(AQW 2635/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The salary of DCAL's Special Adviser has yet to be finalised.

Salmon Fishing

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the announcement made by her predecessor on the 11 February 2009, which stated that departmental officials would be 'tasked to come up with a suite of robust and effective measures which will make a significant contribution in the drive to conserve salmon' and that the Department would consult 'on new measures before implementing final changes to the way we fish for salmon, both in rivers and commercially in the sea around Northern Ireland'.

(AQW 2682/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL Fisheries Staff working with Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute staff (AFBI) at the Bushmills Salmon Station, have undertaken long-term research into the ecology and population dynamics of wild Atlantic salmon.

This long term research is necessary for the Department to develop and implement robust and effective measures required to support the conservation of wild salmon stocks. The policy development process has been progressing since the announcement made by my predecessor in February 2009, and is now at an advanced stage.

The Department will consult all stakeholders on any new measures on fishing for salmon in the DCAL jurisdiction.

Fish Stock Levels

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the fish stock levels in each of the last three years, in each index river under her Department's jurisdiction.

(AQW 2684/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Table 1. Juvenile salmon (0+ summer) abundance indices (no. 5mins-1) for monitored rivers in the DCAL area of UK (N. Ireland) for 2008-10.

River	2008	2009	2010
Bush	5.2	3.9	6.3
Blackwater	9.8	6.3	3.9
Main	5.7	4.7	3.4
Glendun	4.2	7.1	6.9
Shimna	0.8	1.7	1.6

TABLE 2. ADULT SALMON COUNTS FOR MONITORED RIVERS IN THE DCAL AREA OF UK (N. IRELAND) FOR 2008-10.

River	2008	2009	2010
Bush	1712	726	1045
Blackwater	n/a	n/a	n/a
Main ¹	548	333	296
Glendun	127	41	84
Shimna	n/a	n/a	96

1 The River Main counter represents a partial count.

Table 3. Salmon ova deposition estimates (Million ova) for monitored rivers in the DCAL area of UK (N. Ireland) for 2008-10.

River	2008	2009	2010
Bush	2.4	1.4	1.3
Blackwater	n/a	n/a	n/a
Main	4.6	1.9	1.7
Glendun	0.4	0.1	0.3
Shimna ²	0.1	0.1	0.2

2 Estimates for 2008 & 2009 produced from rod catch data.

TABLE 4. PERCENTAGE COMPLIANCE WITH CONSERVATION LIMITS FOR MONITORED RIVERS IN THE DCAL AREA OF UK (N. IRELAND) 2008-2010.

River	2008	2009	2010
Bush	103	66	56
Blackwater	n/a	n/a	n/a
Main	170	68	61
Glendun	96	33	64
Shimna	40	12	76

Salmon Nets, Netting Operations and Fishing Engines off the North Coast

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail which MLAs, or former MLAs, have made representation to her Department for the retention of salmon nets, netting operations and fishing engines off the North Coast, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2685/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The following (i) MLAs and (ii) former MLAs have made representations in the last three years to my Department for the retention of salmon nets, netting operations and fishing engines off the North Coast:

- (i) Daithí McKay MLA;
- (ii) Ian Paisley Junior and Declan O'Loan.

Salmon Nets, Netting Operations and Fishing Engines off the North Coast

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to provide details of the representations made to her Department by MLAs, or former MLAs, in relation to operators of salmon nets, netting operations and fishing engines off the North Coast, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2686/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The following MLAs and former MLAs have made representations in the last three years to my Department in relation to operators of salmon nets, netting operations and fishing engines off the North Coast:

- Danny Kinahan MLA – AQW 635/11;
- Daithí McKay MLA – meeting on 1 December 2008, AQW 784/09 and AQW 1194/09;
- Ian Paisley Junior – meeting on 1 December 2008;
- Declan O'Loan – meeting on 1 December 2008.

Ministerial Statements

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many (i) statements she has made to the Assembly; and (ii) of her answers to Members' questions have had to be corrected because of errors in her original statements or answers.

(AQW 2702/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have made four statements to the Assembly and issued clarification in relation to a response I gave to a Member's question.

Waterways Ireland

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many people are employed in Northern Ireland by Waterways Ireland.

(AQW 2723/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Waterways Ireland employs 97 people in the North (as at 3 October 2011). This is comprised of 87 permanent employees, 4 student placements employed on one year fixed term contracts and 6 agency workers.

Department of Education

Certificate in Religious Education

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has to make the Certificate in Religious Education more accessible to Protestant teachers, given that their main method of obtaining the certificate is through a 24-month correspondence course at the University of Glasgow and fees are set to increase to £800 next year.

(AQW 2343/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Certificate in Religious Education is a mandatory requirement of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) for all those seeking appointment to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school here.

All student teachers and those teachers who have already qualified without the Certificate in Religious Education have several options open to them to acquire the Certificate. St Mary's University College and the University of Ulster are the local awarding bodies for the Certificate for their students whilst Stranmillis University College has established a partnership arrangement with the University of Glasgow which enables its students to acquire the Certificate through a part-time, distance learning route.

As well as having access to the University of Glasgow course, any student or qualified teacher can also avail of the opportunity to acquire the Certificate from the Iona Retreat Centre in Derry or through a Life-light Home Study Course.

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) provides additional funding to Stranmillis University College to enable students, who so wish, to undertake the Certificate in Religious Education course through any of the available providers. Students are reimbursed by the College up to £480 (the current University of Glasgow rate for the course) on submission of receipts and evidence of progress.

It is understood that the University of Glasgow has not yet published its fees for the 2012/13 academic year and so there is no evidence to indicate that these are to rise to £800. DEL will keep its funding allocations to the College under review in light of demand for the course and available resources.

My Department is currently engaged in a review to assess the impact of the requirement of a religious certificate on current and future recruitment opportunities in the teaching sector, including any course accessibility issues. It is anticipated the review will be finalised in 2011 and its outcome will be shared with the Education Committee.

Certificate of Religious Education

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education (i) whether he intends to hold discussions with the maintained sector to address the disparity in employing Protestant teachers without the necessity of obtaining a Certificate of Religious Education; and (ii) if this cannot be agreed, whether he would consider reducing the funding to the maintained sector on the basis that it falls short on equality ethos **(AQW 2380/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: It is a requirement of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) that all those appointed to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school should hold a recognised Certificate of Religious Education. All student teachers, regardless of their religious background, are able to access a course of study leading to the award of the certificate. I refer the Member to my answers to his questions AQW 1701/11-15 and AQW 1757/11-15 which were published in the Official Report on 16 September 2011.

The responsibility for equality legislation rests with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and therefore the exemption of teacher recruitment from the provisions of the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 is not a matter for the Department of Education.

I do not intend to hold discussions with the maintained sector on this matter nor do I intend to reduce the funding to the maintained sector on the basis that it falls short on equality ethos.

Integrated Education

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education whether he intends to issue a framework for increasing provision of integrated education, given that there is only one integrated school in North Antrim and it was 86 percent oversubscribed this year. **(AQW 2386/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education which I take very seriously.

However, as I outlined to the Assembly on 26 September, in future, any proposals for new schools will be founded in an area plan developed by all sectors. An important aspect of area plans will be that determining the need for particular provision, including integrated education, should be consistent with the overall plans for the area within which they are situated. Consequently, I will not be issuing a separate framework for increasing the provision of integrated education in North Antrim.

Children from Ethnic Minority Backgrounds: GCSE's

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to detail the proportion of children from ethnic minority backgrounds who achieved five or more GCSE Grades A* - C in each of the last five years. **(AQW 2402/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The answer is contained in the table below.

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS FROM MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS⁽¹⁾ ACHIEVING AT LEAST 5 GCSES A*-C 2005/06 TO 2009/10

	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Minority Ethnic Groups	189	67.0	194	64.0	217	70.2	235	71.2	257	72.6
Northern Ireland Average	16,394	64.2	16,049	64.7	16,107	66.9	16,323	70.1	16,404	71.9

1 Minority Ethnic Groups includes Travellers.

Source: School Leavers Survey

Catholic Teachers Employed in Controlled Schools

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many Catholic teachers are currently employed in Controlled schools, broken down by (i) nursery; (ii) primary; and (iii) post-primary schools.

(AQW 2418/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 56/11-15, tabled by David McIlveen MLA and published in the Official Report on 27 May 2011.

Certificate of Religious Education

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to end the Certificate of Religious Education.

(AQW 2480/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Certificate in Religious Education is a mandatory requirement of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) for all those seeking appointment to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school here.

Access to the Certificate is available to all student teachers via various routes and the onus is on students to acquire the Certificate if they wish to seek employment in a Catholic maintained nursery or primary school.

My Department is currently undertaking a review of employment opportunities for teaching staff. The purpose of the review is to assess the impact of the requirement for a religious certificate and make recommendations to promote equality of opportunity for all teachers. It is anticipated that this review will be finalised in 2011 and its outcome shared with the Education Committee.

Capital Investment

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education what plans he has for capital investment in schools which are over-subscribed as a result of their performance and achievements, but have an enrolment number of less than 105 pupils for primary schools and 500 pupils for post-primary schools.

(AQW 2497/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As I outlined in my statement to the Assembly on Monday 26 September, I must be certain that we are investing our resources in the right schools. I have asked the managing authorities to conduct a viability audit to be submitted before the end of the year which will identify those schools facing significant viability issues and include proposals to protect the education of the pupils enrolled in those schools. In addition, I have commissioned the Education and Library Boards, working with CCMS and actively engaging with other sectors, to co-ordinate a strategic planning exercise based on each Board area to shape the future pattern of education delivery.

Any proposals for future capital investment must be founded in area plans agreed by the sectors and approved by my Department. These plans will be based on the Sustainable School Policy, the aim of which is to ensure that we have a network of viable and sustainable schools.

I will not comment on any specific school or type and size of school in advance of this work being completed.

Educational Attainment

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the improvement in educational attainment in the last five years.

(AQW 2548/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There has been improvement in educational attainment in the last 5 years. In 2006, 53% of school leavers achieved at least five good GCSEs including GCSE Maths, English and, for those in

Irish-medium settings, Gaelige. By 2010, this improved to 59%, which equates to almost 3,000 more young people achieving at this level.

In primary schools the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in Key Stage 2 Communication in English has increased from 78% in 2005/06 to 81.4% in 2009/10. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in Key Stage 2 Maths has increased from 80% in 2005/06 to 82.5% in 2009/10.

However, while overall levels of attainment have improved, we remain average by OECD standards and have too many young people leaving school not having achieved the expected level in literacy and numeracy and lacking the skills and qualifications they need for future employment.

I am continuing to implement a range of policies aimed at improving educational outcomes for all our young people, which include the school improvement policy, Count, read: succeed, the revised curriculum and entitlement framework, the ending of academic selection and work to finalise and put in place the SEN and Early Years Strategies. I intend to intensify the pace of implementation and delivery of these policies to ensure the needs of all our young people are to the fore and that progress in raising standards is accelerated.

Cambridge House Grammar School, Ballymena

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education, to detail for the 2011/12 academic year, the number of (i) children who applied for a place at Cambridge House Grammar School, Ballymena; and (ii) pupils enrolled.

(AQW 2578/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board has indicated that 211 pupils applied for a place in Year 8 at Cambridge House Grammar School for September 2011 and 140 pupils were admitted.

The number of pupils who applied for a place in Year 13 was 164 and of these 89 were admitted, including 8 pupils from other schools.

The total number of pupils enrolled across all year groups at Cambridge House Grammar School as at 28 September 2011 is 9791.

Number of Pupils

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) pupils; and (ii) teachers in each (a) primary school; and (b) post-primary school in the Western Education and Library Board area, broken down by education sector.

(AQW 2607/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested has been placed in the Assembly library. It relates to the 2010-11 school year. Information for the 2011/12 school year is not yet available.

Movilla High School, Newtownards

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Education when he will inform Movilla High School, Newtownards, if its request to temporarily change its pupil number from 900 to 600 has been granted.

(AQW 2657/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department received a letter from the South Eastern Education and Library Board on 27 September 2011 supporting Movilla High School in a request that their admission and enrolment numbers be temporarily reduced. This is currently under consideration and the Department will reply to the Board and school as soon as possible and by no later than 18 October.

1 This figure is correct as at 28 September 2011 and does not include statemented pupils.

Schools Closures in the Western Education and Library Board

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools which have closed in the Western Education and Library Board area in each of the last five years, in the (a) maintained; (b) controlled; and (c) integrated sector.

(AQW 2659/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There have been 6 school closures in the Western Education and Library Board in the past 5 years, none of which were in the integrated sector. The schools concerned and the year in which they closed were as follows:

School	Sector	Date of Closure
2006		
Stragowna PS	Controlled	31/8/2006
2007		
St Josephs High School, Plumbridge	Maintained	01/09/2007
2008		
Trillick PS	Controlled	31/08/2008
Shanmullagh PS	Controlled	31/08/2008
2009		
St Patricks PS Garvallah	Maintained	31/08/2009
St Columbas PS Curley	Maintained	31/08/2009

There were no school closures in the Western Education and Library Board in 2010.

Academic Selection

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 2219/11-15, to detail the way in which each school has used academic selection 'to prevent young people from accessing' them.

(AQW 2706/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The schools listed in my answer to AQW 2219/11-15 use an academic criterion as their first criterion to select applicants when they are oversubscribed. Applicants are successful and unsuccessful according to their performance against this criterion. As outlined in the previous answer, that performance may be influenced by a number of factors and so self-evidently prevents some young people from gaining admission to a school that practises it.

My emphasis on young people's access being denied by academic selection is not an observation of how it mechanically functions as an admissions criterion. In the respect that it determines successful and unsuccessful applications, an academic admissions criterion is like any other admissions criteria. My emphasis on access denied is based on the characteristics of intakes in schools that currently determine their admissions chiefly by academic criteria. In the school year 2010/11, 7% of the grammar school pupil population was entitled to free school meals, whilst 26% of the secondary school pupil population was entitled to free school meals. These facts suggest that academic selection works as an effective criterion for selection based on socio-economic group. In that way it denies access to young people in a manner that is distinct from the effect of other admissions criteria.

Irish Medium School and Pre-School Units

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list all the new Irish medium school and pre-school units which have been approved in the last four years.

(AQW 2726/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In the last four years (2008 – present) there have been 7 Irish medium schools, 2 Irish medium units and 9 Irish medium nursery units approved. As listed below:

Irish Medium Schools

- Bunscoil Ui Chléirigh (Dungannon)
- Gaelscoil Na Daroige (Derry)
- Gaelscoil an tSeancha (Magherafelt)
- Gaelscoil Choin Ri Uladh (Ballymena)
- Gaelscoil na mBeann (Kilkeel)
- Gaelscoil Leim an Mhadaidh (Limavady)
- Gaelscoil Aodhua Rua (Dungannon)

Irish Medium Units

- IM Unit at St Joseph's Grammar School (Donaghmore)
- IM Unit at St Malachy's High School (Castlewellan)

Irish Medium Nursery Units

- Scoil an Droichid (Belfast)
- IM Nursery Unit at Christian Brothers' Primary School (Armagh)
- Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir (Derry)
- Bunscoil an tSleibhe Dhuibh (Belfast)
- Gaelscoil Ui Neill (Coalisland)
- Gaelscoil Ui Dhocartaigh (Strabane)
- Gaelscoil na gCrann (Omagh)
- Gaelscoil an Chaistil (Ballycastle)
- Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain (Belfast)

Schools: Key Stages 4 and 5

Mr Murphy asked the Minister of Education what progress is being made in increasing the choice of subjects for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 pupils.

(AQO 460/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As I set out in my recent statement to the Assembly on putting pupils first, I am fully determined to press ahead with the introduction of the Entitlement Framework in 2013. The Framework is a key measure in ensuring that young people can access a choice of courses that meet their needs, interests and career aspirations. The Entitlement Framework places a statutory obligation on schools to guarantee all pupils access to at least 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and 27 courses post-16. It is about quality and coherence of provision which meets the needs of our young people and properly prepares them for life and work in the 21st century.

I am pleased to report good progress since 2007/08 when only 47 post-primary schools were offering 24 or more courses at Key Stage 4, and 19 were offering 27 or more courses at post-16. Now 131 schools are offering 24 or more courses at Key Stage 4, and 59 schools are offering 27 or more courses post-16. Of these, 105 and 42 schools respectively include the breadth required by ensuring that one third of these courses are general and one third applied.

I have responded to those seeking certainty about the Entitlement Framework and will be commencing the legislation to take effect from September 2013. To further support schools in meeting their statutory obligations, I am also introducing a phased implementation of the full Entitlement Framework, specifying a slightly lower minimum course requirement of 18 and 21 courses from 2013, rising to the full minimum requirement of 24 and 27 courses by 2015.

Sustainable Schools

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Education how he plans to enforce the Sustainable Schools policy. (AQO 465/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I highlighted in my statement to the Assembly last Monday, that there was a need to quicken the pace of implementation of the Sustainable Schools policy. I have therefore commissioned a viability audit to examine enrolments, standards and the financial sustainability of schools. This is to identify those schools that are currently facing significant challenges and determine what actions are required going forward.

I have also asked the Education and Library Boards and CCMS, in consultation with other sectors, to commence collective strategic planning based on Board areas. I have set a challenging timeframe for process as it is essential that we move quickly to identify the education provision required to meet the needs of all pupils.

Schools: Closure

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Education how many schools with a significant maintenance backlog are earmarked for closure. (AQO 469/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There is no list of schools earmarked for closure. School managing authorities assess the long-term viability of schools against a range of criteria set out in the Sustainable Schools Policy. This process identifies those schools that cannot offer the required quality of education.

Any recommendation to close a school involves the publication of a statutory Development Proposal. This allows all interested parties to make their views known before a decision is taken.

The maintenance backlog at a school is not a factor taken into account in determining its potential for closure. It is, however, taken into account when determining the priority of expenditure on items requiring maintenance, refurbishment or replacement within the schools' estate.

School Construction and Pupil Numbers

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the total cost of each of the last five (a) primary schools; and (b) post-primary schools constructed by his Department; and (ii) the current number of pupils in each school. (AQW 2879/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The tables below detail the costs of the five most recently constructed primary schools and post primary schools. Enrolment numbers are officially verified in January 2012.

Type of Procurement	School Name	Total Construction Cost ⁽¹⁾	Current Enrolment Pupil Numbers ⁽²⁾
Primary Schools			
Conventional	Lisnagelvin PS, L'Derry	£5.5m	541
Conventional	Lisbellaw PS, Enniskillen	£2.5m	219
Conventional	St Patrick's & St Brigid's PS, Ballycastle	£4.0m	356
Public Private Partnership (PPP)	St Joseph's PS, Carryduff	£4.1m	430
Conventional	Whitehouse PS, Newtownabbey	£3.9m	410

Type of Procurement	School Name	Total Construction Cost ⁽¹⁾	Current Enrolment Pupil Numbers ⁽²⁾
Post Primary Schools			
Conventional	Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch	£15.3m	877
Public Private Partnership (PPP)	Our Lady & St Patrick's College, Knock	£18.3m	1,285
Public Private Partnership (PPP)	St Patrick's Grammar School, Downpatrick	£12.2m	683
Public Private Partnership (PPP)	St Mary's College, L'Derry	£15.9m	863
Public Private Partnership (PPP)	St Cecilia's College, L'Derry	£16.8m	871

(1) This cost excludes professional fees, furniture & equipment and site purchase (where applicable).

(2) Current enrolment numbers will be officially verified in January 2012.

Early Years Strategy

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Early Years (0-6) Strategy.
(AQO 461/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Departmental officials are currently considering the responses to the consultation on the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy. Almost 2,000 have been received and it is taking longer than expected to examine these.

I intend to publish the Strategy as soon as possible. However, it is important that the views raised in the consultation are fully considered before establishing the way forward. We will also need to ensure that the revised Strategy takes account of the most up to date position in relation to the Programme for Government and other key policies.

Integrated Schools

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education whether he would support a target of having 20 percent of pupils in integrated schools by 2020.
(AQO 467/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education. I take that duty very seriously.

I also recognise that parental choice is central to the selection of schools for children. As such I would not consider it appropriate to prescribe targets for the development of integrated education, or any other sector.

In future any proposals for new schools will be founded in an area plan drawn up by all sectors to ensure that we are investing our resources in the right schools.

Notwithstanding this, I do, of course recognise the vital and valuable contribution that the integrated sector, together with all sectors of education, makes to building a peaceful and stable future for our children.

Shared Education: Fermanagh

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the shared education programme in Fermanagh and how it has contributed to cross-community relations in schools.

(AQO 468/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Fermanagh Trust Sharing in Education Programme is funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and, in line with the Fund's policy, any queries in relation to this programme should be directed to the Chair of the Fund.

My Department will, however, examine the final evaluation report once this has been published by the Fund.

Irish Language Education

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to promote Irish language education.

(AQO 470/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish medium education which it takes very seriously. One of the ways it does this is by funding Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta which has as an objective the promotion of Irish medium education.

My Department has facilitated the development of the Irish medium sector to the extent that there are now over 3800 pupils being educated through the Irish language. We will continue to support the sector, within the context of area based plans which are agreed by all sectors and approved by the Department as outlined in my statement to the Assembly on 26 September.

Irish medium education is and will continue to be embedded in the core work of my Department.

Department for Employment and Learning

Efficiency Savings

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department intends to meet increased efficiency savings, which may involve looking at staffing options, while meeting his objective that front-line services will not be affected.

(AQW 2167/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): To deliver these increased efficiency savings, the department has initiated the development of a Business Improvement Programme, which will include the examination of how the same level and quality of frontline services can be delivered at a lower cost.

Steps to Work and Steps Ahead Programmes

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what provision is available for people with a learning disability who wish to participate in the programmes (i) Steps to Work; or (ii) Steps Ahead.

(AQW 2175/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) Steps to Work is available to all those seeking work whether on benefits or not. While there is no specific provision within the programme for people with learning disabilities there are several strands which provide additional assistance to those who are particularly disadvantaged in their search for work. These include:
 - Help with any identified **Essential Skills** need/s. This offers participants the opportunity to undertake an essential skills qualification in literacy and/or numeracy. During this strand participants will also undertake work experience.

- **Enhanced Support.** This provides intensive one-to-one support to specific participants who without it would be unable or unlikely to move into work. Each participant is assigned a Mentor to help identify and address any barriers that prevent them from finding work or staying in work.
 - **Confidence/Motivational Building Provision.** This module of the programme is designed to help participants who have been out of the labour market for some time and are lacking the self confidence and/or motivation to actively look for work. It aims to boost self esteem and develop enthusiasm, helping create the positive attitude to work valued by employers.
 - Access to a job during participation on the **Employer Subsidy.** The main aim of the Employer Subsidy is to help improve the participant's chances of finding permanent employment by offering a period of subsidised work.
- (ii) The Step Ahead initiative is a 26 week temporary waged employment strand within the Steps to Work programme. This offers a paid job within the Voluntary/Community Sector for those who have been on benefits for 30 months or more. People who avail of Step Ahead may also have access to a Mentor.
- (iii) For people with a learning disability looking for employment, the Disability Employment Service (DES) has a number of programmes and services to help them:
- **Workable (NI)** - long term support to assist disabled people carry out the duties of a particular job, assistance can include a job coach, disability awareness to employers, or other development costs. Support is individually assessed and delivered by external providers.
 - **Access to Work (NI)** - individually assessed long term or one-off support to help a disabled person carry out their job. Assistance includes; Travel to Work, support worker and specialist equipment.
 - **Residential Training** - formal training for disabled people in a residential setting, to meet the needs of trainees unable to progress in mainstream training environments.
 - **Condition Management Programme** - delivered by Health Service professionals this programme assists people with a range of health conditions to manage their health condition/illness and be better prepared to enter the world of work or appropriate provision
 - **Occupational Psychology Services** assessment service enables people with disabilities to have a comprehensive employment assessment to gain guidance on suitable employment and support needs.

Note-Takers for Students Who are Unable to Attend Lectures or Classes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many note-takers are available for students who are unable to attend lectures or classes in each (i) Further Education College; and (ii) Higher Education Institution.

(AQW 2207/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is committed to widening access to further and higher education for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

(i) Further Education

The Department provides the six Further Education Colleges with £1.5m per annum through the Additional Support Fund, to help meet the additional costs associated with provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Through this funding, Colleges provide electronic note-takers, audio note-takers, dictaphones and pen-casts (Livescribe), as required. Colleges do not retain a specific pool of note takers, such services are secured on a demand led basis.

(ii) Higher Education

The Department provides funding, through Disabled Students Allowances, to help students pay for the extra costs they may incur when studying their higher education course, as a direct result of a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. The allowances can help with the cost of a non-medical personal helper including a note taker, items of specialist equipment, travel and other course related costs. In the 2010/11 financial year my Department paid approximately £3.134m in Disabled Student Allowance awards.

Through Disabled Student Allowances, my Department also provides funding for the administration and delivery of a Register of Support Providers in each of the two Northern Ireland Universities. These are registers of freelance professional and non-professional support workers who are recruited and trained to assist students with disabilities.

At present, Queen's University has 127 trained note takers available to support students. The University of Ulster has approximately 100 note takers available and is currently undertaking a recruitment exercise. However, there may be an unknown degree of duplication as note-takers may be on both registers.

St Mary's University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many Protestants applied to attend St Mary's University College in each of the last four years; and how many were accepted.

(AQW 2282/11-15)

Dr Farry: In common with practice at other Higher Education institutions, students applying to St Mary's University College Belfast are not asked for their religious background. As it is not known how many members of the Protestant community applied to the College, it is not possible to state how many of these were accepted.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, for each of the last five years, how many students attending Further Education Colleges were in receipt of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), broken down by the level of EMA received and the constituency in which they lived.

