

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 8 March 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze Site

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will publish any market research carried out on the location of the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze site; and which other locations were considered or tested.

(AQW 18905/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre is being built at Maze/Long Kesh in accordance with Recommendation 3.3.12 of the All-party Maze Consultation Panel Report (February 2005).

The Maze Consultation Panel Report "A new future for the Maze/Long Kesh" 24 February 2005 recommended that the Government should commit immediately to the design and construction of a major new conflict transformation facility specified to the highest architectural standards appropriate to an international centre of expertise, and embracing iconic art elements in the specification sufficient to signify the major political and social investment in promoting peace and prosperity and the transformation of society.

- Maze Consultation Panel Membership:

Political Nominees

David Campbell, Chair (UUP)
Michael McKernan, Vice Chair (SDLP)
Roy Bailie, UUP nominee
Gerry Cosrove, SDLP nominee
Mairtin O'Muilleoir SF nominee
Edwin Poots, DUP nominee

Extensive consultations take place on an ongoing basis with many stakeholder groups, reference groups and local residents to obtain how their needs may best be met on the site.

Rowntree Foundation: Measuring Poverty

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have met with the Rowntree Foundation to discuss the issue of measuring poverty and to learn from other jurisdictions.

(AQW 19523/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have not met with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to discuss measuring poverty. However, officials, along with colleagues from other departments, have met with JRF in relation to the development of the longer term approach to the Delivering Social Change (DSC) framework. This framework has been established by the Executive to achieve a sustained reduction in poverty and disadvantage.

Officials will continue to keep in contact with JRF to monitor its work on a UK anti-poverty strategy and to exchange ideas and information as the Programme for Government work on tackling disadvantage progresses.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the consultation on the childcare strategy, (i) what engagement has taken place with employers on their inclusion in providing solutions to childcare for employees; (ii) what assessment has been made of the benefits to businesses from providing childcare support for employees; (iii) how businesses can be incentivised to provide childcare solutions to their employees; and (iv) whether they have considered introducing regulations which would require some employers to provide childcare.

(AQW 19786/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Public consultation on the Childcare Strategy is underway. It is an opportunity for all with an interest in childcare, including employers and employers' groups, to put forward proposals to inform and shape the final Strategy. The Department has been accepting written submissions since the start of the consultation on 5 December 2012 and public consultation events, which began on 20 February, will provide a further opportunity for direct engagement in the Strategy's development. All proposals for the future Strategy are welcome and will be taken fully into account. In parallel to public consultation, research is being undertaken to identify and critically assess options, including those put forward during consultation, for potential intervention in the childcare sector.

Ebrington Barracks: Underground Car Park

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the construction of an underground car park at Ebrington Barracks.

(AQW 19962/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The tender for the construction of a car park and enabling platform at Ebrington closed in December 2013 and a contractor has been appointed. It is expected that work on the project will commence in March 2013.

Child Poverty

Dr McDonnell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they intend to bring forward any new initiatives to tackle child poverty.

(AQO 3409/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Child Poverty Strategy, which was agreed by the Executive in March 2011, continues to inform and steer the actions that are being taken forward by all departments in fulfilment of their obligations under the Child Poverty Act 2010. The second annual report on the delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy is due to be laid before the Assembly by the end of March.

Under the Delivering Social Change framework, we are aiming to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages, as well as improving the health, wellbeing and life opportunities of our children and young people.

The early