(AQW 2323/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise that in each of the last five academic years the number of students who have received Education Maintenance Allowance in Further Education Colleges broken down by the level of Education Maintenance Allowance received is set out in the table overleaf. I must also advise that data is not available in the constituency format requested.

Academic year	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
£30	5,810	5,970	6480	7,630	7,360
£20	540	500	620	670	670
£10	380	460	410	450	440
Total	6,730	6,930	7,510	8,750	8,470

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many pupils have received an Education Maintenance Allowance in each of the last five years, broken down by the (i) level of the Allowance; and (ii) constituency.

(AQW 2334/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise that (i) the total number of school pupils who have received Education Maintenance Allowance broken down by the level of allowance in the last five academic years is set out in the table below; (ii) Data is not available in the constituency format requested.

Academic Year	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
£30	10,060	9,880	10,380	11,830	13,700
£20	1,250	1,250	1,290	1,440	1,530
£10	1,150	1,150	1,070	1,090	1,230
Total	12,460	12,280	12,740	14,360	16,460

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of whether the Education Maintenance Allowance has resulted in better qualifications for young people from disadvantaged areas who received the allowance.

(AQW 2335/11-15)

Dr Farry: The main purpose of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme is to enable young people from lower income backgrounds to remain in post-compulsory education at school or college with the key objectives of raising participation and retention rates in the eligible group. It also aims to encourage young people to fulfil their educational potential and encourage them to achieve qualifications.

Since improving participation and retention rates have always been the key objectives of the scheme, with the attainment of qualifications being a positive outcome, there are currently no mechanisms in place to specifically track the qualifications achieved by students in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance.

However, student survey findings from the recent review of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme in Northern Ireland indicated that learners felt their engagement with learning had increased since receiving Education Maintenance Allowance. Just over a half of learners agreed or strongly agreed that Education Maintenance Allowance had a positive impact on their attendance and time-keeping. This finding was supported by the Education Maintenance Allowance co-ordinators survey and, of course, actual records of attendance in the schools and Further Education colleges.

Following the recent review, it is intended that my Department and the Department of Education will jointly present options for the future of the Education Maintenance Scheme to the Executive in the autumn and this will be followed by a public consultation. I can confirm that, as part of this consultation, consideration will be given to the feasibility of developing a specific mechanism to track the qualifications attained by students in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance.

Students from England, Scotland and Wales

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students from (i) England; (ii) Scotland; and (iii) Wales have studied at universities in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2369/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of student enrolments at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions from England, Scotland and Wales in each of the last five years is detailed below:

Academic year	England	Scotland	Wales
2005/06	835	185	40
2006/07	735	120	40

Academic year	England	Scotland	Wales
2007/08	835	130	45
2008/09	1,025	140	55
2009/10	1,045	150	50

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- (1) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2009/10.
- (3) The figures in the table above are for all years and levels of study.

St Mary's University College, Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the report on the future sustainability of St Mary's University College, Belfast.

(AQW 2382/11-15)

Dr Farry: The College forwarded a copy of the report to the Department and I understand that the Governing Body has considered the report and the responses to the public consultation that it conducted on it. I further understand that the Governing Body has approved the report and accepted the majority of its recommendations. The College has produced a draft institutional plan based on the report which was agreed by the Governing Body in June. I believe that the plan will be publicly launched next month.

I hope to meet with St Mary's shortly and to discuss this and other issues.

Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department has implemented the action in the Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan which states that Departments must explore the implementation of domestic violence workplace policies with private and public sector employers; and if his Department will meet the target implementation date of December 2011.

(AQW 2436/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning has met its obligations under the action in the Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan by adhering to the NI Civil Service (NICS) guidance on Domestic Violence and Abuse, which was issued in 2006 and is included in the NICS Human Resources Handbook. The policy applies to all staff and includes guidance for line managers in dealing with staff who may be victims of domestic violence as well as providing information on the help and support available to victims. The Department of Finance and Personnel has an overarching responsibility for maintaining the policy.

The Local Domestic Violence Partnerships and the Prevention & Support sub-group are directly responsible for the other outcomes from this action, including employer engagement with private and public sector organisations.

Arts Educational Capital Projects

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consideration has been giving to jointly funding arts educational capital projects with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

(AQW 2449/11-15)

Dr Farry: There has been substantial investment in further and higher education capital projects in recent years. Currently however there are no joint proposals being considered with DCAL for my

Department, all funding is fully committed for the current budget period which makes it unlikely that any new proposals could be funded.

The only previous consideration for joint funding between my Department and the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure for arts educational projects was a Cathedral Quarter arts centre proposal, in 2004, involving the then Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education. After preliminary assessments, this proposal was not taken forward.

St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he would explore additional collaboration between St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College, Belfast.
(AQW 2469/11-15)

Dr Farry: Both St. Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College are independent bodies and they are both colleges of Queen's University of Belfast.

Both already collaborate on a number of initiatives. An example of this is the collaboration on issues such as Diversity and Mutual Understanding (DMU). St Mary's and Stranmillis have developed the DMU program to become an integral aspect of study for all students studying on Bachelor of Education and PGCE pathways. Members of academic staff from both Colleges provide a range of activities and workshops at a variety of locations including both college campuses. Students are encouraged to engage in discussion and establish ways of coping with issues such as identity, diversity and prejudice within the classroom environment.

Greater collaboration between the Colleges is primarily a matter for the Governing Bodies of both Colleges. However, I am due to meet with members of the Governing Body and senior staff of St Mary's in the near future and the issue of greater collaboration may be discussed.

University of Ulster

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an estimate of the numbers of additional places that will be provided by the University of Ulster at the (i) Magee; and (ii) Coleraine campuses in the next academic year.
(AQW 2471/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of student places at each campus is a matter for the University. You are aware that the Executive has made available a total of £3m to finance additional student places. Work is ongoing to determine the number of additional Higher Education places that can be financed from the very limited resources available. Final decisions have yet to be taken on the number of places to be funded and their allocation across the Higher Education providers in Northern Ireland.

University Drop-out Rates

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the student drop-out rate in each of the last five years for (i) Queen's University Belfast; (ii) the University of Ulster, Jordanstown; (iii) the University of Ulster, Coleraine; (iv) the University of Ulster, Magee; (v) South Eastern Regional College; and (vi) the remaining Further Education Colleges.
(AQW 2485/11-15)

Dr Farry: Data on drop out rates for Higher Education Institutions are only available for undergraduate entrants who fail to return to Higher Education in the following academic year. In terms of reporting information on drop out rates in Higher Education, the Department concentrates on full-time first degree entrants.

Therefore, the drop out rates for full-time first degree entrants to (i) Queen's University Belfast; (ii) the University of Ulster, Jordanstown; (iii) the University of Ulster, Coleraine; and (iv) the University of Ulster, Magee in each of the last four years (these data are only available from the Department for the 4 years 2005/06 to 2008/09), are detailed in the following table:

Institution	Year of Entry			
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
QUB	7.5%	6.3%	7.1%	7.7%
UU – Jordanstown	15.0%	12.6%	13.3%	10.5%
UU - Coleraine	14.7%	11.0%	13.4%	8.9%
UU - Magee	16.9%	12.9%	13.1%	10.5%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- 1 Data on drop out rates for Higher Education Institutions are obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Agency's Performance Indicators data.
- 2 The latest available data are for 2008/09 entrants failing to continue in Higher Education in 2009/10.
- 3 The data measure those full-time first degree entrants who fail to continue in Higher Education in a particular academic year after entry in the previous academic year.

Drop out statistics from the Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges are calculated as the proportion of enrolments coded as 'withdrawn' from the College Statistical Returns, which are set out in the table below for (v) South Eastern Regional College; and (vi) the remaining Further Education Colleges for each of the last 5 years for which data are available:

Further Education College	Academic Year				
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Belfast Metropolitan College	17.1%	12.4%	13.1%	16.0%	15.7%
Northern Regional College	12.7%	16.0%	14.9%	15.3%	18.1%
South Eastern Regional College	13.9%	12.8%	11.5%	7.5%	8.7%
Southern Regional College	12.6%	9.1%	7.8%	7.7%	9.1%
South West Regional College	12.3%	11.5%	12.0%	12.7%	8.2%
North West Regional College	11.2%	12.9%	11.1%	12.5%	14.4%

Source: Further Education Leavers Survey (FELS)

Notes:

- 1 The data above only relate to enrolments on DEL funded recurrent grant provision on professional and technical courses and therefore exclude courses such as Government Training, Cost Recovery and Vocational Enhancement Programme/Entitlement Framework enrolments.
- 2 The data are presented in the context of the 6 college model in place since 2007/08 with College data mapped accordingly prior to this.
- 3 Latest available validated full-year data pertains to the 2009/10 academic year.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he is taking to ensure that participants in the Give and Take Scheme, and similar pre-vocational training schemes, qualify for the Education Maintenance Allowance.

(AQW 2532/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is important to clarify that there is a means tested and also a non-means tested Education Maintenance Allowance which have very different target audiences.

The means-tested Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme was jointly introduced in September 2004 by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and the Department of Education (DE). The main purpose of the scheme is to enable young people from lower income backgrounds to remain in post-compulsory education at school or college with the express purpose of raising participation, retention and achievement rates in the eligible group; and addressing the well-established cyclical link between low attainment and low income.

Following a recent review of the means-tested scheme, DEL and DE will consider options for its future. It is intended that options will be presented to the Executive in the autumn and this will be followed by a public consultation. Any proposals to change the current provision of the scheme will also be subject to the appropriate equality considerations.

The non means tested EMA was established in 2008 under the provisions of the Employment and Training Act (Northern Ireland) 1950 and applies exclusively to unwaged trainees on the Training for Success Programme. When put in place this EMA scheme formed part of a package of financial incentives directed at young people undertaking specifically structured training of a minimum of 30 hours per week and leading to recognised professional and technical qualifications. The legislative basis for this EMA package is tied inextricably to UK wide Social Security and Child Benefit legislation and cannot apply to programmes such as the Give and Take scheme which is funded through the ESF or to other pre-vocational training not provided by DEL under the Act.

The issue has also been raised during the Pathways to Success consultation on those young people Not in Education, training or Employment (NEET).

It will be considered, along with a range of issues arising from the responses to the consultation, as the Department leads the development of a cross Departmental strategy to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training

Agency Workers Directive

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether, under the proposed Agency Workers Directive, after twelve weeks of employment an agency worker will receive the same pay as a fellow non-agency employee who is working in an identical post, regardless of the fees retained by the agency. **(AQW 2561/11-15)**

Dr Farry: One of the key elements in the transposition of the Directive will be the inclusion of a 12-week qualifying period before the equal treatment provisions of the Directive will apply. However, once this 12-week period has elapsed, an agency worker will be entitled to the same basic working and employment conditions, as if they had been recruited directly to that post.

These basic working and employment conditions will include the level of a worker's pay, regardless of the fees retained by the employment agency.

One exception to the availability of equal treatment in respect of pay after twelve weeks is under a permanent contract of employment and payment between assignments ('the Swedish Derogation'). This provision allows an employment agency to offer an agency worker a permanent contract of employment, and pay the Agency Worker between assignments (i.e. when they are not working). This means that after twelve weeks in a given job, the agency worker will not be entitled to the same pay as if they had been recruited directly. However, they will be entitled to receive a guaranteed minimum level of pay during any period when they are not working.

All agency workers, including those covered by the Swedish Derogation, are entitled to other new provisions under the Regulations. In particular, equal treatment in relation to the duration of working time, night work, rest periods and rest breaks, and annual leave after twelve weeks.

Teacher Training: PGCE Courses

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he has had any discussions with the Minister of Education regarding the possible introduction of a cap on PGCE course places to reflect the number of teaching posts that are available each year due to the retirement of teachers.

(AQO 447/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of both BEd and PGCE places at Northern Ireland Higher Education institutions is a matter for the Minister for Education. No meetings have taken place on this subject to date, however, correspondence has been exchanged and it is a firm agenda item for my forthcoming meeting when I expect to discuss it with the Minister.

Belfast Metropolitan College: Ballymacarrett

Mr Douglas asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he can confirm that the Belfast Metropolitan College will continue its outreach work in East Belfast and, in particular, within the Ballymacarrett area when the new Skainos Project is completed.

(AQO 448/11-15)

Dr Farry: Belfast Metropolitan College has informed me that it remains committed to outreach work in East Belfast including when the Skainos Project is completed. In addition it is currently developing new provision for the area and, in particular, with the Skainos Project.

The exciting development of BMC in the Titanic Quarter will enhance significantly the breadth of learning opportunities for all of Belfast including East Belfast.

Unemployment: Ballymoney

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to tackle unemployment in the Ballymoney area during this Assembly term.

(AQO 449/11-15)

Dr Farry: My staff in Ballymoney Jobs and Benefits Office continue to work with employers to assist with their recruitment, training and development needs.

Ballymoney Jobs and Benefits Office are currently working in partnership with Loughgiel Community Association to host a Job Fair and Advice Forum in The Millennium Centre, Lough Road, Loughgiel on 12th October. Previously events were held in Moyle in November 2010 and Ballymoney in March 2011.

The Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) is an initiative designed to help unemployed people with a common employability barrier to employment. The majority of LEMIS clients have barriers such as . homelessness, a history of drug/alcohol misuse or are ex-prisoners or offenders. This service is offered on behalf of the Department, by community employment organisations on an outreach basis within the Ballymoney District Council area.

My officials are also working closely with InvestNI to deliver a new initiative, the Short Term Employment Scheme (STES). This collaborative work aims to ensure that those most disadvantaged in the labour market are able to take advantage of the jobs that are created through a range of new schemes.

Universities: Researcher Development Framework

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much has been spent by universities on training days for postgraduate research students since they were introduced by the last Westminster Government under the Research Development Framework.

(AQO 450/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department recognises the importance of investing in postgraduate opportunities and in academic year 2010/11, provided funding of more than £27 million to support the student and institutional costs of 795 students. A portion of each postgraduate award is specifically targeted at

the enhancement of the student's transferable skills, which are critical to the development of world-class researchers. Funding in respect of generic skills training for postgraduate researchers was first made available by my Department to Queen's and the University of Ulster in April 2004. In total, since 2004, our universities have spent almost £3.5 million in direct costs through their formal provision of Generic and Research Skills Training, which all postgraduate research students undertake in addition to the training normally provided as integral to their PhD. This sum does not include costs for faculty based training or training delivered by administrative and library staff involved in induction and ongoing support for specialised subjects.

In addition, in support of the researcher development agenda, my Department has endorsed the Researcher Development Framework which was launched in September 2010. This new approach provides a common framework for researchers and research institutes throughout the United Kingdom.

It does not directly allocate money to our universities but is rather a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers in higher education.

This framework underpins researcher training and development in the United Kingdom, enhancing our capability to develop world-class researchers and realise their potential for all sectors of the economy and society.

Higher Education: Additional Places

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when he will provide details to the Assembly on the allocation of additional student places in the Higher Education sector.

(AQO 451/11-15)

Dr Farry: The recent agreement reached on the level of tuition fees in Northern Ireland will allow for a modest increase in the number of additional student places in the Higher Education sector. My Department now has available to it a total of £3m to fund additional places across all Higher Education providers. The additional places will be phased in and will first be available in the 2012/13 academic year which commences on 1 August 2012. Work is continuing with the providers on this issue and the actual number of additional places and their distribution among the providers will be announced as soon as is practicable.

Any additional student places which are allocated to providers will only be in subject areas of economic relevance.

Stranmillis University College

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the condition of the buildings at Stranmillis University College, Belfast.

(AQO 452/11-15)

Dr Farry: I was able to visit the Stranmillis site very recently to view the estate first hand. I saw how funding provided by my Department in the last comprehensive spending review period was deployed. I also saw how the proposed funding of £1.6m is to be deployed in the current spending period to 2015. The College reported in its Business Case to support the proposed merger that it required around £9m to address backlog maintenance on the estate and for work on its Henry Garrett building.

I saw clear evidence of this maintenance backlog and of the need for significant additional capital investment at Stranmillis.

My capital budget is not sufficient to provide the level of investment required. However, if the proposed merger with Queen's University proceeds, the University will assume responsibility for the backlog maintenance and invest an initial £7m in the estate. This will result in an investment of £16m in Stranmillis by Queen's from its own resources.

Further Education: Funding

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he can give any assurances on the continuation of funding for further education colleges and on courses remaining at current levels.
(AQO 453/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Further Education sector cannot be fully protected from reductions in public expenditure given the budgetary pressures faced by my Department.

Maintaining capacity and protecting student facing services in Further Education is a priority. Capacity and enrolment targets however beyond the current academic year remain subject to negotiation through the College Development Planning process.

The Further Education budget settlement for 2011/12 was announced on 14 April 2011. It reflects the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and sees the block grant allocation to the 6 Further Education Colleges reduce from £148.2 million in 2010/11 academic year to £143 million in 2011/12. The settlement however aims to protect the capacity across the FE sector with no impact on front line delivery in 2011/12. This has been achieved through the delivery of efficiencies and agreement of enrolment targets with all colleges through detailed bilateral negotiations.

Enrolments for both Further Education provision up to and including level 3, and Higher Education delivered in FE Colleges, are protected at current 2010/11 levels. For Essential Skills, the settlement resources an additional 814 enrolments, increasing the target to almost 25,500 enrolments in 2011/12.

This demonstrates my Department's commitment to the Further Education sector and their critical role in the continuing recovery of our economy in equipping individuals and employers with skills to become more competitive.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what measures he will take to ensure that the Education Maintenance Allowance is retained and to outline any plans he has to improve the scheme.
(AQO 454/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am committed to the retention of the Education Maintenance Allowance Scheme. It is clear, however, that the funding needs to be better targeted. Findings from the joint review of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme in Northern Ireland by my Department and the Department of Education highlighted that the scheme is not as economically efficient as it could be because a majority of Education Maintenance Allowance students indicated that they would have remained in education even if they had not received Education Maintenance Allowance.

However, in some cases it makes a real difference. I am determined that young people from lower income families, for whom these allowances make a real difference, continue to be assisted to stay in education and training. I would, however, agree with the Employment and Learning Committee's recommendation that the allowances could be better targeted. I am also conscious of the very difficult budgetary position currently facing my Department.

I can advise that my Department and the Department of Education have recently established a joint project team which will consider options for the future of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme.

Following approval by myself and my ministerial colleague in the Department of Education, it is intended that options for the future of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme will be presented to the Executive in the autumn and this will be followed by a public consultation. I am committed to completing this process as soon as practically possible.

Any proposals to change the current provision of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme in Northern Ireland will also be subject to the appropriate equality considerations.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the review of the Education Maintenance Allowance.

(AQO 455/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise that my Department and the Department of Education have recently established a joint project team which will consider options for the future of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme.

Following approval by me and my ministerial colleague in the Department of Education, it is intended that options for the future of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme will be presented to the Executive in the autumn and this will be followed by a public consultation. I am committed to completing this process as soon as practically possible.

Any proposals to change the current provision of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme in Northern Ireland will also be subject to the appropriate equality considerations.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Units in the Rowan Tree Centre, Pomeroy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) whether her Department gives approval to, or through, Cookstown Enterprise Centre before units in the Rowan Tree Centre, Pomeroy are rented out to businesses; (ii) whether her Department ensures that the proposed uses of the centre are compliant with the pertaining planning permission; and (iii) whether any businesses are currently utilising units for office purposes in contravention of any planning permission prohibiting office use.

(AQW 2158/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):

- (i). All business tenant applications at the Rowan Tree Centre are considered for approval by my Department to ensure they comply with the conditions of funding in the DETI letter of offer. The outcome of this assessment is notified to the workspace promoter (to date, through Cookstown Enterprise Centre in its capacity as Managing Agent for the facility).
- (ii). It is the responsibility of Pomeroy Development Projects Ltd as owners of the facility, in conjunction with prospective business tenants, to ensure that any proposed use of the centre complies with existing planning permissions.
- (iii). Judgement on, and enforcement of planning permission is the responsibility of Planning Service, a function within the Department of the Environment.

Directors and Non-Executive Directors of Mutual Energy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment who determines who will serve as directors and non-executive directors of Mutual Energy and their remuneration.

(AQW 2159/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Mutual Energy Limited is a private company and details relating to its appointment of directors and their remuneration are contained in the company's Articles of Association and Annual Reports.

Directors of Mutual Energy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the total remuneration packages paid annually to directors of Mutual Energy since it came into existence.

(AQW 2160/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Mutual Energy is a private company and, as such, the information requested is not held by DETI.

DiscoverIreland Website

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what efforts have been made to market tourist attractions in County (i) Antrim; (ii) Fermanagh; (iii) Derry; (iv) Armagh; (v) Down; and (vi) Tyrone on the DiscoverIreland website.

(AQW 2210/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There is a dedicated section on each of these counties on Tourism Ireland's suite of 42 international websites – www.discoverireland.com – containing up to date information on upcoming events and festivals, key attractions in the county, accommodation listings and special offers, in addition to an interactive map of each county. Tyrone, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Antrim and Down are also included in Tourism Ireland's set of "Go" films and are used extensively as part of promotional campaigns in key overseas markets. The "Go" series of films is an evolving project, with films being added over a number of years and Armagh is on the agenda for future productions.

DiscoverIreland Website

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the average daily number of hits on the (i) discovernorthernireland.com; (ii) discoverireland.ie; and (iii) discoverireland.com websites.

(AQW 2211/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) In 2010/2011 the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com received 2.5 million visitors. This equates to a daily average of 6,897 visitors.
- (ii) In 2010 Tourism Ireland's suite of 42 international websites - www.discoverireland.com - attracted almost 12 million unique visitors. There are approximately 31,500 visits to discoverireland.com each day.
- (iii) The new Failte Ireland site, www.discoverireland.ie, was launched in June 2011. To date the site has received over 1 million visitors with an average of 8,500 per day.

Ballycastle and Rathlin Island

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what Tourism Ireland has done to market (i) Ballycastle; and (ii) Rathlin Island in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2212/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Over the last 3 years Tourism Ireland has featured the Causeway Coast including key locations such as Ballycastle and Rathlin Island as part of its extensive global marketing programme.

Information on Ballycastle and Rathlin Island is available on the discoverireland.com website.

Events such as the Auld Lammas Fair are also featured in Tourism Ireland's ezines and newsletters which are sent out regularly to top travel trade, media contacts and to consumers overseas.

In partnership with NITB, Tourism Ireland has arranged for overseas travel and lifestyle media to visit a range of attractions in Co Antrim, including Ballycastle and Rathlin Island.

Ballycastle and Rathlin Island

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans (i) the Tourist Board; and (ii) Tourism Ireland have to market (a) Ballycastle; and (b) Rathlin Island over the next three years.

(AQW 2214/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Rathlin Island has been highlighted as part of the NITB campaign which runs both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Causeway Coast will be a central feature of Tourism Ireland's "NI2012" global promotional campaign, to coincide with a number of events and celebrations taking place throughout Northern Ireland, including the opening of the Giants Causeway Visitor Centre. Tourism Ireland features the Causeway Coast - including Ballycastle and Rathlin Island - as part of its extensive marketing programme.

Land Owned By Invest NI

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she will review the policy on land owned by Invest NI which is being sought either for purchase or long-term lease by companies offering to open new stores in areas of high unemployment.

(AQW 2236/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI land is held exclusively in support of approved economic development projects brought forward by qualifying businesses.

These businesses have a strong focus on export markets and are in the manufacturing and tradeable services sectors. Invest NI will prioritise its limited resources on these sectors.

Sectors such as retail, which have Northern Ireland as their principal market place, do not fall within the agency's remit.

Food Production Industries

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to expand food production industries.

(AQW 2287/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The food and food and drinks processing industry in Northern Ireland is very important to our economy, generating significant external sales and employment. In 2010 the industry continued to make the biggest contribution to Northern Ireland's manufacturing sector accounting for 23.8% of total manufacturing sales, an increase of 1.9%. Turnover also increased from £3.4billion in 2009 to £3.7billion in 2010 representing a growth of 8.3% with £2.4billion sales external to Northern Ireland. Employment levels and average wages and salaries also increased.

As the economic development and policy department, DETI, through Invest Northern Ireland, recognises the importance of this sector and continues to support growth in the industry through financial investment and non-financial support. Between 1st April 2010 and the 31st March 2011 Invest NI offered £8.2m of assistance to companies within the food and drinks sector, contributing towards £62m of investment commitments within the local economy. Last year I also launched the Short Term Employment Scheme in response to the economic downturn and specifically prioritised the food processing sector within that scheme to offer support for generating additional employment in the sector. Support through this scheme is ongoing.

Collaboration across government departments is essential in supporting this industry, and alongside my department DETI, DARD and DEL also have a role to play in developing the industry. Additional capital support is available to the industry through the Processing & Marketing Grant Scheme which is administered by DARD. It is a well known scheme within the food and drinks sector and my Department through Invest NI promotes this scheme to client companies, appraises project applications and monitors business performance after approval. We are currently working alongside DARD on over 70 project applications received in May of this year.

Strategically the development of the industry is directed by the 'Focus on Food' strategy developed and agreed by DETI/Invest NI, DARD, DEL and the Industry Advisory Panel. 'Focus on Food' provides a shared vision for a thriving, successful and sustainable food industry in Northern Ireland. The strategy recognises the importance of innovation, skills development and export markets to the future success

of the agri-food sector. These points are consistent with the key themes identified within the developing NI Economic Strategy.

In March 2010, I together with the former DARD Minister agreed the findings of a review of the delivery structures under 'Focus on Food' including the recommendation for the appointment of an independent Chair to a newly established Food Strategy Board. I and the current DARD Minister have agreed the terms for this appointment and arrangements for recruitment to this post are well underway. In addition to the Chair the new Food Strategy Board will consist of six industry members representing both primary producers and processors, and six government officials. One of the roles of this new Food Strategy Board will be to refresh the current 'Focus on Food' strategy, developing a longer-term five-year vision for the industry, both on the primary side which DARD is responsible for and on the processing side which my Department is responsible for.

In summary I am committed to working with the industry and other Government departments to continue to support and develop this important sector, which has a key role to play in strengthening Northern Ireland's economy.

Energy Strategy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the authority for devising and implementing an energy strategy lies with her Department or the utility regulator; and for her assessment of how satisfactory this arrangement is.

(AQW 2301/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Energy policy is the responsibility of DETI. The Utility Regulator is responsible for regulation of the energy industries. However, delivery of strategic energy policy demands partnership between all relevant bodies including the Utility Regulator and Consumer Council, as well as those in industry and the wider energy sector.

Common Arrangements for Gas Consultation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the proposal detailed in the Common Arrangements for Gas consultation that responsibility for the costs of the unused IC2 pipeline should be shared; and whether she can give an assurance that this position will not arise.

(AQW 2302/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The consultation by the Republic of Ireland's Commission for Energy Regulation on Regulatory Treatment of the Bord Gáis Éireann Interconnectors with Great Britain was not part of Common Arrangements for Gas (CAG) policy consultation and the cost of maintaining them is not part of the CAG project.

Fracking

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what chemicals are used in the process of fracking.

(AQW 2318/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The composition of fracturing fluids used depends on the geological conditions. The main constituents are water and proppant (sand) but chemical additives may be used to improve the performance of the fracturing operation and subsequent gas flow by cleaning the casing perforations, inhibiting the growth of bacteria, altering the fluid viscosity and preventing precipitation of chemical compounds. In Northern Ireland, Tamboran Resources have stated their intention not to use any chemicals additives in their fracturing fluids.

Fracking

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what financial assistance her Department provides to companies which are involved in fracking.

(AQW 2319/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not provide any financial assistance to companies involved in fracking.

Fracking

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what qualifications or licences do companies need before they can undertake fracking.

(AQW 2320/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In order to undertake hydraulic fracturing a company would need to hold, or to be working under contract to a company that holds, a petroleum licence. The petroleum licensee must obtain approval from DETI to carry out their drilling operations, which would be dependent on the company obtaining all other permissions needed, including those from Planning Service, NIEA and HSENI. When submitting a drilling application the petroleum licensee must also nominate an Operator, to be approved by DETI, who should have the qualifications and experience appropriate to the proposed operations, as should any contractors or sub-contractors employed by the licensee.

Firmus Energy

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of how effective regulation of the gas industry can result in Firmus Energy operating two tariffs for their gas, depending on the geographic location of the customer.

(AQW 2328/11-15)

Mrs Foster: firmus energy supplies gas within two separate licensed areas in Northern Ireland and has priced their product according to the different nature of these two gas markets.

In the '10 towns' licensed area which includes Londonderry, Limavady, Coleraine, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Antrim, Craigavon, Banbridge, Armagh, and Newry, firmus energy currently holds exclusive rights to develop a new gas market. In this area, oil represents the company's main competition and its gas tariffs are subject to scrutiny by the Utility Regulator to ensure that they are fair and reasonable.

firmus energy is a recent entrant to the more mature 'Greater Belfast and Larne' gas market in which Phoenix Supply is the incumbent gas supplier. firmus' final gas tariffs in this area are not regulated, as the need to be competitive against the regulated tariffs of Phoenix effectively sets the company's prices.

MTV Europe Music Awards Event in Belfast

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much revenue the MTV Europe Music Awards event in Belfast is expected to generate.

(AQW 2353/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is forecast that hosting the 2011 MTV Europe Music Awards (EMAs) will generate £10m to the local economy.

In addition, it is estimated that worldwide media coverage of the EMAs will generate £10m worth of PR.

The Awards will attract approximately 20,000 visitors with 25% coming from outside Northern Ireland and bring significant economic, social and tourism benefits to Northern Ireland in the longer term.

Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has implemented the action in the Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan which states that Departments must explore the implementation of domestic violence workplace policies with private and public sector employers; and if her Department will meet the target implementation date of December 2011.

(AQW 2437/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is not a member of the Inter-Departmental Group tasked with implementing the Action Plan.

Infastrata PLC and eCORP Oil and Gas UK Ltd

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to provide further details of the work programme of Infastrata PLC and eCORP Oil and Gas UK Ltd in years one and two, as outlined in the licence PL1/10.

(AQW 2459/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The work programme for years one and two of PL1/10 is to:

- i) Acquire, re-process and interpret 32km of existing 2D seismic reflection data.
- ii) Acquire, process and interpret 250km of new 2D seismic reflection data.
- iii) Carry out regional studies to include seismic mapping of source rocks, facies mapping of reservoir rocks, petroleum system modelling including structural development of identified leads.
- iv) Review the unconventional gas potential of the licence area.
- v) Review options for development and integration with infrastructure.

The primary objective is to identify conventional Permo-Triassic oil and gas targets similar to those hosting the Morecambe gasfields.

Marketing of the North Coast

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether any work is being undertaken with Donegal County Council or the Irish Government to develop joined-up marketing of the north coast and to ensure that we can benefit from the tourists who visit Donegal each year.

(AQW 2477/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Under the tourism theme of the Interreg IVA programme, DETI is providing support of £1.0m (€1.1m) towards the £6.6m (€7.4m) Sail West programme, with a further £3.5m (€4m) to support the £7.3m (€8.2m) Gobbins/Slieve League project. Both of these projects involve Donegal County Council as a lead partner.

The Sail West project will see the joint marketing of the marine tourism offering across the west coast of Scotland, the north west of Northern Ireland and the northern coast of the Republic of Ireland.

A joint marketing plan for the Gobbins/Slieve League project will include arrangements to bring to market these iconic coastal attractions in Counties Antrim and Donegal. It is envisaged that Gobbins and Slieve League will act both as significant visitor attractions in their own right and as new anchor points to a coastal touring route designed to attract more visitors to Northern Ireland.

Tourism Ireland continues to promote Northern Ireland overseas as part of its extensive global destination marketing programme. Tourism Ireland works closely with the Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau (DVCB).

Fuel Poverty

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she has taken to encourage the home heating oil industry to support people in fuel poverty, such as the introduction of 'pay as you go' cards.

(AQW 2615/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI does not have a statutory remit for the oil supply chain. However, I am alert to concerns about the cost of home heating oil, especially for those on low incomes and would support advice from the oil industry that consumers shop around for oil prices.

Budgeting options are available using pre-payment methods, such as PayPoint through 500 outlets across Northern Ireland, direct debit, stamps or individual distributor schemes. I would encourage consumers to ask their local supplier what credit terms or pre-payment methods are on offer to ensure a regular supply of oil is always available.

Corporation Tax

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that a delay in the lowering of Northern Ireland's Corporation Tax rate could have on our ability to attract inward investment and new business start-ups.

(AQO 435/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The biggest impact of any delay in lowering corporation tax will be on attracting Foreign Direct Investment, FDI.

The recent report produced by my Economic Advisory Group highlights the positive impact of corporation tax on FDI and the wider economy, and this can be used to gauge the costs of any delay in devolving corporation tax to Northern Ireland.

My Department will shortly complete research that sets out the extra FDI we might have attracted, in the past, had lower corporation tax been available.

While issues around the timetable for devolving Corporation Tax varying powers, pre-announcement, phasing and also the loss of Regional Aid are all related issues, nevertheless, these research reports should offer Members a good indication of the cost of any undue delay.

InvestNI Land Bank in the Foyle Constituency

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the current status of the InvestNI Land Bank in the Foyle constituency, including any reserves, the number of sites and their value.

(AQW 2653/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's land is held in support of economic development projects brought forward by qualifying businesses with an approved business case and immediate property need.

Within the Foyle Constituency the agency holds approximately 414 acres across 6 business parks. Whilst a significant proportion of this has been developed and is occupied by businesses there remains approximately 104 acres available to qualifying businesses.

Invest NI employs a long term strategy in respect of its land holding and does not hold land in reserve.

The table attached at Annex A provides information in respect of Invest NI's land holding, the amount of available land and its valuation broken down by industrial estate.

Annex A

Industrial Estate	Land Holding (Acres)	Land Availability (Acres)	Valuation (£) as at 31 March 2011*
Campsie	244.52	61	3,360,000
Skeoge	75.18	32.4	3,170,000
Maydown	66.34	11.07	1,007,500
Springtown	26.23	0	N/A
Lenamore	0.92	0	N/A
Culmore	0.69	0	N/A
Total	413.88	104.47	7,537,500

* An asset valuation exercise on all Invest NI property is undertaken by DFP Land and Property Services (LPS) on an annual basis. Indicative per acre valuations are also undertaken by LPS which reflect the restrictive covenants contained within the 999 year lease offered by Invest NI.

Broadband Services in the Mayobridge and Saval areas of Co.Down

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of broadband services in the Mayobridge and Saval areas of Co.Down; and whether she has any plans to improve the service.

(AQW 2709/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The telecoms market is fully privatised and independently regulated. My assessment is based on the impact of investments made by my department. It may be the case that the private sector has made other investments that I am not aware of which impact on services in this area.

Due to an investment made by my department, since December 2005 broadband services with download speeds of at least 512kilobits per second (Kbps) have been available across all of Northern Ireland including in the Mayobridge and Saval areas of County Down. These services are delivered by a range of local, national and international suppliers using a number of technologies.

In December 2009, DETI embarked on the Next Generation Broadband Project which will bring higher speed broadband services to at least 85% of businesses across NI. This Programme for Government project has a business focus. However wholesale arrangements set down under the contract mean that other service providers can use the BT infrastructure to deliver their own products, which may also include services aimed at residential consumers. Details of where these upgrades are located can be found at www.fasterbroadbandni.com or www.nibroadaband.com.

Due to distance from a cabinet or an exchange, not all premises will benefit from the technology deployed under the Next Generation Broadband Project. For that reason, DETI also has a contract in place with Avanti Communications, a satellite broadband provider, to ensure that broadband services of between 512Kbps and 3 Mbps are available to all premises in NI where it is not technically or economically possible to deliver fixed-line services.

Furthermore, the NI Broadband Fund, launched in August 2008, has provided support for businesses and organisations wishing to promote solutions for delivery of commercial, high speed broadband services in rural locations. Six calls for project applications have been issued under the Fund since its inception. As well as advertising in the press, Departmental officials alert the Chief Executives and Economic Development Officers in all District Councils when Calls are issued, providing them with an opportunity to work with local service providers to develop applications seeking support for localised broadband solutions. To date no projects have come forward in relation to the Mayobridge or Saval areas.

Go For It Programme

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she can give a commitment that no jobs will be lost following InvestNI's decision not to award the contract for the Go For It Programme to Enterprise Northern Ireland.

(AQO 426/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The award of the contract for the new Business Start Programme was a commercial procurement decision carried out in line with public procurement guidelines.

Both Enterprise Northern Ireland and the Local Enterprise Agencies would have been aware that any future contracts would be subject to a public procurement exercise and therefore no level of work could be guaranteed beyond the term of their existing contract.

As the process is now subject to a legal challenge, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on the tender process or award decision.

Manufacturing

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she is taking to help manufacturers to identify new markets.

(AQO 433/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has enhanced its range of solutions aimed at helping Northern Ireland based companies to identify new export markets. This has included new in-market representation in Brazil, Canada, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa which builds on the existing representation in China, Germany, India, United Arab Emirates and the USA. Such resource is used to help companies look at the potential export opportunities in those markets.

Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she has taken to promote and enhance the profile of the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.

(AQO 434/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, GSNI, promotes and supports the Geopark both locally and internationally, having presented it to member states of UNESCO and at meetings worldwide. GSNI ensures that the international profile of the Geopark worldwide. Tourism Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board also feature the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark as part of their extensive marketing programmes.

Shankill Tourism

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she will continue to support the development of Shankill Tourism.[R]

(AQO 436/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board, NITB, has provided support for the Greater Shankill Partnership to develop and operate a Local Information Office on the Shankill Road.

This successful initiative is in its third year of operations and NITB will continue to monitor and evaluate its performance against visitor numbers and income generation targets, and provide support until the end of March 2012.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the impact that no reduction in Air Passenger Duty could have on business and the tourism industry.

(AQO 437/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Air Passenger Duty impacts on all business sectors and in particular on long haul flights which are important for Foreign Direct Investment and tourism. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's announcement on X 2011 of a reduction in the rate of APD applied to direct flights operating to Band B destinations from Northern Ireland airports is very welcome and sends a positive message that Northern Ireland is a viable long haul destination.

Furthermore, the Coalition Government's decision to commence the process of devolving APD to Northern Ireland sends a clear message that we are determined to do everything in our power to build confidence in and grow our economy.

Invest NI: Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what work is being undertaken by InvestNI in Carrickfergus to help indigenous companies and to attract new investment into the area.
(AQO 438/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI works with a wide range of businesses in Carrickfergus to help them start, develop and grow internationally. Support for new business starts is available in three key areas; business start up advice; business start-up finance for those new businesses that intend to export their goods or services outside Northern Ireland, and; specialist support for those new high-technology companies that have the potential for rapid growth and substantial sales outside Northern Ireland. Between 2008 and 2011, Invest NI helped almost 100 new businesses start in the borough

For established small businesses, Invest NI has structured its support around a number of key areas including strategy development, finance, people and skills, energy efficiency, product development, research and development and selling outside Northern Ireland. In the last three years, 133 offers of support were issued to established locally-owned companies in Carrickfergus such as Advanced Sensors, Pollock Lifts and NK Fencing. This assistance will generate total investment in the borough of over £5 million.

Invest NI continues to work with potential investors and encourages them to consider a variety of potential locations within Northern Ireland including Carrickfergus however, it is important to emphasise that it is the investor's decision to select a business location. This is based on a number of factors, including availability of skills and workforce, transport links and availability of suitable property. Between 2008 and 2011, Invest NI has supported significant inward investment projects in Carrickfergus by companies such as Ryobi and ZST. Almost £4 million of support has been offered to externally-owned companies in the borough, generating total investment of over £57 million and promoting nearly 200 new jobs.

Renewable Heat Incentive

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, following the consultation on the Renewable Heat Incentive, what action she will take to progress this issue.
(AQO 439/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The consultation period on the Renewable Heat Incentive proposals closes today. I will now consider the comments and evidence received from respondents before beginning the development and implementation of a final policy position.

This work will be taken forward as quickly as is practical, for I am committed to the development of the Northern Ireland renewable heat market.

Investment: Ballymoney

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she will take during this Assembly term to promote investment in Ballymoney.
(AQO 440/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI works with a wide range of businesses in Ballymoney to help them start, develop and grow internationally. Support for new business starts is available in three key areas; business start up advice; business start-up finance for those new businesses that intend to export their goods or services outside Northern Ireland, and; specialist support for those new high-technology companies that have the potential for rapid growth and substantial sales outside Northern Ireland. Between 2008 and 2011, Invest NI helped almost 120 new businesses start in the borough

For established small businesses, Invest NI has structured its support around a number of key areas including strategy development, finance, people and skills, energy efficiency, product development, research and development and selling outside Northern Ireland. In the last three years, 86 offers of support were issued to locally-owned companies in Ballymoney such as KBB Doors, JMF Ltd and Woodland Kitchens and Furniture. This assistance will generate total investment in the borough of almost £3 million.

Invest NI continues to work with potential investors and encourages them to consider a variety of potential locations within Northern Ireland including Ballymoney however, it is important to emphasise that it is the investor's decision to select a business location. This is based on a number of factors, including availability of skills and workforce, transport links and availability of suitable property.

Department of the Environment

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment 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 2037/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The salary of the Special Adviser in the Department of the Environment falls within Pay Band B. I have noted the revalorised pay bands provided by the Department of Finance and Personnel; that no increase has been made to the Special Adviser's salary.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.
(AQW 2050/11-15)

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.

This and similar experiences mean that too often in too many places, plan led development does not occur. Reforms to the development plan system aim to reduce the length of the overall development

plan preparation process. The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 also allows for the commencement of the plan led system which will result in better planning, development and certainty for applicants.

Illegal Forms of Advertising in Public Spaces

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment what action has been taken in each of the last five years against businesses that have used illegal forms of advertising in public spaces, such as fly-posting on road signs.

(AQW 2121/11-15)

Mr Attwood: District councils take action under Article 18 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 to remove or obliterate any placard or poster displayed in contravention of the Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992. However, the Department does not hold details of the extent of such action taken by district councils over the last five years.

The Department enforces advertisement control under Article 84 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. However, while the Department can take action against the landowner, occupier or person benefiting from an illegal advertisement, it must be in a position to identify the person responsible and have sufficient evidence to prove that they displayed it. It is defence for an alleged offender to prove that the advertisement was displayed without their knowledge or consent.

Also, in many cases, the Department only becomes aware that fly posting has taken place after the event, and it has proved difficult to obtain the required evidence to pursue a prosecution, particularly in tracing the person who posted the advertisement.

The number of cases involving the unauthorised display of advertisements investigated by the Department during the 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 business years is set out in the table below.

Breach Type	09/10	10/11	11/12 to date
Advertising	56	124	141

It is important to note that the vast majority of breaches of planning control are resolved informally through negotiation with the owner/occupier or through the submission and consideration of a retrospective planning application.

I have been advised by the Minister for Regional Development, Danny Kennedy MLA, that, where advertising hoardings are erected illegally on his Department's property, action is taken by Roads Service to try and remove these under Article 87 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993. (This Article deals with advertisements, pictures, signs, etc. unlawfully affixed to the surface of a road, or any tree, structure or other works in or on a road. i.e. signs on Roads Service's property.)

Article 21(1) of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 states that "any person who erects or exhibits or causes or permits to be erected or exhibited any advertisement or notice which is sited or designed wholly or mainly for the purpose of being visible to persons using a special road or which is likely to prejudice the safety of traffic using a special road shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine." The motorway and Westlink are examples of Special Roads.

Minister Kennedy has confirmed that, where an advertising hoarding is erected illegally on his Department's property or adjacent to special roads, action is taken by Roads Service to try and remove these under Articles 87 & 21 respectively of the Roads (NI) Order 1993. His Department may subsequently seek to recover costs as appropriate.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 will strengthen the law in relation to illegal fly posting by:-

- providing district councils with the power to issue fixed penalty notices in respect of certain fly-posting offences;

- enabling councils to serve notices on statutory undertakers and the other owners of street furniture requiring them to remove fly-posters from their property;
- amending existing powers available to district councils to ensure that –
- the council can act more quickly to remove the fly-poster;
- the landowner or occupier, who in all likelihood is the victim of the fly-posting, is not responsible for the cost of removing it and that the cost is borne, where possible, by the person who committed the act of fly-posting or the person whose goods, trade, business or other concerns are publicised by it; and
- existing loopholes which allow the beneficiaries of fly-posting to avoid liability and to continue to benefit from free illegal advertising are closed.
- amending the defence currently available to the beneficiaries of fly-posting to make it more difficult for them to escape prosecution;
- providing councils with additional powers to gather information in relation to fly-posting offences.

Non-Governmental Organisations: Funding

Mr Kinahan asked Minister of the Environment to detail (i) each non-governmental organisation which has received funding from his Department in each of the last five years; (ii) how much funding was awarded for each scheme or programme; and (iii) the purpose of the funding in each case.

(AQW 2128/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides details of the funding disbursed by the Department to non-government organisations for the last five years and the purpose of the funding.

Non Government Organisation	Purpose of funding	2006/07 (£)	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)
Architectural Heritage Fund	Built Heritage Grant	20,000	25,000	160,000	305,228	20,000
Alliance Youth Works	Natural Heritage Grant	0	0	0	0	21,665
An Creaghan	Natural Heritage Grant	0	0	0	0	27,270
Association of Prevention Trusts	Built Heritage Grant	6,818	7,500	0	15,075	10,000
Baglady Productions	Community Waste Innovation Fund	41,243	17,237	0	0	0
Belfast Hills Partnership	Natural Heritage Grant	71,549	82,800	84,873	89,560	70,130
Bryson House	Community Waste Innovation Fund	140,828	127,697	102,858	58,196	0
Butterfly Conservation NI	Natural Heritage Grant	34,307	40,555	50,084	48,486	58,629

Non Government Organisation	Purpose of funding	2006/07 (£)	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)
Carntogher Community Association	Natural Heritage Grant	15,326	11,657	0	0	0
Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Society	Natural Heritage Grant	92,894	93,104	149,771	154,849	143,751
Conservation Volunteers NI	Natural Heritage Grant	254,968	77,234	363,129	303,100	188,464
Conservation Volunteers NI	Community Waste Innovation Fund	87,859	0	0	0	0
Copeland Bird Observatory	Natural Heritage Grant	7,500	3,846	15,432	8,553	0
Countryside Recreation Network	Natural Heritage Grant	208,130	179,432	323,097	266,850	243,620
Creggan Education Research	Natural Heritage Grant	0	0	0	0	14,539
Derg Valley Care	Community Waste Innovation Fund	16,008	43,845	19,650	37,460	0
Earth Science 2000	Natural Heritage Grant	1,119	0	0	5,000	0
East Belfast Mission	Community Waste Innovation Fund	80,064	147,805	170,793	51,037	0
Eco Seeds Ltd	Natural Heritage Grant	14,841	0	0	0	0
Envirocentre	Community Waste Innovation Fund	61,269	50,668	42,063	0	0
Fermanagh Local Strategy	Natural Heritage Grant	12,865	2,813	0	0	0
Groundwork NI	Natural Heritage Grant	834	0	0	0	0
Killesher Community Development Association	Natural Heritage Grant	7,000	12,414	3,000	0	0
Limavady Community Development Initiative	Community Waste Innovation Fund	34,196	53,023	65,933	14,606	0

Non Government Organisation	Purpose of funding	2006/07 (£)	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)
Marine Conservation Society Ltd	Natural Heritage Grant	7,409	14,202	3,890	19,283	18,000
Mourne Heritage Trust	Natural Heritage Grant	173,907	150,692	231,124	301,860	294,489
NI Environment Link	Natural Heritage Grant	144,960	136,068	249,960	181,541	209,992
NI Raptor Study Group	Natural Heritage Grant	0	0	0	0	4,985
Quarry Products Association	Natural Heritage Grant	16,959	22,404	3,690	2,100	4,200
Shopmobility Belfast	Natural Heritage Grant	0	17,821	19,488	49,475	0
Speedwell Project	Natural Heritage Grant	0	25,475	42,730	64,030	60,201
Sperrin Tourism Ltd	Natural Heritage Grant	8,411	0	0	0	0
Sustainable NI	Community Waste Innovation Fund	8,846	0	0	0	0
Talnorty Avian Care Trust	Natural Heritage Grant	10,644	32,548	6,244	48,208	30,618
Ulster Historic Churches Trust	Built Heritage Grant	3,000	0	0	0	0
Foyle Civic Trust	Built Heritage Grant	0	0	0	0	2,500
Old Belont School Preservation Trust	Built Heritage Grant	0	0	0	0	288,000
The National Trust	Natural Heritage Grant	216,169	549,849	640,757	132,651	216,247
The National Trust	Built Heritage Grant	100,530	290,286	91,394	127,675	10,220
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Natural Heritage Grant	133,104	112,388	404,665	190,643	209,660
The Ulster Wildlife Trust	Natural Heritage Grant	202,859	285,314	199,021	318,402	213,593
The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	Natural Heritage Grant	0	0	83,771	107,400	131,320

Non Government Organisation	Purpose of funding	2006/07 (£)	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)
The Woodlands Trust	Natural Heritage Grant	252,832	101,131	476,993	125,064	94,545
Tidy Northern Ireland	Litter Grant	140,762	117,000	97,000	100,847	77,006
Tidy Northern Ireland	Eco Schools Grant	0	0	22,700	23,082	36,802
Tidy Northern Ireland	Natural Heritage Grant	5,884	26,123	0	0	0
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society	Built Heritage Grant	31,053	43,360	52,633	43,027	26,220
Various Churches	Built Heritage Grant	312,219	394,867	696,730	476,814	963,210
Voluntary Services Lisburn	Community Waste Innovation Fund	91,103	165,803	163,564	8,155	0
Northern Ireland Bat Group	Natural Heritage Grant	304	0	0	1,728	966
Lough Macrory Community Development Association	Natural Heritage Grant	114,936	0	0	0	0
Disability Action	Raise awareness of disability access within the built environment.	161,000	185,000	185,000	182,000	80,000
Community Places	Services to community and voluntary groups and individuals in recognised disadvantaged areas.	154,900	159,050	177,000	177,000	88,500
Community Places	Part funding of purchase of new building.	125,000	0	0	0	0

Non Government Organisation	Purpose of funding	2006/07 (£)	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)
THI - Antrim	The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) grant programme focuses on designated Conservation Areas and aims, in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sectors, to secure the long-term future of the built heritage.	30,932	10,000	0	0	0
THI - Bushmills THI Partnership		0	0	8,805	0	49,877
THI - Canal Street Heritage Initiative		71,965	58,273	23,304	0	0
THI - Carnlough		11,602	0	0	0	0
THI - Dungannon		0	7,000	0	0	0
THI - Lisburn City Centre Management Ltd		0	39,875	20,000	5,000	20,927
THI - Lurgan Forward		0	11,500	38,500	10,786	0
THI - Newtownstewart		0	25,000	0	0	0
THI - Randalstown		16,484	0	0	0	0
THI - Walled City Partnership Ltd		65,955	31,038	32,793	71,428	24,500
HEARTH	Purchase/ improvement of buildings in Conservation Areas	50,000	0	0	0	0
PLACE	Core activity costs of the Built Environment Centre	5,000	0	0	0	0
PLACE	Part funding of salary of director	0	0	0	9,649	12,291
West Belfast Partnership Board	Funding of seconded member of staff	0	0	0	13,573	0
Total		3,878,344	3,988,697	5,522,439	4,149,420	3,966,937

External Consultants and Media Services

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 828/11-15 (i) for his assessment of local councils' spend on external consultants and external media services; and (ii) whether he intends to issue guidance on this expenditure.

(AQW 2147/11-15)

Mr Attwood: To facilitate our comparison of the relative spend of councils, the expenditure tables provided to you in answer to AQW 828/11-15 were recast to draw out council expenditure set against its population. The revised tables are provided below.

My officials then sought explanations from those councils above the average spend. They were advised that in relation to consultancy costs, the spend related mainly to the quantum of capital spend, along with HR related exercises, and feasibility studies carried out on promoting tourism and economic development in the area. Some expenditure included grant aided projects and this can be recouped.

With regard to external media services, the bulk of the expenditure related to promoting arts / festivals, tourist events, publications for ratepayers, economic development, job vacancies, press notices about tenders and provision of services.

It is worthy of note that overall council spend in both of the categories has reduced over the last three years – consultancy by 32.6% in 2010/11 compared to 2008/09 and external media spend by 10.4% over the same period.

One exception to this generally decreasing trend is Craigavon Borough Council. I am advised that this council's expenditure relates to capital projects amounting to approximately £37m and to costs associated with major refurbishment of streets and footpaths in Lurgan and Portadown town centres. Other expenditure relates to developing the Community Integrated Development Framework within the Craigavon Area Plan as well as for economic development programmes in the area.

The figures that have been produced require further interrogation and I shall work with officials to drill down and to determine what further action might then be necessary. The ICE programme which is being taken forward by DOE/NILGA/SOLACE can also produce opportunities for better spend and value. It should be noted that district councils are bodies corporate as defined in legislation and that the Department has no statutory powers to intervene as long as councils operate within the legislative provisions. As there is no suggestion that this is the case in either of these matters, it would not be appropriate for the Department to issue such guidance.

AQW 2147 11-15 EXTERNAL CONSULTANCY

Council	2008/2009 £	2009/2010 £	2010/2011 £	Total Expenditure £	Expenditure Per Head of Population 2008/2011
Newtownabbey	1,052,810	909,929	361,778	2,324,517	27.87
Armagh	572,459	704,523	222,358	1,499,340	25.49
Down	664,966	401,870	583,546	1,650,382	23.48
Belfast	2,393,000	1,783,000	1,312,000	5,488,000	20.45
Craigavon	357,279	559,931	833,113	1,750,323	18.95
Newry & Mourne	674,621	465,774	470,831	1,611,226	16.32
Coleraine	270,655	234,654	203,754	709,063	12.42
Strabane	158,589	97,001	95,986	351,576	8.82
North Down	205,000	233,000	214,000	652,000	8.19
Derry	193,656	445,820	228,160	867,636	7.91
Ards	246,004	276,793	92,976	615,773	7.88
Antrim	106,624	136,096	91,312	334,032	6.18
Omagh	144,974	89,390	85,382	319,746	6.10

Council	2008/2009 £	2009/2010 £	2010/2011 £	Total Expenditure £	Expenditure Per Head of Population 2008/2011
Ballymena	109,636	123,620	121,293	354,549	5.61
Moyle	43,803	41,156	10,037	94,996	5.61
Carrickfergus	135,124	44,705	35,874	215,703	5.38
Banbridge	90,094	78,119	75,562	243,775	5.13
Fermanagh	108,720	100,030	109,571	318,321	5.10
Magherafelt	129,842	49,107	40,365	219,314	4.96
Larne	71,597	33,447	28,643	133,687	4.25
Lisburn	210,844	105,688	145,852	462,384	3.97
Ballymoney	39,012	23,787	30,147	92,946	3.05
Limavady	30,950	54,704	14,126	99,780	2.94
Cookstown	54,933	28,496	21,178	104,607	2.88
Dungannon	74,793	23,056	31,593	129,442	2.29
Castlereagh	13,056	21,137	34,726	68,919	1.03
Total	8,153,041	7,064,833	5,494,163	20,712,037	11.58

AQW 828 11-15 EXTERNAL MEDIA

Council	2008/2009 £	2009/2010 £	2010/2011 £	Total Expenditure £	Total Expenditure Per Head of Population
Strabane	154,936	131,429	154,834	441,199	11.07
Belfast	849,000	732,000	497,000	2,078,000	7.74
Craigavon	179,878	225,026	264,086	668,990	7.24
Down	168,349	154,276	155,561	478,186	6.80
Cookstown	92,603	66,212	68,172	226,987	6.26
Ards	175,653	157,076	139,981	472,710	6.05
Newtownabbey	150,099	165,232	187,896	503,227	6.03
Fermanagh	147,231	127,356	79,520	354,107	5.68
Banbridge	82,551	76,746	77,940	237,237	4.99
Magherafelt	80,772	79,654	53,083	213,509	4.83
Carrickfergus	71,492	49,753	68,681	189,926	4.73
Castlereagh	93,649	100,408	118,681	312,738	4.69
Lisburn	109,618	194,785	163,030	467,433	4.01
Moyle	12,226	14,662	22,362	49,250	2.91

Council	2008/2009 £	2009/2010 £	2010/2011 £	Total Expenditure £	Total Expenditure Per Head of Population
Larne	27,560	29,350	31,695	88,605	2.82
Ballymena	22,303	51,916	63,044	137,263	2.17
Armagh	18,354	68,000	30,255	116,609	1.98
North Down	33,000	23,000	27,000	83,000	1.04
Ballymoney	8,696	5,980	6,037	20,713	0.68
Newry & Mourne	6,310	7,160	7,310	20,780	0.21
Derry	5,020	960	12,420	18,400	0.17
Coleraine	3,170	661	3,967	7,798	0.14
Antrim	0	1,325	0	1,325	0.02
Dungannon	0	0	0	0	0.00
Limavady	0	0	0	0	0.00
Omagh	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	2,492,470	2,462,967	2,232,555	7,187,992	4.02

Strabane District Council

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment whether he can confirm that the recent decision by Strabane District Council to appoint a temporary replacement for the current Chief Executive was carried out in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

(AQW 2172/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Yes, the decision was carried out in accordance with the appropriate guidelines and endorsed by the Local Government Staff Commission which has a related statutory responsibility.

Planning Application for the New Golf Resort at Bushmills

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment (i) when he expects the planning application for the new golf resort at Bushmills to be processed; and (ii) what action his Department is taking to ensure that there will be no further delays.

(AQW 2227/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have instructed planning officials to bring forward papers on the planning application for the Golf Resort at Runkerry Bushmills and to do so by the end of November 2011. It is my view that all issues around this application have been or are being exhaustively interrogated. I believe it is time to make a decision and I plan to do so. I will carefully weigh all relevant material considerations – environmental, World Heritage Status at the Giant's Causeway, economic benefits and others – in making the decision.

My officials have liaised closely with the agents for the application to agree a timeframe to ensure that all outstanding environmental information was submitted to the Department in good time to allow for appropriate advertising and consultation under the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999. Further Environmental Information was submitted on 27 September 2011 and will be advertised in the week beginning 4 October 2011. Four weeks is allowed under the Regulations for further representations to be made. My officials have been instructed to actively manage and progress

the consideration of the application, taking account of all issues, to ensure that a recommendation is brought to me before the end of November 2011 for my decision on the proposals.

Local Councils

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment which local councils he has visited since taking up office.
(AQW 2240/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since taking up office, I have visited two local councils; Omagh District Council on 23 August 2011 and Newry & Mourne District Council on 31 August 2011.

I have had a series of meetings with NILGA, NAC, Council Procurement groups and other groups including Local Government representatives and management.

Proposed Runkerry Development, Bushmills

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment when he will make an announcement on his decision on the proposed Runkerry development, Bushmills.
(AQW 2455/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have instructed planning officials to bring forward papers on the planning application for the Golf Resort at Runkerry Bushmills and to do so by the end of November 2011. I believe it is time to make a decision and I plan to do so. I will carefully weigh all relevant material considerations – environmental, World Heritage Status at the Giant's Causeway, economic benefits and others – in making the decision.

My officials have liaised closely with the agents for the application and have now agreed a timeframe that will allow for all the outstanding environmental information to be advertised and consulted upon in accordance with the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999. Further Environmental Information was submitted on 27 September 2011 and will be advertised in the week beginning 4 October 2011. Four weeks is allowed under the Regulations for further representations to be made. My officials have been instructed to actively manage the remaining application process in order to ensure that a recommendation is brought to me before the end of November 2011.

Marine Bill

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment when the Marine Bill will be introduced.
(AQW 2515/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am committed to bringing forward the Marine Bill at the earliest opportunity.

As currently drafted, the Marine Bill provides for marine spatial planning, for the streamlining of certain energy licences, and for conservation zones to help protect habitats and species.

The full benefits of these can be realised only if they are implemented in an integrated and independent way. I therefore intend to strengthen the Bill through provisions for a Marine Management Organisation.

Proposals for this organisation are currently being developed and I will outline the timetable for introduction following consideration of these proposals by the Executive.

National Parks

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment how he will ensure that any future National Parks legislation will reflect the concerns of residents in the affected areas.
(AQO 476/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has published a comprehensive consultation document on enabling legislation for national parks. The document envisages that legislative provisions should include specific consultation requirements for any proposal to designate an area as a national park.

There will therefore be ample opportunity for residents of any area that is proposed for designation to have their views heard.

Local Government: Review of Public Administration

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment to provide a timeframe for the implementation of the Review of Public Administration proposals.

(AQO 477/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The First Minister and the Acting deputy First Minister have advised me that they have reached an understanding on the way forward with the reform of local government. I look forward to receiving their proposals, which I will carefully consider.

Of course, it is for me, as Minister of the Environment, to bring forward a comprehensive package of proposals to the Executive that embrace all key reform issues and are linked to a timeframe that serves the best interests of ratepayers.

I am fully committed to doing so, sooner rather than later, in order to provide the certainty that is required across local government and government Departments that propose to transfer functions to it.

Carrickfergus Castle

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment what action he is taking to promote Carrickfergus Castle to its full potential.

(AQO 475/11-15)

Mr Attwood: On behalf of the Department, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) promotes Carrickfergus Castle continually throughout each business year. This promotion includes working with other government departments, local government bodies, the public, tourists and schoolchildren alike. NIEA works in partnership with others to provide such civic events as the Lughnasa Celebrations and Armed Forces Day. NIEA will also continue to liaise with cruise ship companies and coach operators and, by prior arrangement and where practicable, open the Castle early or late to facilitate tour groups. NIEA works with local hotels and commercial concerns on pricing and sponsorship promotions, accepts bookings for the use of existing facilities as staff resources permit, and will continue to seek a partner to facilitate the use of the Keep for suitable events such as weddings, receptions and reunion dinners outside normal hours. NIEA has also developed a series of resources, which are available on the DOE website.

NIEA is currently examining the possibilities of working in partnership with NITB in order to update and enhance the interpretation of the Castle; has had positive contact with the MOD over the potential of a new build above the barrel-vaulted stores in which to house a museum of relevant military memorabilia; and is discussing other possibilities. A one-day conference to promote the castle and its conservation issues is to be held in Carrickfergus Town Hall on Friday 28 October 2011.

Environment: North/South Co-operation

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his plans for greater North-South cooperation across the environment policy agenda.

(AQO 478/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since I took up office in May this year I have been looking at all opportunities for greater North South cooperation on environmental policy, both within the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council and on a bi-lateral basis on other areas of mutual interest which fall outside the NSMC framework.

The areas within the NSMC framework include

- Waste Management
- Cross-border movements of waste

- Water Quality and
- Environmental protection.

On waste management, there is potential for greater all-island cooperation to exploit economies of scale in the market for recycled materials, such as plastics. In many cases the island is losing valuable resources that could be used here, meaning that raw materials still have to be imported. The North South Market Development Group is looking at a number of potential initiatives that could be rolled out to develop all-island market opportunities.

On Water Quality there is an opportunity for greater cooperation to refocus on a range of important water quality issues of common concern and to build on the progress already made under the Water Framework Directive.

Outside the formal NSMC mechanisms I am keen to explore the opportunities for greater engagement on an all-island basis with the EU and this would undoubtedly increase the potential to drawdown significant EU funding.

There are already close relations at policy and operational levels between officials in the Department and their counterparts in the south on a wide range of environmental matters. I have urged them to ensure they look at all opportunities to enhance that co-operation.

Single-use Carrier Bags

Mr Ross asked the Minister of the Environment when he will introduce a levy on single use carrier bags. **(AQO 479/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: My objective is to ensure that charging is underway by April 2013. However achievement of this target depends, of course, on the required legislation and the necessary operational arrangements being in place in advance of that date.

At present, Departmental officials are working on a detailed framework for the introduction of a carrier bag levy. The Member will also be aware that I am currently consulting on proposals for the levy. The consultation closes on 12 October 2011, and the outcome will help me determine implementation requirements. I will of course keep the Executive informed of key policy developments.

Rivers: Pollution

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his efforts to address the number of prosecutions and amount of costs recovered following river pollution incidents. **(AQO 480/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: NIEA has a robust enforcement policy which compares favourably with that of other environmental agencies: such as the Environment Agency (EA) in England and Wales, or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the Republic of Ireland. Cost recovery, under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, for water pollution incidents was introduced on 1 April 2008.

Under NIEA's Enforcement Policy, appropriate enforcement action is pursued where a water pollution incident is of high or medium severity. Where the polluter can be identified, the range of enforcement action taken by NIEA includes:-

- prosecution
- issue of a notice requiring remedial or other action by the polluter
- breach under cross-compliance for farms (resulting in financial penalties)
- issue of a formal warning letter.

It is not always the case that such incidents result in significant costs for NIEA – for example the polluter will often voluntarily employ a specialist cleanup company and so there are no NIEA cleanup costs to be recovered.

Public Prosecution Service (PPS) will generally not allow a prosecution to proceed for less severe pollution incidents, therefore, NIEA does not spend valuable staff time preparing prosecution files for minor incidents which are unlikely to be allowed to proceed to court by PPS.

For this financial year to date, cost recovery for pollution incidents is over £40k. This includes the costs of NIEA staff time and materials recovered directly by NIEA from the polluter. Additional costs to the polluter will not show up in the costs recovered by NIEA.

Furthermore, NIEA will generally require the offender to carry out whatever repairs and take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the pollution problem does not recur. The total costs to the polluter for remedial work is in addition to any payment made direct to NIEA for clean up costs.

Vehicle Tax

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment if he will explore with the Driver and Vehicle Agency the possibility of making car tax renewals available online.

(AQO 481/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Vehicle licensing and registration is an excepted matter for which responsibility rests with the Secretary of State for Transport. However, it is administered in Northern Ireland by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) under the terms of a formal agreement between my Department and the Department for Transport, represented by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea.

Currently there are separate IT systems for delivering vehicle registration and licensing services in Northern Ireland and Britain and this has resulted in differences in the services available to NI customers, especially in relation to online facilities.

DVLA believes that the best way to make these services available in NI is through the integration of these separate IT systems and it has initiated a feasibility study to examine the potential for integrating the systems. An integrated system would extend online relicensing to NI customers.

Following correspondence and a meeting earlier in the year, I recently wrote again to Mike Penning the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport about this issue. I plan to continue to press for the upgrading of services for NI motorists and protect DVA staff numbers.

George Best Belfast City Airport

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of the Environment what steps can be taken to manage noise levels around the George Best Belfast City Airport better.

(AQO 482/11-15)

Mr Attwood: On 30 September 2011 I announced the initiation of a public process to modify the existing Planning Agreement between my Department and GBBCA. The existing Agreement controls certain aspects of the airport's operations such as the number of aircraft movements, operating hours and the types of aircraft that can use the airport. However to date a bespoke noise management system has not been established.

My objective in seeking a further modification of the Agreement is to establish a fair, effective and enforceable noise management system at the airport. I want to see a system that provides operational flexibility and commercial certainty for the airport with the environment and quality of life for local residents protected.

The modification process will be transparent and inclusive. It will include a public consultation on proposals for a noise management system, to be brought forward by the airport. This will include a Public Examination to independently consider all of the issues and report to me. After I have considered the independent report and recommendations of the Examination I will decide what modifications should be included in the Planning Agreement.

It is hoped that the process will be concluded by early Summer 2012.

Marine Bill

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made on the draft Marine Bill. (AQO 484/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As currently drafted, the Marine Bill provides for marine spatial planning, for the streamlining of certain energy licences, and for conservation zones to help protect habitats and species.

The full benefits of these can be realised only if they are implemented in an integrated and independent way. I therefore intend to include in the Bill provisions for a Marine Management Organisation. This will be a non-Departmental Public Body capable of delivering the range of marine operational functions which is currently fragmented across Departments. Proposals for this organisation are currently being developed.

Planning Applications

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of the Environment what is the current number of planning applications awaiting approval and the average time taken to process an application. (AQO 485/11-15)

Mr Attwood: At the end of August 2011 there were 10,028 live planning applications awaiting a decision.

The average processing times for the 2010/11 business year are contained within the Development Management Statistics Northern Ireland 2010/11 Annual Statistical Bulletin (April 2010 to March 2011) which is publically available on the Department's website.

The average time taken to process a planning application in the 2010/11 business year was 77 days.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cost to his Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years. (AQW 1946/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Earlier this year my Department undertook a review of the reporting classification of the bodies for which it has a degree of responsibility, in particular, to reassess whether the bodies were public bodies or arm's length bodies.

This review resulted in additional bodies being classified as arm's length bodies. The outcome of the review is reflected in a document entitled 'Bodies for Which DFP has a Degree of Responsibility' which is available on the Department's website <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/bodies-which-dfp-has-degree-of-responsibility.pdf>

The arm's length bodies set out in the table below reflect the outcome of the review.

Arm's Length Body	Cost	
	2009-10 £'000s	2010-11 £'000s
NI Building Regulations Advisory Committee	5	2
Statistics Advisory Committee	-	-
Lands Tribunal for NI	292	498
NI Valuation Tribunal	30	50

Arm's Length Body	Cost	
	2009-10 £'000s	2010-11 £'000s
Public Service Commission for NI	82	78
Lay Observer for NI	23	26
Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) Governance Group	-	1

The Lands Tribunal for NI and the NI Valuation Tribunal transferred to the Department of Justice with effect from April 2011.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why their Department requires eight Special Advisers compared to the number of Special Advisers in the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales.

(AQO 341/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The number of Special Advisers in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is provided for by statute. Under the provisions of the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 the First Minister and deputy First Minister may each appoint up to three persons to hold, at any one time, a situation as a Special Adviser. The Civil Service Commissioners (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 provides that two junior Ministers in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister may each appoint one person to hold a situation as a Special Adviser, if so authorised by the First Minister and the deputy First Minister.

The number of Special Advisers in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister reflects the range and complexity of the work of that department and its co-ordinating role across all departments.

Vacant Business Premises

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) how many business premises are currently vacant in (a) Ballymena; (b) Ballymoney; and (c) Ballycastle; (ii) how many premises in each of these towns are occupied by charities with rates exemption; and (iii) how do these figures compare with the figures from three years ago.

(AQW 2441/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of business premises that are currently vacant in the towns of Ballymena, Ballymoney and Ballycastle is not available as data is collated at District Council and Ward level only. The latest figures available, at 25th September 2011, indicate that there are 445, 192 and 109 business premises vacant in the District Councils of Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle respectively.

Information available cannot easily or consistently identify those properties which are charities with rates exemption.

The earliest comparable figures available for vacant premises are at 31st March 2010 and indicate that 441, 181 and 103 business premises were vacant in the District Councils of Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle respectively at that time.

Former Permanent Secretary to the Department for Regional Development

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 1944/11-15, whether the Department will recoup the costs from the host organisation, and if not, to detail what the secondment is providing with regard to public interest and benefit.

(AQW 2704/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The host organisation is reimbursing the Northern Ireland Civil Service at 54% of the secondee's salary.

Secondments offer benefits for both the employer and the employee. Employees receive opportunities to develop new skills and experiences from which the employer can benefit on the individual's return to the civil service. This particular secondment will expose the secondee to a range of different experiences and working practices in the private sector.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

10-Day Target for Payment of Invoices

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the minimum 10-day target for payment of invoices, other than health and social care invoices, by (i) each Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) the Health and Social Care Board.

(AQW 2224/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The Department has directed all HSC organisations to ensure that they have taken all appropriate steps to support the commitment to paying businesses within 10 days.

Whilst HSC organisations are committed to maximising the number of invoices paid within 10 days, there are no specific performance targets against this commitment.

The Department is committed to and monitors performance against the requirements of the Better Payments Practice Code, which stipulates that payments should be made within agreed terms or where no terms exist, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice. This requirement has a best practice target of 95%.

10-Day Target for Payment of Invoices

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the success rate of (i) each Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) the Health and Social Care Board in meeting the 10-day target for payment of invoices, other than health and social care invoices, in the (a) 2010/11 financial year; and (b) 2011/12 financial year to date.

(AQW 2225/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below shows the number of non-HSC invoices paid within 10 days and the percentage this represented of the total invoices received by each HSC Trust for 2010/11 and the five months ended 31 August 2011.

	2010-11		31 Aug 2011	
	Invoices paid within 10 days	% of total invoices received	Invoices paid within 10 days	% of total invoices received
Belfast	136,696	38.3	73,316	47.4
Northern	51,729	37.6	19,085	36.4
Southern	40,496	38.0	15,562	33.8
South Eastern	51,114	42.2	21,690	40.0
Western	54,032	54.5	23,510	56.2
N.I.A.S.	15,137	36.5	2,519	40.1

It is not possible to provide comparable information for the HSCB, as could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Abortions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many of the abortions in each of the last three years were performed on women who resided outside Northern Ireland, in particular the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 2315/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of abortions carried out in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years is shown in the table below.

Financial Year	Number of Abortions	Number Carried Out on Women who Reside	
		Outside NI	Within ROI
2008/09	77	<5	<5
2009/10	67	<5	<5
2010/11 ^P	74	<5	<5

Source:- Hospital Inpatient System (HIS)

In line with professional guidelines on disclosure and in order to protect patient confidentiality, information relating to less than 5 individuals is not released.

P Information relating to 2010/11 is provisional and may be subject to changes.

Chaplaincy Services

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of chaplaincy services in each of the last three years, broken down by each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 2325/11-15)

Mr Poots: The cost of chaplaincy services in each of the last three years, broken down by each Health and Social Care Trust, is set out in the table below.

Health & Social Care Trust	2010/11 £	2009/10 £	2008/09 £
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	478,000	535,000	453,000
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	142,548	178,168	147,463
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	133,900	129,512	125,031
Western Health & Social Care Trust	159,980	166,118	186,758
Southern Health & Social Care Trust	110,246	102,554	95,663
NI Ambulance Service	0	0	0
Total	1,024,674	1,111,352	1,007,915

The costs relate to salaries and wages, travel expenses, hospitality, goods and services.

Review by the Public Health Agency on Allied Health Professional Services

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for his assessment of the potential impact that the review by the Public Health Agency on Allied Health Professional Services to children with special needs, will have on the outcome and implementation of the policy proposals contained in 'Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'.

(AQW 2331/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Review by the PHA of Allied Health Professional services to children with special needs will require a collaborative multiagency approach involving all key stakeholders which will include Education as a key partner. Full consideration of the proposals within “Every School a Good School: The way forward for Special Education Needs and Inclusion” will be integral to the process.

Any potential impact of this review on the above policy proposals is anticipated to be positive. However, the full implications will not be known until the process is under way in partnership with all key stakeholders. The engagement process has begun between the PHA and my Department of Health on how this review should be taken forward across Health and Education.

We expect the review to take approximately one and a half years to complete. This however, will depend on what is agreed on a multi professional and multiagency basis when the review commences.

Review by the Public Health Agency on Allied Health Professional Services

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the likely end date for the review by the Public Health Agency on Allied Health Professional Services to children with special needs.

(AQW 2333/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Review by the PHA of Allied Health Professional services to children with special needs will require a collaborative multiagency approach involving all key stakeholders which will include Education as a key partner. Full consideration of the proposals within “Every School a Good School: The way forward for Special Education Needs and Inclusion” will be integral to the process.

Any potential impact of this review on the above policy proposals is anticipated to be positive. However, the full implications will not be known until the process is under way in partnership with all key stakeholders. The engagement process has begun between the PHA and my Department of Health on how this review should be taken forward across Health and Education.

We expect the review to take approximately one and a half years to complete. This however, will depend on what is agreed on a multi professional and multiagency basis when the review commences.

Mid-Ulster Hospital Site

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current, and future, plans for the Mid-Ulster Hospital site.

(AQW 2385/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Mid Ulster hospital site is an important health and social care campus and the hospital will continue to play an important part in the delivery of hospital services to the population served by the Northern Trust. The current services are:

- Care of the elderly
- Children’s Unit
- Community dental services
- Day Procedure Unit
- Diagnostics
- Dietetics
- Endoscopy Suite
- Minor Injuries Unit
- Occupational therapy
- Outpatients services
- Physiotherapy
- Rehabilitation
- Speech and language therapy

The Trust is currently in the process of developing a proposal to refurbish elements of the Mid Ulster Hospital to provide administrative and clinical space to accommodate primary and community care services. I am advised that the Trust has arranged to meet with you and the other Mid-Ulster MLAs in October 2011 to discuss these plans further.

Social Work Qualifications

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he would liaise with his counterpart in the Republic of Ireland to discuss the implementation of a mutual recognition agreement between the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and CORU on social work qualifications, which would allow social workers to work in both jurisdictions without paying registration fees for both. **(AQW 2417/11-15)**

Mr Poots: This issue is covered by European Legislation as part of the European Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. In the context of the EU the UK is recognised as a single country, therefore any decisions made for Northern Ireland would have implications for the rest of the UK. The position at present is that in Northern Ireland, as in other parts of the UK, applications from the Republic of Ireland are dealt with as part of the International Recognition Service. The Degree in Social Work issued by universities in the Republic of Ireland is recognised as an equivalent social work qualification by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

As with the rest of Europe, social workers and other professionals require to be registered in each country in which they wish to practise with the appropriate regulator. There are administrative costs associated with this for each regulator.

Registration of Social Workers in the Republic of Ireland comes under the remit of the Social Work Registration Board and the Health and Social Care Professions Council. Anyone practising social work in Northern Ireland must be registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

Locum Appointment for Service Grade

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the cost implications for (i) Antrim Area Hospital; and (ii) Causeway Hospital from the introduction of the Locum Appointment for Service grade. **(AQW 2442/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The additional cost* implications of Locum Appointment to Service Grades (LAS) appointments to (i) Antrim Area Hospital and (ii) Causeway Hospital for the 12 months August 2010 to August 2011 (latest figures available) are as follows:-

Hospital	Number of LAS Posts	Total Cost	Additional costs (compared with training posts)
Antrim Area Hospital	2	£180,642	£33,916
Causeway Hospital	0	-	-

Source: Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Junior Doctor Training Posts

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency junior doctor training posts were unfilled across each speciality in August 2011 in (i) Causeway Hospital; (ii) Antrim Area Hospital; and (iii) Northern Ireland. **(AQW 2443/11-15)**

Mr Poots: At 22nd August 2011,

- (i) there were 9 unfilled junior doctor training posts in the **Causeway Hospital** in the following specialities:
- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| ■ Foundation F2 | 2 |
| ■ Emergency medicine | 6 |
| ■ Core surgical | 1 |
- (ii) there were 10 unfilled junior doctor training posts in the Antrim Area Hospital in the following specialities:
- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| ■ Foundation F2 | 1 |
| ■ Emergency medicine | 2 |
| ■ Obstetrics &Gynaecology | 1 |
| ■ Paediatrics | 1 |
| ■ Core Medical | 1 |
| ■ Gastroenterology | 1 |
| ■ Rheumatology | 1 |
| ■ Core Surgical | 2 |
- (iii) there were 74 unfilled junior doctor training posts throughout Northern Ireland in the following specialities:
- | | |
|---------------------------|----|
| ■ Foundation F2 | 8 |
| ■ Emergency medicine | 17 |
| ■ Obstetrics &Gynaecology | 4 |
| ■ Paediatrics | 3 |
| ■ Core Medical | 5 |
| ■ Gastroenterology | 1 |
| ■ Rheumatology | 2 |
| ■ Core Surgical | 18 |
| ■ Anaesthetics | 1 |
| ■ Acute medicine | 1 |
| ■ Clinical Oncology | 1 |
| ■ Haematology | 2 |
| ■ Renal medicine | 1 |
| ■ Core Psychiatry | 3 |
| ■ Cardiothoracic | 1 |
| ■ Plastic Surgery | 3 |
| ■ Neurosurgery | 1 |
| ■ Ophthalmology | 2 |

Junior Doctor Posts

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many unfilled junior doctor posts in August 2011 were covered by locums in (i) the Northern Health and Social Care Trust;

and (ii) Northern Ireland; and how many of these locums were paid at (a) normal Trust rates; (b) premium Trust rates; and (c) local agency rates.

(AQW 2444/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is detailed in the table below:

Trust/Agency	Number of unfilled junior doctor posts	Number filled by locums	Number paid at normal trust rate	Number paid at premium trust rate	Number paid at local agency rates.
Belfast HSC Trust	34	4	3	n/a	1
Southern HSC Trust	7	7	5	n/a	2
South Eastern HSC Trust	10	4	4	n/a	unknown at this stage as adhoc shifts covered rather than the WTE post
Public Health Agency	1	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Northern HSC Trust	18	18	13	n/a	5
Western HSC Trust	17	12.8	5.8	n/a	7
Totals	87*	45.8	30.8	0	15

* 74 posts unfilled deanery appointments (NIMDTA), 13 Trust appointed clinical research fellows.

Doctors in Training

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the circumstances in which a doctor in training can refuse to take up a post assigned by the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency.

(AQW 2482/11-15)

Mr Poots: The recruitment process managed by the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) takes account of training requirements, curriculum requirements and trainee preferences, with posts assigned to try and meet all three of these criteria.

If however a doctor in training is not satisfied with the post assigned to him/her by NIMDTA they can apply for a post in a different location under the special circumstances criteria. To be eligible the trainee must satisfy one of the following criteria:

- Be a parent or legal guardian with significant caring responsibilities for a child or children under the age of 18 (this would normally mean the child or children residing primarily with the trainee);
- Be the primary carer for someone who is disabled (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005) (expected to be a partner, sibling or parent);
- Have a medical condition (physical or psychological) or disability for which local follow up and / or support is an absolute requirement, as confirmed by a report from an Occupational Health physician or an appropriate medical specialist.

Positions at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many doctors in training have refused an offer of a position at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine, in each of the last three years. **(AQW 2483/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA), who are responsible for placing junior doctors into training posts, do not collect or retain this data. They have however advised that in their experience, refusals to take up training posts at the Causeway Hospital, are rare.

GP Training Places

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of GP training places available in each of the last three years; and the number of applicants who applied for each place.

(AQW 2484/11-15)

Mr Poots: The following table details the number of GP training places available and the number of applicants in each of the last three years:

Year	Places	Applicants
2009	65	189
2010	65	190
2011	65	187

GPs in Training

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the additional medical roles, at a similar level, a GP in training could fulfil at a district general hospital. **(AQW 2486/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The roles and responsibilities of GP's whilst they are in training in hospital settings are strictly regulated by both the General Medical Council (GMC) and the Royal College of General Practitioners, accordingly there is no scope for them to perform additional medical roles outside the GP training curriculum.

GP trainees normally spend eighteen months of their training in a hospital based setting with their training centred on the specialities of general medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, emergency medicine and psychiatry. These have all been approved by the GMC.

Causeway Hospital, Coleraine

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) GPs in training; and (ii) doctors in training have been assigned to the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine (a) in total; and (b) in each hospital department, in each of the last three years. **(AQW 2488/11-15)**

Mr Poots:

NUMBER OF GP TRAINEES ASSIGNED TO CAUSEWAY HOSPITAL IN PAST 3 YEARS, (BY SPECIALTY)

Specialty	2009	2010	2011
Emergency Medicine	2	2	2
Psychiatry	2	2	2

Specialty	2009	2010	2011
General medicine	2	2	2
Obs and Gynae	2	2	2
Psychiatry	2	2	2
Total	10	10	10

NUMBER OF DOCTORS IN TRAINING ASSIGNED TO CAUSEWAY HOSPITAL IN PAST 3 YEARS, (BY SPECIALTY)

Specialty	2009	2010	2011
Foundation	28	20	21
Emergency Medicine	0	0	4
Core Medical Training	7	3	2
Cardiology	1	1	1
Gastroenterology	1	1	1
General Medicine	1	0	0
Obs and Gynae	7	7	6
Paediatrics	5	2	2
Core Psychiatry	3	3	3
General Adult Psychiatry	1	1	1
Core Surgical Training	5	4	4
General Surgery	3	2	2
Total	62	44	47

Waiting Lists for Paediatric Orthopaedic Patients

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what waiting list initiatives the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has undertaken to address the waiting list for paediatric orthopaedic patients in the private sector.

(AQW 2491/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has advised me that it currently does not have enough capacity to treat all orthopaedic patients within the waiting time targets; a number of patients are therefore referred to Independent Sector providers for outpatient assessment and treatment. Some patients are also referred from the Musgrave Park Hospital inpatient/day case waiting list for treatment by Independent Sector providers.

Short Stay Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the opening times of the Short Stay Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast; (ii) why the Unit closes at the weekends; and (iii) when the Unit will be operational seven days a week.

(AQW 2493/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Trust has advised me that the Short Stay Unit is presently open from 8:00am Mondays until 9:00pm Fridays. The Unit closes at weekends because there are insufficient senior medical staff available to provide appropriate medical cover.

It is expected that the unit will become operational seven days a week from 1 November when senior medical staff relocated from the Belfast City Hospital A&E department will be available to provide cover.

Accident and Emergency Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the additional beds in the Accident and Emergency Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, will become operational; and whether these beds will be available 24 hours a day.

(AQW 2494/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Trust has advised me that the work to provide the additional capacity in the A&E department at the Royal Victoria Hospital is currently well under way and is due to be completed shortly. The Trust plans to have the new area operational by 1 November 2011.

Due to relocation of Belfast Trust senior medical staff to the Royal Victoria Hospital, this will enable beds which are currently only available from Monday to Friday (8.00 -21.00) to be operational 24 hours per day.

Patient Assessments

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why, after GPs have carried out patient assessments and have recommended hospitalisation, it is necessary for patients to see a junior doctor in an Accident and Emergency Unit before being admitted.

(AQW 2523/11-15)

Mr Poots: Treatment by GPs is limited by the facilities and options available for clinical interventions in GP surgeries.

While on some occasions GPs can admit directly to wards, patients presenting at an Accident and Emergency department may be reassessed to determine the most appropriate treatment pathway, which may include the option of treatment and observation in a Medical Assessment Unit and discharge home, or admission to an appropriate clinical area.

Accident and Emergency Units: Staff

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of staff, broken down by grade, employed in the Accident and Emergency Unit at the (a) Belfast City Hospital; (b) Royal Victoria Hospital; (c) Mater Hospital; (d) Ulster Hospital; (e) Antrim Area Hospital; and (f) Causeway Hospital.

(AQW 2524/11-15)

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

STAFF EMPLOYED IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNITS AT BELFAST CITY HOSPITAL, ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL AND MATER HOSPITAL AT SEPTEMBER 2011

Grade	Belfast City Hospital		Royal Victoria Hospital		Mater Hospital	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Consultant	4	3.70	9	8.30	4	4.00
Staff Grade / Associate Specialist	3	3.00	3	3.00	2	2.00
Specialist Registrar	4	4.00	5	5.00	6	6.00

Grade	Belfast City Hospital		Royal Victoria Hospital		Mater Hospital	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Foundation House Officer	4	4.00	4	4.00	4	4.00
Practitioner (Sessions)					1	0.10
Band 7/8 Nurse	4	3.71	9	8.76	2	2.00
Band 6 Nurse	10	9.00	8	7.84	9	8.08
Band 5 Nurse	28	25.59	28	24.34	19	17.16
Nurse Support staff	5	4.17	9	8.12	5	4.56
Domestics / Porters	8	5.68	17	13.50	5	3.90
Band 4/5 Admin / Medical Secretary	4	2.47	4	3.59	1	1.00
Band 2/3 Admin	19	15.20	11	11.00	10	10.00
Total	93	80.52	107	97.45	68	62.80

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

STAFF EMPLOYED IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNITS AT ULSTER HOSPITAL, ANTRIM AREA HOSPITAL AND CAUSEWAY HOSPITAL AT SEPTEMBER 2011

Grade	Ulster Hospital		Antrim Area Hospital		Causeway Hospital	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Consultant	5	4.20	6	6.00	3	3.00
Staff Grade / Associate Specialist	1	1.00	4	3.57	1	1.00
Specialist Registrar (ST5/6 / CT1/2)	13	12.60	7	7.00		
GP Trainee			5	5.00	1	1.00
Foundation House Officer	4	4.00	4	4.00		
Practitioner (Sessions)	7	1.03				
Band 7/8 Nurse	7	7.00	7	5.32	3	2.23
Band 6 Nurse	8	7.00	8	6.05	9	7.15
Band 5 Nurse	50	41.92	51	35.17	27	22.71
Nurse Support staff	11	10.00	11	8.35	4	3.73
Plaster Technician			1	1.00		
Band 4/5/6 Admin / Medical Secretary	4	4.00	5	4.40	2	1.90
Band 2/3 Admin	22	12.75	16	10.40	7	4.80

Grade	Ulster Hospital		Antrim Area Hospital		Causeway Hospital	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Total	132	105.50	125	96.26	57	47.52

Source: South Eastern & Northern Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 1 HC = Headcount.
- 2 WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.

Accident and Emergency Units: Staff Vacancies

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of staff vacancies, broken down by grade in the Accident and Emergency Unit at the (a) Belfast City Hospital; (b) Royal Victoria Hospital; (c) Mater Hospital; (d) Ulster Hospital; (e) Antrim Area Hospital; and (f) Causeway Hospital.

(AQW 2525/11-15)

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

STAFF VACANCIES IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNIT AT BELFAST CITY HOSPITAL, ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL AND MATER HOSPITAL AT SEPTEMBER 2011

Grade	Belfast City Hospital		Royal Victoria Hospital		Mater Hospital	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Consultant					1	1.00
Specialty Doctor (Staff Grade)	2	2.00				
Foundation Year 2 Doctor	1	1.00	2	2.00	1	1.00
Foundation Year 1 Doctor	1	1.00	1	1.00		
Sister					1	1.00
Staff Nurse	5	4.80	7	6.98	6	5.24
Health Care Support	1	0.79	3	2.88	1	0.74
Total	10	9.59	13	12.86	10	8.98

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

STAFF VACANCIES IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNIT AT ULSTER HOSPITAL, ANTRIM AREA HOSPITAL AND CAUSEWAY HOSPITAL AT SEPTEMBER 2011

Grade	Ulster Hospital		Antrim Area Hospital		Causeway Hospital	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Specialty Doctor (Staff Grade)	6	6.00	3	2.43	1	1.00
Specialty Registrar ST6			1	1.00		

Grade	Ulster Hospital		Antrim Area Hospital		Causeway Hospital	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Specialty Registrar CT1/2					7	6.00
Band 6 Nurse	1	1.00				
Band 5 Nurse	7	7.00	1	1.00	1	1.00
Nurse Support					2	0.33
Band 6 Social Worker	1	1.00				
Admin Support			12	8.61	4	2.88
Total	15	15.00	17	13.04	15	11.21

Source: South Eastern & Northern Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 3 HC = Headcount.
- 4 WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
- 5 Vacant administrative posts at Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital have been held due to the Review of Public Administration.

Accident and Emergency Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether the Accident and Emergency Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast is currently housed in a temporary building; and (ii) when the new critical care unit on this site is due for completion.

(AQW 2527/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) I can confirm that the A&E Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital is currently housed in a temporary building.
- (ii) The new building is due for completion in October 2012. Services could start operating from the building from May 2013, based on the current timetable and following the clinical commissioning of the building.

Accident and Emergency Unit at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what yearly visit capacity the Accident and Emergency Unit at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald was designed to accommodate.

(AQW 2528/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Accident and Emergency Department at the Ulster Hospital has recently been extended and refurbished. The existing accommodation based on current Health Building Note guidance can accommodate in the range of 70,000 and 90,000 attendances per annum.

Healthcare Assistants

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many healthcare assistants are employed by each of the Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 2529/11-15)

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

NURSE SUPPORT AND ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT STAFF EMPLOYED WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUSTS AT JUNE 2011

HSC Trust	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	1,735	1,447.69
Northern	873	728.09
South Eastern	711	611.85
Southern	862	730.85
Western	854	769.47
Total	5,035	4,287.95

Source: Human Resources Management System

Notes:

- 6 WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
- 7 The term healthcare assistant has been defined as nursing support grades and allied health professional support grades, but does not include clinical science support grades.

Healthcare Assistants: Training in Dementia Care

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety given that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence states that staff working with people with dementia should have training in dementia care, how many healthcare assistants have received mandatory training in dementia care.

(AQW 2530/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is not mandatory for Health Care Assistants to receive training in dementia care. However, Trusts provide a comprehensive induction programme which provides them with knowledge and skills necessary to work with patients in all areas, including those with dementia. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines are advisory rather than compulsory and used by Trusts as an evidence based reference guide.

Healthcare Assistants

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provision is in place to ensure that healthcare assistants are adequately trained to respond appropriately and efficiently to the needs of people with dementia.

(AQW 2531/11-15)

Mr Poots: Trusts provide comprehensive induction training for all healthcare assistants across a range of settings, including dementia care. In addition, healthcare assistants can avail of further work based training in dementia care, including Healthcare at levels 2 and 3 on the Qualifications Credit Framework.

Infections Detected in Blood Donations

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of infections detected in blood donations and blood component donations in each of the last five years, broken down by (a) type of donation; and (b) type of infection; and (ii) what happened to the infected donations.

(AQW 2552/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested in part (i) of the question is set out in the table below.

Year	Number of Infections Detected	Type of Donation (a)	Type of Infection (b)
2007	4	All Whole Blood (WB) donors	1 x Hep B Virus 1 x Hep C Virus 2 x Syphilis
2008	5	All Whole Blood (WB) donors	1 x Hep B Virus 4 x Syphilis
2009	7	All Whole Blood (WB) donors	2 x Hep B Virus 1 x HIV 4 x Syphilis
2010	4	All Whole Blood (WB) donors	1 x Hep B Virus 2 x Hep C Virus 1 x HIV
2011 (to date)	5	1 x Apheresis donor, 4 x Whole Blood (WB) donors	1 x Hep B Virus 4 x Syphilis

(ii) All donations that tested positive were discarded.

Donated Blood

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the amounts of donated blood and donated blood components which have been exported to (i) England; (ii) Scotland; (iii) Wales; (iv) the Republic of Ireland; and (v) elsewhere, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2554/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is a reciprocal relationship within the UK Blood Services to move blood around in terms of specific group shortages or specific component shortages. The table below sets out the amounts of donated blood and donated blood components which have been exported in the last five years.

	Unit of product	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
England		0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	Fresh Frozen Plasma	0	0	225	0	0
	Red Cells	100	0	0	0	0
	Leuco/Cryro Depleted Plasma	56	0	0	0	0
Wales		0	0	0	0	0
Republic of Ireland		0	0	0	0	0
Portugal	Red cells	0	0	0	1	0

Note: Each unit in the table above represents 250mls of blood components.

Donated Blood

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, for each of the last five years, in relation to donated blood and donated blood components to detail (i) how much has been

sold; (ii) to whom it was sold; (iii) the countries in which the purchasers were based; and (v) the revenue that was acquired from the sales,

(AQW 2555/11-15)

Mr Poots: The processing of donated whole blood collected by NI Blood Transfusion Service into blood components suitable for transfusion, results in surplus plasma as only 10% of the plasma produced is required by hospitals. Prior to 2008, this plasma was incinerated as there was no other clinical use for it and NIBTS incurred a charge for disposal. As there is a commercial market for this component, since 2008, surplus plasma has been sold by NIBTS to be used in the manufacture of laboratory test reagents. The table below details to whom the surplus plasma was sold, the volume sold, and the revenue received since 2008.

Company	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11	
	Volume (litres)	Value (£)	Volume (litres)	Value (£)	Volume (litres)	Value (£)
Nova Biologics (USA)	4,699	131,558	10,681	321,649	11,290	338,702
Randox Laboratories (NI)	2,719	76,133	365	10,212	0	0

Proposed Cuts to the Community Pharmacy Budget

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a population-based needs assessment, which took into account a high prevalence of health inequalities and ill health, was carried out to inform his decision on the proposed cuts to the community pharmacy budget.

(AQW 2565/11-15)

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.

In light of the judicial review of the new remuneration arrangements successfully sought by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI), which was heard on 20, 21 and 22 September, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further until the outcome of the hearing is known.

Dementia Strategy

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he intends to make an announcement on the Dementia Strategy.

(AQW 2569/11-15)

Mr Poots: Dementia care is an important issue facing us all in Northern Ireland. The expected increases in numbers of people with dementia will bring further pressures on our health and social care services.

Recognising these pressures my Department has developed and consulted on a regional strategy for improving dementia services. Given the current financial climate, I am giving careful consideration to realistic and meaningful options to progress implementation of the strategy. I hope to make a statement to the Assembly regarding this matter in the near future.

Pharmacists

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he intends to take to ensure that pharmacists who provide front-line services in rural communities and areas of deprivation remain financially viable.

(AQW 2570/11-15)

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.

In light of the judicial review of the new remuneration and reimbursement arrangements successfully sought by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI) which was heard on 20, 21 and 22 September, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on these issues until the outcome of the hearing is known.

Accident and Emergency Unit at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of patients admitted to the Accident and Emergency Unit at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine, in the last 12 months; and (ii) how many of these patients were seen within four hours of arrival.

(AQW 2571/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on (i) the number of patients that attended the Accident and Emergency Unit at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine, in the last 12 months; and (ii) how many of these patients were seen within four hours of arrival, is collected and published on a quarterly basis. It is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-monthly_waiting_times.htm

Vehicles Clamped at the Antrim Area Hospital or the Causeway Hospital Car Parks

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he intends to take to ensure that the conversations of owners whose vehicles are clamped at the Antrim Area Hospital or the Causeway Hospital car parks are not taped without their permission.

(AQW 2572/11-15)

Mr Poots: Parking Enforcement Agency policy is to record conversations with clients who are being clamped.

The Trust has agreed with PEA (the company that enforces parking regulations at Antrim) that printed signs will be placed on cars that have been clamped to inform the client that they will be recorded.

Printed information will also be handed to the client to inform them that they are being recorded. This information will also be delivered verbally, so there is no ambiguity for anyone concerned.

Suicide Prevention

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the enhanced mental health crisis intervention services for suicide prevention that are provided by his Department.

(AQW 2588/11-15)

Mr Poots: Over £5.5m (recurrent) has been allocated to the HSC Board for community mental health services, including Crisis Response and Home Treatment teams. This facilitates early intervention, promotes recovery in the community and is reducing demand for acute psychiatric beds. My Department has also allocated a further £1m (recurrent) to expand crisis response to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. In addition, the Card Before You Leave protocol has been implemented in hospital A&E Departments to ensure that those not requiring immediate treatment are seen by community mental health teams within 24 hours.

As regards investment in suicide prevention, a total of £6.7m has been allocated by my Department for this purpose. This is made up of £3.2m for the implementation of Protect Life actions (including over £2m in community support) and £3.5m for the operation of Lifeline (including its wraparound support services).

Suicide Prevention

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much his Department spent on public awareness campaigns for suicide prevention in each of the last five years; and (ii) how these campaigns were targeted at local areas.

(AQW 2589/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The 'Protect Life' Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy contains actions which support the development of suicide awareness public information campaigns. The Public Health Agency is responsible for the development of the relevant campaigns. Funding allocated in each of the last five years is as follows:

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
£315,387	£422,769	£302,746	£317,434	£387,158

The costs include TV, cinema, radio, and online advertising, and also all supporting materials such as leaflets and posters.

- (ii) While the TV and radio elements of the campaigns are broadcast on a Northern Ireland wide basis, much of the supporting literature is disseminated at a local level through GP surgeries, schools, community centres, libraries, and partner organisations. Other local area-specific advertising is also undertaken via billboards, and in facilities such as washrooms and bus shelters.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the support provided by his Department to address alcohol and substance abuse.

(AQW 2590/11-15)

Mr Poots: Alcohol and drug misuse have been significant public health and social issues in Northern Ireland over the last number of years, and continue to be a key priority for my Department.

In 2005, the Department led the development of a cross-sectoral strategy that sought to reduce the harm related to both alcohol and drug misuse in Northern Ireland. This strategy, the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (NSD), began being implemented in October 2006. Approximately £8 million is allocated to its implementation each year, and additional funding is provided through the mental health budget for the provision of treatment and support services. The NSD seeks to direct action across five pillars, and these are: prevention and early intervention; harm reduction; treatment and support; law and criminal justice; and monitoring, evaluation and research.

It was agreed last year that, rather than carrying out a full formal review, the existing NSD would be refreshed, updated and extended for a further five years. A number of emerging issues (including prescription drug misuse; legal highs; and links with mental health and suicide) are highlighted in the revised NSD and a range of actions has been developed to address these issues. The revised NSD issued for public consultation in March 2011. Responses have been analysed and are very supportive of the approach being taken. The strategy is now being finalised in light of consultation responses and it is anticipated that it will be published before the end of this year.

At Risk Register

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the criteria used to assess whether a child should be placed on the At Risk Register.

(AQW 2591/11-15)

Mr Poots: The criteria used to assess whether a child should be placed on the At Risk Register are set out in the Department's guidance, Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2003) and in the Regional Child Protection Committee's Policy and Procedures Guidance. Social Workers are required to follow this guidance and will exercise their professional judgment when responding to the particular circumstances of individual children and their families. Following a comprehensive assessment of risk, which concludes that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, the child's name should be included on the Child Protection Register. When a child's name is included on the Child Protection Register, a Child Protection Plan is put in place for the child which, among other things, sets out how identified risks will be managed and the welfare needs of the child met.

Hospitals: Building Improvements and Building Projects

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much has been spent on building improvements and building projects at each acute hospital in each of the last five years. **(AQW 2593/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The attached table details capital spend at each acute hospital in each of the last 5 years, including the new SW Hospital at Enniskillen.

Hospital	2006/07 (£000'S)	2007/08 (£000'S)	2008/09 (£000'S)	2009/10 (£000'S)	2010/11 (£000'S)	Totals (£000'S)
Belfast City	7,185	482	4,277	2,655	5,600	20,199
Royal Group	16,165	13,284	25,433	22,771	49,071	126,724
Mater	940	1,336	624	1,651	1,839	6,390
Antrim Area	0	403	4,949	2,884	2,908	11,144
Causeway	0	387	75	654	567	1,683
Ulster	22,238	18,674	20,858	27,188	14,790	103,748
Craigavon Area	5,109	17,001	6,747	12,530	3,335	44,722
Daisy Hill	0	472	2,195	369	3,222	6,258
Altnagelvin	27,727	20,120	16,175	11,149	2,054	77,225
SW Hospital Enniskillen	13,786	5,297	3,321	1,900	1,252	25,556
Totals	93,150	77,456	84,654	83,751	84,638	426,649

Percentage of the Population Diagnosed with Cancer

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the percentage of the population diagnosed with cancer in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) constituency; and (ii) council area. **(AQW 2594/11-15)**

Mr Poots: There were on average 8,223 annual incidences of cancer in Northern Ireland between 2007 and 2009 (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer). This represents around half a percent of the population.

Table 1 and table 2 outline the yearly percentage of the population diagnosed with cancer in 2007, 2008 and 2009 in each Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Area (WPC) and District Council/Local Government District (LGD). The percentage rate makes no allowance for differences in the age and gender of the population in each area and care should therefore be taken when comparing these rates between the areas.

Table 2 also outlines the standardised incidence ratio (SIR) at LGD level for 2007-2009. This rate is age standardised which allows for relative comparison between the areas. SIRs at WPC level is not available.

TABLE 1 INCIDENCE OF CANCER* BY WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AND YEAR OF DIAGNOSIS (2007-2009)**

	Incidence as percentage of the population		
	2007	2008	2009
Belfast East	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
Belfast North	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Belfast South	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
Belfast West	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
East Antrim	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
East Londonderry	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Foyle	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Lagan Valley	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Mid Ulster	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Newry & Armagh	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
North Antrim	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
North Down	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
South Antrim	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
South Down	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Strangford	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
Upper Bann	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
West Tyrone	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Northern Ireland	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%

1.2% of cancer incidences over this period have no geography attached.

* Excluding non-melanoma skin cancer

** 2008 boundaries

TABLE 2 INCIDENCE OF CANCER* BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT AND YEAR OF DIAGNOSIS (2007-2009)

	Incidence as percentage of the population			Standardised incidence ratio (NI=100) (95% CI)	
	2007	2008	2009	2007-09	
Antrim	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	99.6	(91.0,108.3)
Ards	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	92.4	(86.2,98.6)
Armagh	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	106.4	(98.1,114.6)

	Incidence as percentage of the population			Standardised incidence ratio (NI=100) (95% CI)	
	2007	2008	2009	2007-09	
Ballymena	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	96.3	(89.2,103.4)
Ballymoney	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	93.3	(82.8,103.8)
Banbridge	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	88.5	(80.1,96.9)
Belfast	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	109.4	
Carrickfergus	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	97.0	(88.0,106.1)
Castlereagh	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	91.9	(85.5,98.3)
Coleraine	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	98.2	(90.8,105.5)
Cookstown	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	99.1	(88.6,109.6)
Craigavon	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	100.3	(93.9,106.8)
Derry	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	104.3	(98.1,110.6)
Down	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	102.4	(95.1,109.7)
Dungannon	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	92.9	(84.7,101.1)
Fermanagh	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	92.1	(84.9,99.4)
Larne	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	107.3	(96.8,117.7)
Limavady	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	102.0	(90.9,113.1)
Lisburn	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	105.7	(99.9,111.5)
Magherafelt	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	95.9	(86.4,105.5)
Moyle	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	99.4	(85.5,113.3)
Newry & Mourne	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	105.3	(98.7,112.0)
Newtownabbey	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	91.9	(85.8,97.9)
North Down	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	95.3	(89.4,101.2)
Omagh	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	91.1	(82.8,99.4)
Strabane	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	101.0	(91.1,110.9)
Northern Ireland	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	100.0	

1.2% of cancer incidences over this period have no geography attached.

* Excluding non-melanoma skin cancer

This information has been provided by the Northern Ireland Cancer registry and is the most up to date available.

Accident and Emergency Units

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number patients who were not (i) treated; (ii) admitted; or (iii) discharged within the target time of 12 hours of arrival, in each month since April 2011 at the Accident and Emergency Unit of the (a) Belfast City Hospital; (b) Mater Hospital; and (c) Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 2598/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of patients who were not (i) treated; (ii) admitted; or (iii) discharged within the target time of 12 hours from their arrival, is not currently available.

However, information on the time spent by patients in an emergency care department from their arrival until admission, transfer or discharge, is collected and published on a quarterly basis. This information is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-monthly_waiting_times.htm

Accident and Emergency Units

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number patients who were not (i) treated; (ii) admitted; or (iii) discharged within the target time of four hours of arrival but were treated, admitted or discharged within 12 hours of arrival, in each month since April 2011 at the Accident and Emergency Unit of the (a) Belfast City Hospital; (b) Mater Hospital; and (c) Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 2599/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of patients who were not (i) treated; (ii) admitted; or (iii) discharged within the target time of four hours of their arrival but were treated, admitted or discharged within 12 hours of their arrival, is not currently available.

However, information on the time spent by patients in an emergency care department from their arrival until admission, transfer or discharge, is collected and published on a quarterly basis. This information is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-monthly_waiting_times.htm

Accident and Emergency Units

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number patients who were not (i) treated; (ii) admitted; or (iii) discharged within the target time of four hours of arrival, in each month since April 2011 of the Accident and Emergency Unit at the (a) Belfast City Hospital; (b) Mater Hospital; and (c) Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 2600/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of patients who were not (i) treated; (ii) admitted; or (iii) discharged within the target time of four hours from their arrival, is not currently available.

However, information on the time spent by patients in an emergency care department from their arrival until admission, transfer or discharge, is collected and published on a quarterly basis. This information is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-monthly_waiting_times.htm

Accident and Emergency Units

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number patients who were (i) treated; (ii) admitted; or (iii) discharged within the target time of four hours of arrival, in each month since April 2011 at the Accident and Emergency Unit of the (a) Belfast City Hospital; (b) Mater Hospital; and (c) Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 2601/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of patients who were (i) treated; (ii) admitted; or (iii) discharged within the target time of four hours from their arrival, is not currently available.

However, information on the time spent by patients in an emergency care department from their arrival until admission, transfer or discharge, is collected and published on a quarterly basis. This information is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-monthly_waiting_times.htm

Pay Bill of the Health Service

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any plans he has to reduce the pay bill of the Health Service for the 2011-15 budget period, broken down by year.
(AQW 2602/11-15)

Mr Poots: Controls on the Health and Social Care pay bill are already in place and include: continuation of the pay freeze for all staff earning over £21k ending in 2012/13; vacancy controls; reduction of reliance on agency workers and further efficiencies through the introduction of shared services. Over the budget period, there will be continual monitoring of cost pressures including pay bill costs. PEDU are currently carrying out a review of the efficiency of DHSSPS.

Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) when future meetings of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence are scheduled to take place; and (ii) whether the group will be providing a progress report on the implementation of the Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan.
(AQW 2612/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following completion of the current “Tackling Violence at Home” Action Plan which runs to April 2012, a progress report evaluating the implementation of the actions will be provided to the Inter-Ministerial Group. At this stage, proposals on the way forward to integrate the domestic and sexual violence strategies will have been developed and will be presented to the Inter-Ministerial Group for consideration.

Prevalence of Dementia

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the prevalence of dementia in each of the last five years.
(AQW 2614/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF) of the General Medical Services contract, the total number of GP-registered patients diagnosed with dementia is recorded. Table 1 shows the raw prevalence of dementia in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

TABLE 1: RAW PREVALENCE OF DEMENTIA PER 1,000 REGISTERED PATIENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 2007- 2011

Year	Raw prevalence of dementia per 1,000 registered patients ^{1,2}
2007	5.26
2008	5.32
2009	5.38
2010	5.71
2011	5.97

Source: Payment Calculation and Analysis System (PCAS)

Notes:

- 1 The prevalence is calculated based on the number of patients on the dementia register as a proportion of the full GP registered list for Northern Ireland.
- 2 The disease register data is extracted on National Prevalence Day each year, which was on 14 February up to 2008, but was changed to 31 March from 2009 onwards. The GP registered list size is taken as at January of each year.

Cerebral Angiogram

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current average waiting time for a patient to receive the results of a cerebral angiogram in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 2626/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board have informed me that catheter cerebral angiograms are performed at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

These cerebral angiograms are undertaken by a radiologist following a referral from a consultant, whom in the majority of cases is a neuro-surgeon. The results of the procedure are usually available for the referring consultant to view on the Northern Ireland Picture Archive and Communication System (NIPACS) within 48 hours of the procedure being undertaken, with a paper copy of the report forwarded to the referrer soon after. It is then the responsibility of the referring consultant to communicate the results of the procedure to the patient.

Information on the length of time taken for consultants to communicate the results of cerebral angiograms to patients is not readily available. The calculation of this information would incur a disproportionate cost.

Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Support Services

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department spent on community-led suicide prevention and bereavement support services in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2627/11-15)

Mr Poots: A total of £2.3 million of the Protect Life strategy's £3.2 million annual budget is currently allocated for the delivery of community-led suicide prevention and bereavement support services. A breakdown of expenditure on these services over each of last five financial years is outlined in the table below:

Protect Life Initiative	Funding 2006/07	Funding 2007/08	Funding 2008/09	Funding 2009/10	Funding 2010/11
Community Support Funding	£500k	£1.8m	£2.060 m	£2.230m	2.3m

Register of Deliberate Self-Harm

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the information held on the Register of Deliberate Self-Harm which is used to inform the delivery of accident and emergency services and psychiatric follow-up.

(AQW 2628/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Deliberate Self Harm Registry holds the following data items: gender, age, date and time of attendance, admission details (where applicable), method(s) of self harm, and details of psychiatric assessments undertaken at Accident and Emergency Departments. This information is subsequently

made available to the Health and Social Care system to help inform planning and service delivery in a wide range of areas, which include:

- Identification of need for Child and Adolescent or Adult Mental Health specialists within A&E;
- Staff rota management to ensure cover at peak attendance times;
- Targeting of resources to deal with increases in specific self-harm methods;
- Treatment of people who self-harm while under the influence of drugs and alcohol;
- Reduction in number of patients leaving without seeing an A&E Clinician;
- Recording of the “Card Before You Leave” protocol.

Register of Deliberate Self-Harm

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how many people have had personal information held on the Register of Deliberate Self-Harm, broken down by (i) each of the last five years; (ii) constituency; and (iii) council area.

(AQW 2629/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Deliberate Self-Harm Registry was established in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area during 2007, and it was extended to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area in 2011.

All data held in the Deliberate Self-Harm Registry is anonymised; therefore, no identifiable personal information is recorded.

Annual reports are produced which report on deliberate self-harm rates by participating Health and Social Care Trust areas and by associated local council areas. The next reports are due for publication by the end of 2011.

Suicide and Self-Harm

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much his Department has spent on local research into suicide and self-harm, broken down by (a) each of the last five years; (b) constituency; and (c) council area; and (ii) who carried out the research.

(AQW 2630/11-15)

Mr Poots: The need for further research in a number of areas relating to suicide prevention is highlighted in the Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan, “Protect Life – A Shared Vision”.

The amount spent on local research in each of the last five years is detailed in the table below together with the name of the organisation or individual who carried out the research:

Year	Amount	Service Provider
2006	£7, 448	Millward Brown Ulster
2006	£5,000	University of Ulster & QUB
2007	£29,500	Social Market Research
2007	£4,050	Millward Brown Ulster
2007	£14,700	SMR
2007	£73,000	University of Ulster & QUB
2008	£8,200	Claria Research
2008	£29,950	Social Market Research
2008	£13,900	Millward Brown Ulster
2008	£12,880	McCready Donnelly and Lowry Consultants

Year	Amount	Service Provider
2008	£20,000	Carecall
2008	£96,000	University of Ulster & QUB
2008	£12,880	McCready Donnelly and Lowry Consultants
2009	£20,000	Magee Consultancy and Quaesitum
2009	£5,000	Millward Brown Ulster
2009	20,000	Northern Ireland Association of Mental Health
2009	£5,000	Jim Deeds
2009	£18,000	Deloitte
2009	£31,826	University of Sterling
2009	£39,000	University of Manchester
2009	£74,000	University of Ulster & QUB
2010	£190,147	NI Association for Mental Health
2010	£19,700	Moore Stephens Consultancy
2010	£62,513	University of Ulster
2010	£75,493	Northern Ireland Association of Mental Health
2010	£10,000	University of Sterling
2010	£30,000	University of Manchester
2010	£5,000	Millward Brown Ulster

This information is not available by parliamentary constituency or council area.

Complaints Against Midwives and Maternity Units

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many complaints have been lodged against (i) midwives; and (ii) maternity units in each hospital, in each of the last five years. **(AQW 2634/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Information on the number of complaints lodged against (i) midwives; and (ii) maternity units in each hospital, in each of the last five years, is not currently available.

However, information is available on the number of complaints received by HSC Trusts relating to the Maternal and Child Health Programme of Care, for each of the last four years, detailed in the table below.

HSC Trust	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Belfast	148	92	180	178
Northern	75	71	10	22
South Eastern	47	59	32	94
Southern	21	9	9	2
Western	31	38	44	29
Total	322	269	275	325

Source: CH8

Rainbow Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 1755/11-15 (i) why the Rainbow Project's 2010/13 revenue grant renewal application to his Department was approved, given that its forward plan stated that it would lobby for Section 75 to be extended to include schools and the promotion of good relations between people of different sexual orientations, particularly as the Department does not allocate funding to be spent on lobbying for an expansion of gay rights; and (ii) how much funding has been allocated to the Rainbow Project by each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2638/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The revenue grant renewal application towards the central administrative costs of the Rainbow Project was approved by my Department to help achieve an agreed schedule of activities which support the aims and objectives of the Department's Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan. Rainbow is an independent charitable organisation; its forward work plan includes activities beyond the scope of the Department's financial contribution.
- (ii) I am advised that funding provided from the Health and Social Care Trusts to the Rainbow Project in each of the last five years is as follows:
- (iii)

	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
WHSCT	*	£36,013	£21,496	£39,077	£36,730
NHSCT	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
SHSCT	NIL	£9,358	£3,000	NIL	NIL
SEHSCT	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
BHSCT	NIL	NIL	£2,000	£17,593	£12,000

* Unable to confirm funding provided by legacy Trusts.

Social Care Trust

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much each Health and Social Care Trust has spent on secure data and document storage in each of the last ten years.
(AQW 2640/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below sets out expenditure incurred by Health and Social Care Trusts for off-site external document storage in each of the last four years. Expenditure prior to April 2007 could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	431,220	563,723	609,000	510,000
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	13,053	12,948	23,152	21,811
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	115,134	151,060	177,703	112,586
Western Health & Social Care Trust	0	0	0	0
Southern Health & Social Care Trust	62,235	88,551	97,519	57,827
NI Ambulance Service	0	0	0	0
Total	621,642	816,282	907,374	702,224

It is not possible to provide details of costs associated with secure electronic data storage, as this information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Card Before You Leave Scheme

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Card Before You Leave scheme in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 2652/11-15)

Mr Poots: All Trusts have confirmed that the Card Before You Leave scheme is in operation in each A&E Department in their area. The scheme facilitates those patients who have self harmed and have presented to the Emergency Department, but who are assessed as being of low risk to themselves or others, to avail of a full mental health assessment the next day. The patient is given information on keeping safe and an appointment to attend mental health services the following day.

Prescription Medicines

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to quantify the amount of prescription medicines that were returned by patients to community pharmacists in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) retail cost; (ii) volume; and (iii) unfinished courses of medicine.

(AQW 2658/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information being requested regarding the quantification of the actual amounts and costs of medicines being returned to Community Pharmacists by patients is not available in the format requested.

Studies have indicated that around 11% of UK households have been found to have one or more medicines that are no longer being used. The Department ran a successful advertising campaign in 2010-11 to encourage the reduction of prescription drug wastage across Northern Ireland.

Prisoners who are Drug Dependent

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide an estimate of the percentage of prisoners who are drug dependent; and whether there has been a change in this figure in the last three years.

(AQW 2661/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of prisoners registered on my Department's Drug Misuse Database is set out in the table below:

	Number of prisoners on the Drug Misuse Database
2007/08	148
2008/09	162
2009/10	188

The Drug Misuse Database holds information on problem drug users throughout Northern Ireland presenting to drugs treatment agencies, for the first time or after a period of 6 months. It is not possible to estimate the percentage of prisoners who are drug dependent, only the number of prisoners on the database between April 1 to March 31 for each of the years listed above.

A problem drug user is defined as a person who experiences social, psychological, physical or legal problems (related to intoxication and/or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence) as a consequence of their own use of drugs or chemical substances. Drugs are defined as any drug, whether prescribed or not, including solvents and tranquillisers, but excluding alcohol and tobacco.

Orchardville Day Centre, Finaghy Road, Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much has been spent on transporting clients to and from the Orchardville Day Centre, Finaghy Road, Belfast, including day trips, in each of the last three years; (ii) how much of this was paid to a private transport company; and (ii) when did the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust start using the private transport company.

(AQW 2678/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the Member to the table below which sets out, in the format requested, money spent on transporting clients to and from Orchardville Day Centre.

Year	Cost of Trust Transport*	Cost of Private Transport Provider	Total
2008-09	£310,595	Information not available	N/A
2009-10	£310,520	£41,228	£351,748
2010-11	£315,531	£35,857	£351,388

* Includes the operating cost of 6 vehicles (including capital charges), drivers and bus escorts.

The Trust has been using a private transport operator to provide a service for clients attending Orchardville Day Centre from East Belfast since July 2006.

Suffolk Day Centre: Physiotherapist

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the physiotherapist is due to retire from the Suffolk Day Centre; and whether she will be replaced.

(AQW 2679/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised that the physiotherapist currently employed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust at Suffolk Day Centre will retire on 1 November 2011.

The Trust plans to replace this member of staff at the earliest opportunity, following approval by the Belfast Trust Scrutiny Committee.

Vacant Health Service Posts

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Health Service posts were vacant on 1 September 2011.

(AQW 2722/11-15)

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

The Department of Health collects information on the number of vacancies within Trusts on a bi-annual basis (as at 31st March and as at 30th September) by means of a survey and this information is published on the Departmental website. The latest available report records vacancies as at 31st March 2011 and can be found at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/vacancy_survey_march_2011_web_report.pdf

Expectant Mothers

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of expectant mothers in the East Antrim constituency smoked during their pregnancy in the 2010-11 year, broken down by electoral ward.

(AQW 2744/11-15)

Mr Poots: In the calendar year 2010, 18.4% of expectant mothers smoked during the pregnancy in the East Antrim Westminster Parliamentary Constituency (provisional figures). This compares with 17.5% in 2009.

Due to small numbers, the percentage of expectant mothers that were smoking cannot be broken down by Electoral Ward. The data at this geographical level would not be robust.

This information is taken from the Child Health System supplied by the HSC Trusts and is based on live births only. Please note that in some cases, where an expectant mother has stopped smoking during the pregnancy, her records may not have been updated to reflect this.

Regional information on smoking during pregnancy is also published from the UK wide Infant Feeding Survey (www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/infantfeeding10).

Department of Justice

Convictions for Perverting the Course of Justice

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions for perverting the course of justice have been secured in the last five years.

(AQW 1825/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The table below gives the number convicted for perverting the course of justice under Common Law in the last five years of available data.

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.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONVICTED OF PERVERTING THE COURSE OF JUSTICE – NUMBER CONVICTED, 2002-2006

Year	Number convicted
2002	6
2003	0
2004	7
2005	6
2006	9

Currency Seizures from Prisoners

Mr Allister asked Minister of Justice (i) on how many occasions have there been currency seizures from prisoners 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 2216/11-15)

Mr Ford: Currency seizures from prisoners from 1 January 2009 to date are as follows:

Maghaberry

- 08/02/2009 - £5 note found on a prisoner in visits search box.
- 24/07/2009 - Half a £5 note handed in by a prisoner.
- 06/08/2010 - £10 note found on a prisoner in visits search box.

Magilligan and Hydebank Wood

There are no reported currency seizures in Magilligan or Hydebank Wood for the same period.

Separated Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether Marion Price McGlinchy has signed the required compact for prisoners wishing to be treated as separated prisoners; and if so, when it was signed.

(AQW 2223/11-15)

Mr Ford: Marion McGlinchey (nee Price) has not yet signed the required compact for prisoners wishing to be treated as a separated prisoner. The compact, and the associated information booklet for female separated prisoners, is still in draft form. When the documents are approved for issue Ms McGlinchey will be asked to sign the compact.

Convictions for Possessing Indecent Images of Children

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1636/11-15, given that notification of sex offenders is set by statute and anyone convicted of such offences is automatically subject to notification, whether the prison officers caught with indecent images of children and dealt with internally by the Prison Service are bound by this statute.

(AQW 2232/11-15)

Mr Ford: Notification is a direct statutory consequence of a conviction for a sexual offence. There is no statutory requirement to notify if there has been no conviction for such an offence.

I would refer the Member to the reply given to him on 22 September in AQW 1699/11-15. The matter of the disciplinary cases involving prison officers has been referred to the PSNI.

Human Trafficking

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice what action he intends to take to protect and identify victims of human trafficking; and how does his Department intend to deal with the perpetrators, given that a recent report described Northern Ireland as a gateway for trafficking.

(AQW 2332/11-15)

Mr Ford: I support the work of the Police Service and others in seeking to identify victims of human trafficking, to provide support to those victims and to bring the traffickers before the courts.

My Department funds a comprehensive victim-centred care and support package for adult victims of human trafficking while the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety provides care and support to children. This includes safe accommodation in an environment that is conducive to the recovery of victims. Victims have access to healthcare, counselling, translation services and other necessary advice in line with our obligations under the relevant Council of Europe Convention.

The Organised Crime Task Force Immigration and Human Trafficking Sub Group provides a forum for inter-departmental and cross border co-operation on steps to tackle human trafficking in Northern Ireland. Members include the Police Service, United Kingdom Border Agency, Serious and Organised Crime Agency, DHSSPS and An Garda Síochána.

My Department seeks to engage the public to support our efforts to identify victims and perpetrators of human trafficking by knowing what signs to look out for and reporting information to PSNI or Crimestoppers. With this in mind, my Department has funded publicity campaigns, conferences and workshops. Further information on human trafficking is available at www.blueblindfold.co.uk

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to re-open the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme to ensure that those entitled to it receive payment.

(AQW 2350/11-15)

Mr Ford: Apart from those applications pending the Appeals Panel decisions, the Scheme is now closed and all of the £20m allocated. Therefore I am unable to reopen the scheme to allow late applications.

Prisoner Officers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to confirm when the matter of two prisoner officers being caught with an indecent image of a child was referred to the PSNI.

(AQW 2376/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service consulted with the PSNI on 9 September 2011 and Prison Service staff met with officers from the Child Protection Unit on 28 September 2011 to discuss the case. At that meeting the PSNI advised that the picture did not constitute an indecent image. As no criminal offence has taken place, the police have advised that they will not be taking further action.

Criminal Damage Within Prisons

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total cost of criminal damage within prisons since January 2007

(AQW 2399/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible to detail the cost incurred by each incident of criminal damage since January 2007 except at disproportionate cost to the public purse.

Fuel Laundering

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been convicted of fuel laundering and related offences in each of the last five years, broken down by court division.

(AQW 2419/11-15)

Mr Ford: Her Majesty's Customs and Revenue have advised that in 2009/2010 one person was convicted of fuel laundering or related offences (in Antrim Court) and in 2010/2011 four people were convicted of fuel laundering or related offences in Northern Ireland (one in Armagh, one in Newry and two in Belfast). Information on convictions in previous years is available in the HMRC Autumn Performance Report 2009 – see table 5 on oils (www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/autumn-report-2009.pdf). This does not break down the information by court division.

Domestic Violence

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice which District Policing Partnerships have set targets relating to domestic violence; and whether these targets are qualitative, quantitative or both.

(AQW 2422/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Policing Board has informed me that of the 29 Local Policing Plans set for Financial Year 2011/2012, a total of 12 plans contain targets relating to domestic violence. Nine contain targets to increase detection rates; one has a target to reduce incidents of repeat victimisation; one has a target for the proportion of these crimes for which an alleged offender is arrested; one has a target to support victims of domestic violence and encourage reporting. A list of these is attached.

It is important to note that the PSNI Area Commander, rather than the District Policing Partnership, is responsible for issuing a local policing plan and the associated targets. In line with Section 22 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the PSNI must consult the District Policing Partnership and take account of any views expressed prior to issuing or revising the local policing plan.

A District**West Belfast**

- To increase the detection rate for domestic violence with injury crimes by 5 percentage points.

North Belfast

- To increase the detection rate for domestic violence with injury crimes by 5 percentage points.

B District**East Belfast**

- To increase the detection rate domestic violence with injury crimes by 5 percentage points.

C District**Ards**

- To increase the detection rate for domestic violence with injury crimes by 5 percentage points.

North Down

- To increase the detection rate for domestic violence with injury crimes by 5 percentage points.

D District**Antrim**

- To increase the detection rate for crimes with domestic motivation.

Carrickfergus

- To increase the detection rate for crimes with a domestic motivation.

Lisburn

- To increase the detection rate for domestic violence with injury crimes by 5 percentage points.

Newtownabbey

- To increase the detection rate for crimes with a domestic motivation.

G District**Foyle**

- To reduce the incidents of repeat victimisation of domestic abuse.

Limavady

- To ensure that the alleged offender is arrested in at least 75% of domestic violence with injury crimes.

H District**Ballymena**

- To ensure that our working practices support victims of Domestic Violence within our Borough and encourage the reporting of this hidden harm.

Grants for Community Groups

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what grants are available from his Department for community groups.

(AQW 2432/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Youth Justice Agency provides grants to voluntary bodies and community groups to assist activities which support the work of the Agency in terms of diverting children away from offending.

The Department also provides funding to Community Safety Partnerships, who work with a wide range of bodies including voluntary and community groups.

Prison Officers

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1557/11-15, whether the PSNI was obliged to investigate the possession of indecent images by prison officers when it was made aware of the situation by the Prison Service.

(AQW 2464/11-15)

Mr Ford: A response as to whether the PSNI was obliged to investigate the possession of indecent images by prison officers when it was made aware of the situation is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, and 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.

Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1699/11-15, for his assessment of how the incident in question was handled by the Prison Service.

(AQW 2468/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Service followed internal procedures in the handling of this case. Two members of staff were identified as having emailed inappropriate imagery, Prison Service Headquarters immediately referred the matter to the appropriate Governing Governor, who in turn investigated the cases under the NIPS Code of Conduct and subsequently charged the two officers with gross misconduct.

When this issue was raised with the current management of the Prison Service, they sought the views of PSNI who have confirmed that no

criminal offence was committed. That being the case, it would not be appropriate for them to conduct a criminal investigation into this matter.

Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department has implemented the action in the Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan which states that Departments must explore the implementation of domestic violence workplace policies with private and public sector employers; and if his Department will meet the target implementation date of December 2011.

(AQW 2478/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has the lead in the issue of workplace policies and I understand that this action is being taken forward regionally by the Local Domestic Violence Partnerships (LDVPS) in conjunction with their member organisations. Whilst the exploratory work is on target to be completed by December 2011, work to increase the number of employers who implement Workplace Policies will be an ongoing part of the LDVPS' business. The Northern Ireland Civil Service has a policy in place to support employees who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Prima Facie Evidence

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice, in each of the last four years, how many (i) preliminary investigation; (ii) preliminary enquiry; and (iii) mixed committal proceedings were dismissed at the committal hearing stage because of a lack of prima facie evidence.

(AQW 2490/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information sought is set out below:

Year	Total defendants Committed	Number of Statement of Complaints with a Preliminary Investigation (PI) hearing that were Dismissed	Number of Statement of Complaints with a Preliminary Inquiry (PE) hearing that were Dismissed	Number of Statement of Complaints with a mixed PE/PI hearing that were Dismissed
2007	1,938	2	2	0
2008	1,764	0	1	0
2009	1,754	1	1	0
2010	1,899	0	1	0
Total	7,355	3	5	0

Brendan Lillis

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1751/11-15, what cognisance was given to the medical report by Dr Sean O Domhnaill when the Parole Board was considering the release of Brendan Lillis.

(AQW 2516/11-15)

Mr Ford: The assessment of any evidence in a case before them is wholly a matter for the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland. I am committed to respecting their statutory and operational independence.

Motorists Failing to Stop at a Red Light

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Justice what action was taken against motorists who were caught on camera failing to stop at a red light in each of the last five years; and how much money was generated by fines imposed on these motorists broken down by (i) County Court Division; and (ii) year.

(AQW 2517/11-15)

Mr Ford: Where a motorist is detected by camera to have failed to stop at a red light, a Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Notice (COFPN) is issued by police. The information requested is not available as sought as the revenue received for COFPN offences is not broken down by offence type.

However, the total sums received are set out below and the police have provided information on the number of detections of red light running by police district.

REVENUE FOR COFPN 2007 - 2010

Year	Amount
2007	£716,220.00
2008	£735,420.00
2009	£1,033,680.00

Year	Amount
2010	£879,360.00

NI Road Safety Partnership

Detections at Red Light Running Cameras 2007-2010

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Nelson St, Belfast	23	106	91	168
Castle St, Belfast	2	58	72	53
Middlepath St, Belfast	45	199	279	235
York St, Belfast	21	55	30	34
Millfield, Belfast	72	276	206	152
Glenshane Rd, Foyle	0	63	164	158
Total Detections	163	757	842	800

Note: Red Light Running cameras were introduced in 2007 to five sites in Belfast and in 2008 to one site in Foyle. Please note that due to ongoing work on the VPFPO system, these figures are subject to minor changes.

Power of Attorney Cases

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what requirement is asked by the Courts with regard to insurance in power of attorney cases; and whether this requirement has changed in recent years.

(AQW 2544/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no statutory requirement for an attorney under an enduring power to provide insurance.

Information on Child Abusers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1958/11-15, what guidelines are in place to monitor or police priests who fail to disclose information on child abuse heard under the seal of the Confessional; and whether it falls to the alleged victim to report a priest who has not disclosed the information.

(AQW 2606/11-15)

Mr Ford: As I explained in my earlier answer, the law is clear that it is an offence not to provide information to the police in relation to relevant offences, such as child abuse, unless there is a reasonable excuse. I am not aware of specific guidelines relating to a failure to disclose such information and am not clear how any such guidelines might be applied. It is, of course, open to anyone with evidence of the failure of an individual, such as a priest, to disclose information relevant to a crime to bring this to the attention of the police; although this could also emerge as part of a criminal investigation.

Firearms Certificate

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the administrative costs of (i) granting a firearms certificate; and (ii) altering an existing firearms certificate.

(AQW 2610/11-15)

Mr Ford: The administrative costs of firearm certificate licencing 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.

I have been advised by the PSNI that they have also received this question and will be responding directly.

PSNI Firearms Licensing Branch

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the (i) income; and (ii) expenditure of the PSNI Firearms Licensing Branch in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2611/11-15)

Mr Ford: The income and expenditure of the Police Service of Northern Ireland Firearms Licensing Branch 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.

I have been advised by the PSNI that they have also received this question and will be responding directly.

Legal Aid Fees

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to detail the amount paid in legal aid fees to the ten highest earning people who received legal aid in the 2009/10 financial year.

(AQW 2616/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information regarding amounts paid to the highest earning barristers and solicitor firms for the financial year 2009/10 is published on the Legal Services Commission website, www.nilsc.org.uk.

The Commission does not hold information on the level of individual solicitor's earnings. Legal aid payments that are made to solicitor firms often cover the work of a number of individuals.

Knife Amnesty

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to re-introduce a knife amnesty.

(AQW 2662/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PSNI statistics on violent and sexual offences involving knives and sharp instruments indicate that the number of incidents has dropped by 117 during 2010/2011 compared to the previous year – a decrease of 12.2%.

That said there is no room for complacency and my Department is fully committed to tackling violent crimes, including knife crime. The possibility of a further knife amnesty will, therefore, remain, under consideration as we monitor the ongoing trend in knife crime across Northern Ireland.

Department for Regional Development

NI Railways Enterprise Service from Belfast to Dublin

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average travel time for the NI Railways Enterprise Service from Belfast to Dublin.

(AQW 2088/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Translink advise that the average journey time for the NI Railways Enterprise Service from Belfast to Dublin during the period 25 July 2011 to 21 August 2011 was 135 minutes, based on the 205 journeys made during this period.

Financial Subsidy to Translink

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the annual financial subsidy to Translink, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 2205/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is not possible to outline the annual financial subsidy to Translink broken down by constituency. This is because the major revenue grants are based on subsidising travel on the bus and rail networks as a whole and also because Translink do not break down their costs by constituency.

The largest single grant is the concessionary fares scheme for senior citizens, school children and other specified groups which accounts for over £30m per annum. Concessionary fares are primarily a subsidy to the passenger but are included as it is such an important part of the funding for Translink. The second largest is Public Service Obligation or deficit funding for the Northern Ireland Railways network which is over £25m in the current year. After that Fuel Duty Rebate or rebate on the duty paid on fuel for operating a stage carriage network of services is the next largest annual subsidy to Translink at around £10m. The remaining subsidies relate to support for pensions and delivery of transport services for people with disabilities.

In the absence of being able to answer your question by constituency, I have outlined the total annual subsidies to Translink over the Budget period broken down by bus and rail.

Financial Year	NIR £m	Translink Bus £M	Total £M
2011/12	33.5	35.7	69.2
2012/13	32.7	37.2	69.9
2013/14	33.5	31.4	64.9
2014/15	29.5	32.9	62.4

Cycle Lanes in the Ards Peninsula

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much funding has been identified for the provision of cycle lanes in the Ards Peninsula.

(AQW 2243/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that while no funding has been allocated for cycle lanes on the Ards Peninsula during the current financial year, a contribution to cycling has been made through the provision of a bridge, to be erected over the Ballyrainey Road, Comber as an extension to the Comber Greenway, and by way of technical assistance for that project.

Residential Parking Schemes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the plans for residential parking schemes; and if any consideration has been given to the introduction of a residents parking scheme in Bangor town centre.

(AQW 2261/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2015 identified a number of locations where there should be parking restraint and Roads Service's 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 in 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.

Funding Allocation for the A5 Scheme

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of how the funding allocation for the A5 scheme will impact upon structural maintenance elsewhere.

(AQW 2278/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The budget for period 2011/12 to 2014/15 was announced to the Assembly by the Minister for Finance and Personnel on 4 March 2011. The structural maintenance budget is currently held by my Department's Roads Service is that allocated to it centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel following the Budget 2010 settlement. Progression of the A5 scheme does not necessarily impact on Roads Service's structural maintenance budget.

Residents Parking Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to introduce residents parking schemes outside Belfast; and if so, where and when.

(AQW 2289/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it will consider requests to introduce Residents' Parking schemes in urban areas.

At present, a consultation has been successfully completed on a proposal for a scheme in the Bogside area of Londonderry and details are being finalised in preparation for the necessary legislative procedures.

Elsewhere, I would hope that, in due course, schemes could be progressed in Antrim, Lisburn, Bangor, Ballymena and Carrickfergus, subject to the availability of resources and public acceptance.

Snow and Ice on Footpaths

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he has taken to make it obligatory for the Northern Ireland Local Government Association to work with Roads Service to ensure that snow and ice is removed from footpaths to avoid the injuries and the disruption that were experienced last winter.

(AQW 2296/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I should advise the Member that there is no statutory duty on Roads Service, or indeed on District Councils which have responsibilities for street cleaning, to salt, or clear snow and ice from footways. I do not, therefore, have any powers to compel the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) to work with Roads Service on this matter.

However, I am well aware of the difficulties experienced by the public during the last two winters and for that reason, my Department's Roads Service has held a series of meetings with NILGA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) representatives, throughout the summer period. The purpose of these meetings was to establish a consensus on a number of points of principle, 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 can be put in place. These may be specifically tailored for each individual Council, in relation to the agreement of schedules of footways, call-out arrangements, or salt delivery arrangements. It is planned that the agreements will be in place 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.

Salt Bins and Grit Piles on Public Roads

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the shortages last winter, whether his Department plans to increase the number of salt bins and grit piles on public roads.

(AQW 2297/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that arrangements are in place to maintain approximately 4,200 salt bins and almost 40,000 grit piles at pre-agreed strategic locations on public roads across Northern Ireland. These locations meet the required criteria and are monitored on a regular basis, including during the cyclical highway inspections.

Roads Service uses best endeavours to maintain all of these bins with salt supplies. During hazardous weather conditions, the replenishment of salt bins is given a high priority and requests for salt replenishment are duly actioned, as resources permit.

During the exceptional period of cold weather, in December 2010, Roads Service employed all of its available resources, as well as additional contractor squads, to replenish the salt boxes that were in place. Unfortunately, I am informed that occasionally after refilling, the salt was sometimes completely removed from many bins, frequently on the same day and often by people for use in other areas. This made it very difficult to keep up with the demand for replenishment, and also resulted in some members of the public encountering difficulties or delays accessing salt supplies.

The current policy does not limit the numbers of salt bins or grit piles in any area provided they meet the required criteria. However, salt bins are not normally provided within 100m of another bin.

Using the current criteria, new salt bins and grit piles can be, and are being, requested and supplied on an ongoing basis and in doing so, my Department's Roads Service is increasing the number of salt bins and grit piles on public roads this winter.

Salt Used by Roads Service

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amount of salt used by Roads Service last winter in each division.

(AQW 2298/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the volume of salt used by my Department's Roads Service, broken down by Division, are provided in the table below:

Roads Service Division	Volume of Salt Used (Tonnes)
Northern	35,383
Southern	25,201
Eastern	17,085
Western	21,479
DBFO Contractor (Motorways)	11,205
Total	110,353

Clearing of Ice and Snow from Roads

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether Roads Service has made the clearing of ice and snow from roads around schools a priority for this winter.

(AQW 2299/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that following the severe wintry conditions experienced at the start of December 2008, Roads Service carried out an examination of its operational response to areas around rural schools. This examination resulted in Roads Service

introducing enhanced communication arrangements, and priority “secondary” salting to the 46 rural schools most affected by weather conditions throughout the winter of 2008/09. This amended policy, which is designed to give priority to such schools, will be in operation again this winter.

Roads Service maintains the policy at a local level, taking into consideration local weather conditions. There is flexibility to add other schools as conditions dictate throughout the winter period.

At the same time, the criteria for the provision of grit/salt piles and salt bins were also amended so that these can now be provided to affected schools, upon request.

NI Water’s Major Incident Plan

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the predictions of severe weather conditions to occur as early as October, (i) when NI Water’s Major Incident Plan will be tested; and (ii) when NI Water plans to launch its winter publicity campaign to provide advice on lagging and burst pipes prior to potential severe drops in temperature.

(AQW 2300/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) its Major Incident Plan has been revised following lessons learnt from last winter and a mock incident exercise will be held on 26 October 2011, a number of stand alone procedural tests have already been completed; and (ii) NIW’s winter awareness campaign has already commenced with discussions held with various stakeholders to raise awareness of the need to protect water pipes. Those consulted include vulnerable groups, business groups, the Ulster Farmers’ Union, local councils, the Housing Executive and the Education & Library Boards. A winter warmer campaign was launched on 14 September 2011 which promoted the ‘lag and tag’ message to ensure customers are aware of the location of their stop valve in the event of a burst pipe. In addition, a message and advice on how to ‘protect your pipes’ is available on NIW’s website www.niwater.com and an extensive public awareness advertising campaign with the key message of ‘Don’t Wait, Insulate’ will run from 24 October 2011, using a wide range of media outlets. The campaign will include a leaflet drop to all NIW customers throughout Northern Ireland.

Footpath Resurfacing or Upgrade Schemes

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the footpath resurfacing or upgrade schemes planned for the Magherafelt District Council area in each of the next two years.

(AQW 2306/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2303/11-15.

Policy on Cleaning Departmental Signage

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department’s policy on cleaning departmental signage.

(AQW 2309/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department’s Roads Service regularly inspects all public roads and footways to ensure that essential response maintenance is identified and completed as necessary. During these inspections, all defects, including defective signs and signs requiring cleaning to improve their visibility, are noted.

The frequency of these inspections and the subsequent action varies according to the type of road and the volume of vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

Proposed New Roundabouts for the Craigantlet Hills, North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed new roundabouts for the Craigantlet Hills, North Down.

(AQW 2311/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is anticipated that a planning application and environmental statement for this major improvement scheme to upgrade two junctions in the vicinity of Craigtantlet Crossroads will be submitted in autumn of this year.

However, the timescale for construction of this proposed scheme, which is expected to cost in the region of £2.1 million, will be dependent on the outcomes of the various statutory processes, land acquisition and the availability of the necessary finance.

While a firm commitment on funding for this project cannot be given until the various statutory processes have been successfully completed, the scheme remains a high priority for Roads Service.

Road Surfacing Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new road surfacing schemes are planned for the Donaghadee area in the next two financial years.

(AQW 2312/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

Footpath Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new footpath schemes are planned for Conlig in the next four financial years.

(AQW 2313/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

Supply of Grit in Rural Areas

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he has taken to ensure that there will be an increased supply of grit available in rural areas this winter.

(AQW 2351/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that its winter service policy and procedures, which set out the criteria for the salting of roads, are based on the well established practice of targeting the limited resources available for this service on the busier main through routes.

Roads Service has no statutory obligation to salt roads, but 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.

Roads Service salts main through routes carrying more than 1,500 vehicles per day. In exceptional circumstances, roads with difficult topography carrying between 1,000 and 1,500 vehicles per day will also be salted. The application of this policy ensures that 28% of the total road network, which carries around 80% of traffic, is salted. In an average winter, Roads Service would usually use around 50,000 tonnes of salt at a cost of around £5 million. During last year's severe weather, Roads Service used over 100,000 tonnes of salt at a cost of over £10 million.

In addition, small settlements in rural areas containing 100 dwellings or more also have salted links to roads on the main salted network and, priority "secondary" salting is provided to around 50 rural schools that are most affected by the adverse weather conditions. Salting may also be undertaken in urgent situations such as to provide access for the emergency services, unforeseen occurrences such as funerals or to help get fuel or feed stocks to farmers.

Arrangements are also in place to use farmers and contractors to assist with clearing snow from local roads and for the provision of approximately 4,200 salt bins and almost 40,000 grit piles on public roads.

I understand that over 14% of the total amount of salt used during last winter was applied to local roads not on the salted network, to help alleviate conditions in appropriate situations and to replenish salt bins and grit piles.

During the exceptional conditions of last winter, all available resources as well as additional contractors squads were employed, to replenish the salt boxes that were in place. Unfortunately, after refilling, the salt was on occasions completely removed from a number of boxes, frequently on the same day and often by people for use in other areas. This made it very difficult to keep up with the demand for replenishment and unfortunately also denied other members of the public access to salt supplies.

While the current policy does not limit the numbers of salt bins or grit piles in any area provided the request satisfies the required criteria, salt bins are not normally provided within 100m of another bin.

I can confirm that My Department's Roads Service will continue to the use best endeavours to maintain all grit piles, and any requests for replenishment of salt boxes will be dealt with as a matter of priority, as resources permit.

A37 Limavady-Coleraine Road

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to upgrade the A37 Limavady-Coleraine Road which has been scheduled for improvement for a number of years.

(AQW 2356/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTNTP), published in 2005, envisaged the provision of improved overtaking opportunities for Coleraine bound traffic through the construction of a 2.3 kilometre climbing lane on the west side of Keady Mountain, at Gortcorbies.

In completing this scheme, Roads Service needs to take account of the attractive Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and would wish to develop an environmentally friendly and cost effective design. However, issues relating to the disposal of the substantial volume of surplus material that would arise from construction have consistently frustrated development of the scheme.

Unfortunately, given the current financial climate and based on the funding currently allocated to my Department, construction of the Gortcorbies Climbing Lane is not anticipated to commence before 2014/2015, at the earliest.

A2 at Ballykelly Village

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development at what stage are the plans to (i) decide which is the preferred route; and (ii) provide a bypass on the A2 at Ballykelly village.

(AQW 2357/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the preferred route for the Ballykelly Bypass was announced in March 2010. The proposed scheme is for the construction of 4.2km of dual carriageway that will pass to the south of Ballykelly village. A proposed junction at the Loughermore Road will provide access to and from the dual carriageway.

The Investment Delivery Plan (IDP) for Roads, which was published in 2008, identifies the delivery of the A2 Ballykelly Bypass during the plan period 2008–2018. Unfortunately, the funding levels within the current budget do not allow for construction to start before 2014/15 at the earliest. The timing of delivery will be dependent on the allocation of finances beyond the Budget 2011-15.

Privately-Owned Farm Railway Crossings

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to provide technology at privately-owned farm railway crossings to enhance safety and provide an early warning system.

(AQW 2363/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has approved funding to Northern Ireland Railways of £3,378,000 for a User Worked Crossing Safety Improvement Programme on the railways network. Work is under way to investigate the need for safety improvements and to look for practicable solutions where improvements are deemed appropriate.

Given that the greatest safety improvement for any User Worked Crossing is closure, the initial approach is to investigate the potential to permanently close such crossings by provision of alternate access.

Where this is not practicable options will be considered for improving safety by provision of equipment such as telephones for users to obtain permission to cross or, if appropriate, warning systems such as Miniature Stop Lights to provide active warning to users of approaching trains.

Each location is unique and when considering the most practicable solution at each Crossing a number of factors are considered. Work is prioritised on the basis of risk and on each occasion the landowner/ authorised user is consulted to try to reach a solution which is mutually acceptable.

Road Surfacing Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what road surfacing schemes are planned for the Millisle area in the 2012/13; and (ii) 2013/14 financial years.

(AQW 2367/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

Footpath Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what footpath schemes are planned for Crawfordsburn village in next four financial years.

(AQW 2368/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

Replacing Footpaths with Asphalt

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of replacing footpaths with asphalt in the North Down area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2370/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not maintain details on the cost of replacing footways and cycle tracks on the basis of its expenditure on a functional activity basis by council area, however, the information is available for the whole of Northern Ireland.

Roads Service's total expenditure on footway and cycle tracks is broken down into resurfacing (using asphalt) and resurfacing and reconstruction works (including emergency works, using macadam, flagstones and block paving, and other surface treatments). Details of the material that the resurfaced/ reconstructed footways and cycle tracks were originally surfaced with are not held.

Details of expenditure for each of the last 5 years on footways and cycle tracks, using asphalt, and the total amount on structural maintenance work on footways and cycle paths, including asphalt, are set out in the table below:

Financial Year	Footways & Cycle Tracks – Resurfacing (asphalt)	Total Footways & Cycle Tracks – Resurfacing & Reconstruction
2006-07	£1,708.000	£2,961.000
2007-08	£1,851.000	£3,302.000
2008-09	£1,685.000	£2918.000
2009-10	£2,443,000	£4,181.000
2010-11	£2,324,000	£4,125.000

Footpaths in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what projects are planned to replace footpaths in North Down in each of the next three years.

(AQW 2371/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2145/11-15.

Footpath Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what footpath schemes are planned for the North Down area in each of the next three years.

(AQW 2372/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2145/11-15.

Replacing Flagged Footpaths with Asphalt

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of replacing flagged footpaths with asphalt in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2373/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2370/11-15.

Traffic Calming Schemes and Lighting Schemes for the Magherafelt District Council Area

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development what (i) traffic calming schemes; and (ii) lighting schemes are planned for the Magherafelt District Council area in each of the next two years.

(AQW 2383/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2303/11-15.

Cycle Lanes

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to increase the number of cycle lanes on roads in the (i) Magherafelt District Council area; and (ii) the Cookstown District Council area.

(AQW 2384/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service advises that details of cycling provision in both Magherafelt and Cookstown Council areas are available in the Sub-Regional Transport Plan, which can be viewed at the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/subregionaltransport/srtp_technical_supplements.htm

Unfinished Private Roads in Developments

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he is taking to ensure that unfinished private roads in developments, where the developer has gone into administration, will be finished to an acceptable standard.

(AQW 2395/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, where a developer has gone into administration, it will initially liaise with the administrator to seek completion of the development's roads infrastructure that has been considered for adoption. Should this work be undertaken by the administrators, or any other responsible party, Roads Service will carry out inspections at key stages during the construction to ensure the roads and footways determined for adoption are completed to the required standard.

If this is not possible, Roads Service will call upon the road bond and arrange for another contractor to complete the necessary works and will again carry out inspections at key stages during the construction. These inspections confirm that the roads and footways comply with the Private Streets (Construction) Regulations (NI) 1994.

Blue Badges

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Blue Badges have been revoked because of their misuse in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2415/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that no Blue Badges have been revoked in the last three years.

Misuses of the Blue Badge Scheme detected by Traffic Attendants are reported to Roads Service. Three such recorded instances of misuse will lead to the withdrawal of the Blue Badge. There are currently no Blue Badges with three recorded instances of misuse.

Blue Badges

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many applications for Blue Badges for children under 2 years old have been received in each of the last three years; and how many have been granted.

(AQW 2416/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Blue Badge Unit advises that the information is not available in the format you have requested. However, I can confirm that of the 102,000 Blue Badges currently in use, 29 were issued for children under 2 years of age.

NI Water: Waste Water Treatment Works

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development what work NI Water intends to carry out on (i) Killyleagh Waste Water Treatment Works; (ii) Ballygowan Waste Water Treatment Works; and (iii) Saintfield Waste Water Treatment Works in this financial year.

(AQW 2423/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) it expects to award a contract during October 2011 for a programme of capital base maintenance work at Killyleagh Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW). (ii) It proposes to construct a replacement WWTW at Ballygowan, to serve both Ballygowan and adjacent catchments, and hopes to identify a potential site during this financial year. Subject to the successful purchase of land and the completion of all statutory processes, a tender competition will be held to secure a design and build contractor to undertake the works. (iii) Work on a significant upgrade of Saintfield WWTW is in the final stages and completion is anticipated in October 2011.

NI Water

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the operational schemes which NI Water intends to carry out in Ballynahinch in this financial year.

(AQW 2424/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that, during this financial year, it plans to commence a £4.5 million project to upgrade Ballynahinch Wastewater Treatment Works to address compliance, capacity and operational issues. It also plans to provide a storm sewer at Magheraknock Road, Ballynahinch and both projects are expected to commence early in 2012.

In addition, NIW is currently progressing work on the provision of a storm sewer at Crossgar Road, Ballynahinch and will soon commence work on the upgrade of Ballynahinch Town Wastewater Pumping Station. It is expected that both these projects will be completed during this financial year.

Residents Only Parking Schemes

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he is considering introducing residents only parking schemes for urban areas of Coleraine.

(AQW 2427/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a Residents' Parking Scheme is currently being considered at Circular Road, Coleraine. The Member should note that the proposed scheme is at a very early stage. Roads Service will assess the results of initial surveys against the qualifying criteria and inform you of the outcome in due course.

Alley-Gating

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on alley-gating in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2446/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2259/11-15.

Class 80 Rolling Stock

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail his plans for the Class 80 rolling stock which has been taken out of service.

(AQW 2499/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Railways has advised that they have already invited registration of expressions of interest from parties wishing to procure all or parts of surplus rolling stock which will become available for disposal over the next year or so. This will be completed in accordance with agreed guidance and in the manner which represents best value for money for Northern Ireland Railways and my Department.

Railway Station in Derry

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to provide a new railway station in Derry which is accessible from the new Peace Bridge.

(AQW 2500/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink is working with Ilex to carry out a joint 'Londonderry Railway Station Feasibility Study' in order to identify the preferred location and concept layout of a new or refurbished station. As part of the study Translink will consider options to continue using the existing location, acquiring and re-using the old station building and also a new build option. The study is expected to be completed during 2011/12.

Translink recognises that Ilex is currently developing the area and the study is being undertaken at this stage so that suitable steps can be taken to protect the identified preferred site. It should be emphasised that there is no funding within the current capital programme for the station to be built.

Realistically progress will depend on the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

Railway Halts at Magilligan and Bellarena

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amount of money which has been spent on improving the railway halts at (i) Magilligan; and (ii) Bellarena in the last twelve months; and

what plans exist for the improvement of these stations in keeping with the development of a modern inter-city rail service between Belfast and Derry.

(AQW 2501/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has not carried out any improvements to Bellarena Halt in the past year, nor are there currently any plans for works at this location. There is no railway halt at Magilligan. The other halt between Coleraine and Londonderry is at Castlerock and there are also no plans for works at this location in the immediate future.

Metro Bus which Overturned Outside Central Station, Belfast

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development how many passengers who were travelling on the Metro bus which overturned outside Central Station, Belfast on 14 August 2011 have submitted compensation claims; and when is the cut-off date for submitting a claim.

(AQW 2518/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: At the time of the incident there were 35 passengers on the bus. To date Translink has received 26 personal injury claims.

The cut-off point for submitting such claims is 3 years from the date of the incident for a personal injury claim before the statute of limitation expires. In respect of a minor the statute of limitation expires when they reach 21 years of age.

Comber Greenway

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are there to connect the Comber Greenway to Comber town centre.

(AQW 2766/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that due to the existing narrow carriageways, which form the most direct route to the town centre and reduced levels of funding over the current Budget period. There are currently no plans to extend the Comber Greenway into Comber town centre.

However, there may be opportunities to provide a cycle lane if a one-way traffic system was introduced to Mill Street, as part of or in connection with, an Environmental Improvement scheme for that part of Comber.

Department for Social Development

Medical Referee Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development, on average, how long a person has to wait for an oral hearing when appealing a 'fit to work' decision by the Medical Referee Service.

(AQW 2156/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The average time an appellant has to wait for an oral hearing for an Employment Support Allowance appeal, where a Work Capability Assessment informed the decision, is 11.35 weeks from when the appeal is received by The Appeals Service.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether he plans to reduce fuel poverty by ensuring that all senior citizens living in social housing have double glazing; and (ii) to detail the timescale for any such plans.

(AQW 2161/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they do not have a category of stock for senior citizen accommodation. However, they do have a number of window replacement schemes included in their planned maintenance programme this financial year which will see work carried out to over 3,200 homes. The Housing Executive Board has set the objective of having all their properties double glazed by 2021 and I am bidding for additional funding in the October Monitoring round to enable the Housing Executive to replace single glazed windows with double glazing and additional insulation measures to tackle the thermal efficiency of individual homes. With regard to Housing Associations, much of their stock already has double glazing and most have advised that they intend replacing any remaining single glazed windows with double glazing in their planned programme of works.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development how he will ensure that Civil Servants based in Belfast and who wish to transfer to Derry as a result of the relocation of state retirement pension services, are able to do so.

(AQW 2169/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The co-location of over 90 posts for state pension and state pension credit services in Londonderry will create a single Northern Ireland Pension Centre. This exercise will not result the creation of new posts, but in the relocation of posts that already exist within the Social Security Agency.

The human resources plans for the re-location of the posts are being managed under a business-driven Recruitment, Training and Redeployment Strategy. A key requirement of the Strategy is the need to ensure that the services provided to customers are maintained throughout the relocation exercise and that Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) policies on staff redeployment and vacancy management are complied with.

Staff needed for the relocated function will be identified from a range of sources, including those staff currently in post and who wish to move with their post; Departmental staff who have been identified for redeployment; and NICS staff placed on priority pools for redeployment, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) work adjustments and Welfare transfers. In addition, in order to secure the degree of experience necessary to allow the maintenance of service levels, and to reflect the fact that this exercise is essentially about the relocation of existing posts, staff across the Department with relevant experience have been invited to express an interest in the vacancies available. If vacancies remain after these stages, expressions of interest will be invited from staff across the wider NICS.

Housing Executive Properties

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in the North Antrim constituency are not fit for habitation, broken down by (i) the type of dwelling; and (ii) the areas within the constituency.

(AQW 2179/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary Constituency. However, figures from the 2009 House Condition Survey in relation to unfitness indicates that, in the Mid Antrim and Causeway Coast areas, the level of unfitness in 2009 for all housing stock was estimated to be 4% and 1% respectively. This compares with 2.4% for Northern Ireland. These figures relate to all tenures and include vacant dwellings.

Attendance Allowance and Carers Allowance

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development (i) what systems are in place to ensure that the Attendance Allowance and Carers Allowance is received by people who require it; and (ii) what support, guidance and monitoring is provided for people in receipt of the Attendance Allowance and the Carers Allowance.

(AQW 2201/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Benefit uptake is a key Social Security Agency priority and since 2005 specific exercises within the overall uptake programme have focused on increasing uptake of Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance. This has resulted in over 5,000 successful claims to Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance generating an additional £12 million in annual benefits and arrears for customers. A strand of this years' uptake Programme will again focus on people who could be entitled to Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance with over 16,000 people being targeted specifically and offered a full benefit assessment. This work is complemented by participation in local promotional events and general assistance with information and advice through the Social Security Agency's network of offices and Outreach Service which provides a home visiting service to vulnerable customer requiring assistance with all aspects of the benefit claims process.

People who are in receipt of Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance can request information or make general enquiries through a dedicated Customer Contact Centre operated by the Social Security Agency for these benefits. This service is supplemented by a Freephone Benefit Enquiry Line providing general advice and information on all social security benefits, including Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance. The notification advising a customer of entitlement to Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance is also accompanied by an information leaflet about the benefits.

Child Poverty in the East Antrim Area

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 1728/11-15, what steps his Department has taken, and plans to take, to address the high level of child poverty in the East Antrim area. **(AQW 2234/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Although OFMDFM has lead responsibility for tackling child poverty my Department clearly has a key role to play. My Department has recently contributed to the Executive's delivery plan for the Child Poverty Strategy and I am keen for this work to be progressed. My Department included its main strategies for tackling child poverty in all areas including;

- Providing financial support for parents through the social security system and through the delivery of better child support arrangements. This includes the Benefit Uptake Programme which since 2007 contacted over 15,000 families and offered a full benefit assessment carried out by an independent advice sector partner;
- Raising the standards of housing available for young people and families in both the private rented and social housing sectors;
- Tackling fuel poverty in the most vulnerable households through our Fuel Poverty Strategy;
- Funding the provision of advice and volunteer services and a range of programmes, such as the areas at risk programme which have a direct impact on the lives of families in most need.

In the East Antrim Constituency Area my Department provides funding through the Community Investment Fund (CIF) to two recipient Groups. DSD CIF funding to these Groups for 2011/12 is:

Carrickfergus Community Forum	£60,642
Larne Community Development Programme	£50,379

Warm Homes Schemes

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Social Development what steps he intends to take to refocus the Warm Homes Schemes on targeting and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups. **(AQW 2250/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Department's primary tool in tackling fuel poverty is the Warm Homes Scheme and since its introduction in 2001 the Scheme has provided over 90,000 household with insulation measures and over 23,000 households with heating measures. The Warm Homes Scheme now targets privately owned or privately rented properties where there is no central heating, solid fuel, Economy

7 or Liquid Petroleum Gas heating. The Scheme also offers insulation for privately owned or privately rented accommodation.

I have asked officials to review our approach to energy efficiency improvement taking account of lesson learned from the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme and the recent University of Ulster report “Defining Fuel Poverty in Northern Ireland: a Preliminary Review”.

External Cyclical Maintenance Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what external cyclical maintenance schemes are planned for the Bangor area in the (i) 2012/13; and (ii) 2013/14 financial years.

(AQW 2307/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are no external cyclical maintenance schemes programmed in the Bangor area for 2012/13.

An external cyclical maintenance scheme is in the Housing Executive’s 2013/14 programme for Kilcooley, covering 291 dwellings at an estimated cost of £640,000. This will of course be subject to the availability of finance.

Jobseeker’s Allowance

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development how many males in the East Londonderry area have (i) applied for; and (ii) received Jobseeker’s Allowance in each of the last six months.

(AQW 2348/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Data is only held on successful claims to Jobseeker’s Allowance.

The table below shows the number of new male claimants in the East Londonderry Parliamentary Constituency whose claim to Jobseeker’s Allowance started in the 6 months between 1 February 2011 and 31 July 2011.

Month	New male claimants
Feb-11	306
Mar-11	319
Apr-11	312
May-11	319
Jun-11	361
Jul-11	310

Access Routes to Portrush

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what action is being taken to (i) improve the visibility on the access routes to Portrush; and (ii) implement a strategic improvement urban plan for Portrush.

(AQW 2358/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I can advise the following actions by my Department in relation to Portrush:

- (i) The Department operates an Urban Development Grants scheme which is available to property owners and developers in all urban cities and towns across Northern Ireland including Portrush. The aim of the scheme is to make the built environment within town centres more attractive, to improve their overall competitiveness and make them more economically sustainable. Properties located on arterial routes into towns which meet the scheme’s criteria are eligible for grant

support. Funding for any individual project is subject to a satisfactory assessment and the budget resources that are available to my Department.

- (ii) My Department is working in partnership with Coleraine Borough Council to implement the Western Peninsula Strategy for Portrush, which was launched in 2007. As part of this, my Department has made significant funding contributions towards major public realm schemes on the East Strand, which was completed in June 2011, and at Station Square, which has now commenced. In addition the Department has engaged consultants to report on the feasibility of re-locating the train station to unlock potential development land for use as a hotel, spa and conference centre. A report by the consultants is expected to be completed shortly which will inform the next steps by my Department.

Shops at Kilcooley Square in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department owns the shops at Kilcooley Square in Bangor.

(AQW 2365/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No, however, I can confirm that the six shops at Kilcooley Square, Bangor, are owned by the Housing Executive.

External Cyclical Maintenance Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what external cyclical maintenance schemes are planned for the Holywood area in the (i) 2012/13; and (ii) 2013/14 financial years.

(AQW 2366/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive have 2 external cyclical maintenance schemes planned for the Holywood area in the next two financial years, subject of course to the availability of finance. The schemes are:

2012/13	Redburn/Strand	310 dwellings at an estimated cost of £682,000
2013/14	Loughview	247 dwellings at an estimated cost of £543,000

Housing Executive District Offices

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department intends to take to improve consistency in Housing Executive district offices, given that there are no over-arching Government guidelines for consistency of practice.

(AQW 2404/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive already has a comprehensive framework of checks and controls in place to ensure consistency of performance and compliance with policy and procedures across all of their District Offices. These include the following:-

District Business Plans:-

Each District Office is required to produce an annual Business Plan which requires each Manager to agree SMART performance objectives linked to the corporate objectives. These plans are approved by the Area Managers and quality assured by the Director responsible for District Offices.

Risk Management:-

All District Systems and Activities have been risk assessed to ensure that all risks are either mitigated or have controls in place to manage inherent risk. Each District Office is independently inspected to ensure that the controls are being operated satisfactorily (Primary Control Inspections). System Controls:-

In addition all major systems have in built system controls which are also inspected as part of the Primary Control Inspections.

Key Performance Indicators:-

There are Key Performance Indicators which set performance targets for all major housing activities. These targets are cascaded down to District Office level and are reported in the District Business Plans.

District Manager Assurance Statements:-

Assurance Statements for Senior Managers have recently been introduced as part of the Housing Executive's Corporate Governance Framework of Control. These statements provide formal confirmation on the effectiveness of the systems of internal control that managers have in place to fulfil their responsibilities.

Homelessness Strategy

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department intends to take to ensure that the Housing Executive implements its Homelessness Strategy without further delay.
(AQW 2407/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive's Draft Homelessness Strategy 2011/16 went out for consultation in June 2011 and closed on 17 August 2011.

A number of comprehensive responses (19 organisations plus multiple group seminar responses) these are currently being considered with a view to finalising the Strategy as soon as possible.

Once finalised an action plan will be developed to accompany the Homelessness Strategy, and working groups will be developed to monitor progress.

Meanwhile work continues on a number of extant programmes and initiatives to tackle homelessness.

Houses in Multiple Occupation Inspections

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many Houses in Multiple Occupation inspections have been carried out in the Foyle constituency in the last 12 months; and (ii) what percentage of properties failed to meet the criteria.
(AQW 2411/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that 82 Houses in Multiple Occupation Inspections were carried out in the Foyle constituency in the last twelve months and of those inspections 52.44% failed to meet the HMO standards.

Appropriate action has been taken on these cases by the serving of Statutory Notices

Housing Associations

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development, in the case of an emergency, how many housing associations can acquire service from contractors who are not on their selected lists.
(AQW 2412/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Within Housing Association contracts there will be provision for dealing with emergencies which ensures that appropriate procurement procedures are followed.

Housing Executive: Home Heating Systems

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the impending oil price increases, whether he has any plans to discuss with the Housing Executive its policy on replacing home heating systems.
(AQW 2425/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has carried out a review of its heating policy which has been submitted to the Department for consideration. That review considers all aspects of the Housing Executive's heating policy including home heating systems. I understand that the Housing Executive intends to publish its review in due course.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development for an estimate of the percentage of households, with at least one senior citizen resident, that will be in fuel poverty as a result of the current fuel price increases.

(AQW 2426/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Fuel poverty is measured through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's House Condition Survey and the latest survey was undertaken in 2009. The survey found that 53% of households headed by a person aged 60 to 74 and 76% of households headed by a person aged 75 and over were in fuel poverty. In addition the survey found that 83% of lone older households were in fuel poverty.

The next House Condition Survey is due to report in autumn 2012 and will take account of increases in energy prices.

Jobseekers Allowance

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development how many females in East Londonderry have applied for Jobseekers Allowance in each of the last six months; and how many applications were successful.

(AQW 2428/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Data is only held on successful claims to Jobseeker's Allowance.

The table below shows the number of new female claimants in the East Londonderry Parliamentary Constituency whose claim to Jobseeker's Allowance started in the 6 months between 1 February 2011 and 31 July 2011.

Month	New female claimants
Feb-11	130
Mar-11	143
Apr-11	116
May-11	130
Jun-11	195
Jul-11	187

Funding for Community Groups

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail all funding provided by his Department to community groups in North Down in the last twelve months.

(AQW 2431/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Funding is provided my Department to community groups in North Down in the last twelve months through;

The Regional Development Office fund Neighbourhood Renewal and Small Pockets of Deprivation Programmes;

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive fund local community groups;

The Voluntary & Community Unit funding under the Community Support Programme, the Community Investment Fund Programme, the Areas at Risk Programme and the Volunteering Small Grants scheme.

The table below sets out funding details for the above funding.

Funding Programme	Amount
Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (including Small Pockets of Deprivation)	£258,199.19
Community Support Programme (DSD element)	£34,621.00
Community Investment Fund	£164,850.00
Areas at Risk	£91,128.00
Volunteering Small Grants*	£15,400.00
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	£34,791.00
Total DSD Funding	£598,989.19

* The Volunteering Small Grants Programme is administered on behalf of the Department by Volunteer Now and the allocation shown above covers both the North Down and Ards council areas.

Homeless People

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development, given that an estimated 38 percent of homeless people are single and are amongst those finding it most difficult to find accommodation, what his Department is doing to help them find accommodation.

(AQW 2456/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive endeavours to assist all applicants on the Common Waiting List, and recognises that single people face particular difficulties obtaining accommodation.

In addition, households, including single person households, are provided with housing advice regarding alternative housing options, for example, access to the private sector, advice on housing benefit and the availability of private sector properties. A rent guarantee/bond scheme for the private sector is also available in some areas across Northern Ireland which is likely to be expanded in 2012. Applicants, if agreeable, are signposted to these schemes for further consideration.

The Housing Executive will continue to assist all applications for accommodation but it must be recognised that there are limitations in regard to stock, especially for single applicants.

Grants for Community Groups

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what grants are available for community groups.
(AQW 2465/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development administers a range of grants for community groups as follows: -

(A short summary of each of the programmes below has been placed in the Assembly Library for future reference).

Voluntary & Community Unit

- Community Support Programme
- Community Investment Fund
- Volunteer Bureaux Initiative
- Small Grants Programme

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

- Strategic Partnerships
- Community Development
- Community Cohesion
- Small Pockets of Deprivation (SPOD) Scheme
- Alpha Programme

Social Security Agency

- Innovation Fund

Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate (BCCRD)

- Laganside Events Grant
- Laganside Community Activity Grant

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Urban Development Grant
- Areas at Risk

Regeneration of Queen's Parade, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the regeneration of Queen's Parade, Bangor.

(AQW 2466/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department and the developer are in the process of negotiating a Development Agreement for the site which will set out the nature of the development to be delivered and the timescale for its implementation. I anticipate that the agreement will be signed in April or May 2012.

Due to the scale and complexity of the project, it is estimated that it will take the developer between 18 and 24 months to draw up detailed plans, secure planning permission and assemble the site. The Department has established a Project Board to manage the regeneration scheme. The Department has also established a Community Engagement Partnership to liaise with the local community throughout the process.

Flats in the Rathgill Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his plans to refurbish the flats in the Rathgill Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 2467/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are 16 flats in Rathgill Park, Bangor (12 housing Executive properties and 4 owner occupier).

Later this year, the Housing Executive plan to survey all flats to identify those that would benefit from better insulation and/or new windows.

Next year (2012/13) replacement heating will be installed in the Housing Executive flats and in 2014/15 new kitchens are planned again only for the Housing Executive properties.

This work is expected to cost approximately £180k and when completed should make the flats more comfortable for residents.

Interface Violence in East Belfast

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to his Department of (i) repairs; (ii) adaptations; and (iii) forced house moves as a result of interface violence in East Belfast this summer.
(AQW 2514/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The final costs have not yet been established however the Housing Executive maintenance costs for cleaning up following the violence currently stand at £6,580.

The cost of enhancing the security of the roofs of Housing Executive properties in Thistle Court and the Newtownards Road is estimated at £56,000 and will be undertaken in the coming weeks.

Habinteg Housing Association has already spent over £17,500 on adaptations (including the conversion of a number of properties from oil to gas heating) and the cleanup of their properties in Duke Street following the violence. They have also recently agreed to replace the roof tiles on their homes along the interface with metallic, fire resistant tiles. This work is expected to cost in excess of £50,000.

Connswater Housing Association has already spent between £1,250-£1,400 replacing panes of lexon glass in a number of their properties. They met with their tenants last week to discuss a variety of options to help better protect their homes on the Newtownards Road. Following that meeting they have agreed to carry out further work to safeguard these homes/tenants but those costs are not yet known.

Whilst no tenants have yet moved following the violence, two have indicated they would prefer to be re-housed and arrangements are already in place to manage this once suitable alternative accommodation is available.

Price of Alcohol

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what plans his Department has to address the price of alcohol.
(AQW 2575/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Through the Young People's Drinking Action Plan, my Department have been working closely with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) to look at the availability of alcohol – including how it is priced, promoted and marketed. In March, a joint DSD/DHSSPS consultation on the introduction of minimum pricing of alcohol and other alternative measures to tackle the availability of cheap alcohol was issued and this ended on 26 June. Responses are currently being analysed and an options paper is being developed for consideration by Health Minister Poots and myself before a decision on the way forward is taken.

I am also concerned at the use of promotional practices by the licensed trade which may encourage excessive consumption of alcohol. My officials are engaging with the key stakeholders on the possible introduction of a code of practice aimed at preventing the irresponsible promotion of alcohol.

Flats in the Kikcooley Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has to renovate the flats in the Kikcooley Estate, Bangor.
(AQW 2577/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has just completed an Economic Appraisal looking at each of the options for the flats at Kilclief Gardens in Kilcooley. I understand that it has just been approved by the Board of the Housing Executive and will be submitted to the Department for approval in the coming days. I will ensure that the process is completed as soon as practicably possible and will be happy to update the member on the outcome of this once a decision is made.

Grants to Make Homes More Energy Efficient

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what grants are available from his Department to make homes more energy efficient.

(AQW 2618/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department's primary tool in making homes more energy efficient is the Warm Homes Scheme. Since the scheme was launched in 2001 insulation measures have been installed in over 90,000 homes across Northern Ireland and 23,000 homes have benefited from heating measures. In addition, the Housing Executive has increased the energy efficiency of its stock through their annual Heating Replacement Scheme.

In June 2011 I launched a pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme. A budget of £2 million was allocated which I expect will assist over 1,300 households. The rationale for the pilot scheme was to offer assistance to householders on low income who miss out on other energy efficiency improvement schemes such as the Warm Homes Scheme. All potential applicants have been identified and contacted by leaflet encouraging them to apply. I recently opened the scheme up to householders aged 70 and over, in receipt of Lone Pensioner Allowance, with old inefficient boilers.

New Build Social Houses: Burren Road, Warrenpoint

Ms Ruane asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed new build social houses planned for Burren Road, Warrenpoint.

(AQW 2711/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are no schemes in the Social Housing Development Programme for the Burren Road, Warrenpoint.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Official Tours of Parliament Buildings

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission why the script used for official tours of Parliament Buildings has no reference to the memorial tablets to former Members who were murdered by the IRA; and if it will amend the script to include a reference to the memorials.

(AQW 2632/11-15)

Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The aim of the tour of Parliament Buildings is to provide an insight into the day to day procedural work of the Northern Ireland Assembly. In addition the tour also aims to highlight the building's architecture and history of usage. As the duration of the tour is only 45 minutes it is not possible to cover every aspect of the procedural work, architecture and history of usage, however if a Member wishes a tour to incorporate particular features in more detail then this request is normally accommodated.

The tour regulations were reviewed and approved by the Assembly Commission in 2001.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission whether the Special Adviser to the Speaker 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 2785/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Speaker does not have a Special Adviser. The Adviser to the Speaker, as Head of the Office of the Speaker with responsibility for providing support and advice to the Speaker, Principal Deputy Speaker and Deputy Speakers, is

a full-time, permanent employee of the Assembly Commission who was appointed following open competition in January 2011. The Assembly Commission does not utilise the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scales for its staff. The Adviser to the Speaker is paid on the Assembly Grade 3 salary scale. This is a 6-point salary scale with a scale minimum of £57,608 per annum and a scale maximum of £65,259 per annum. In line with the public sector pay freeze, this salary scale was not up-rated in 2010 or 2011.

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		Ballycastle and Rathlin Island	WA 43

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10-Day Target for Payment of Invoices	WA 68	Positions at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine	WA 74
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Revised Written Answers

Friday 7 October 2011

(AQW 1407/11-15)

The PSA woodland creation target during 2008/11 remained unchanged at 1650 hectares, however the actual output over the period was 754 hectares or less than 800 hectares referred to in your question.

The Forest Service Business Plan 2011/12 sets a woodland creation target of 200 hectares for the 2011/12 year. This is a realistic and achievable target, which 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 2011/12 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.

(AQW 2052/11-15)

There have been more than 5,200 custodial sentences handed down at the Magistrates' Court which have been appealed. A further breakdown in the form requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Information on the outcome of all Magistrates' Court appeals is set out in Tables 1 to 3 below.

MAGISTRATES' COURT APPEALS AGAINST CONVICTION AND/OR SENTENCE

2008	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied	Appeal Dismissed	Appeal Abandoned/Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	50	319	94	55	518
Ards	17	168	57	113	355
Armagh and South Down	29	169	72	38	308
Belfast	47	178	58	76	359
Craigavon	15	197	96	75	383
Fermanagh and Tyrone	95	243	160	151	649
Londonderry	11	94	28	49	182
Total	264	1368	565	557	2754

2009	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied	Appeal Dismissed	Appeal Abandoned/Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	80	246	118	64	508
Ards	12	165	35	60	272
Armagh and South Down	25	203	69	75	372
Belfast	40	158	59	80	337
Craigavon	37	234	109	59	439
Fermanagh and Tyrone	29	249	200	175	653
Londonderry	12	71	123	77	283
Total	235	1326	713	590	2864

2010	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied	Appeal Dismissed	Appeal Abandoned/Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	69	245	105	66	485
Ards	17	105	82	86	290
Armagh and South Down	34	203	53	42	332
Belfast	52	222	124	91	489
Craigavon	22	274	178	46	520
Fermanagh and Tyrone	67	349	248	179	843
Londonderry	2	51	77	58	188
Total	263	1449	867	568	3147



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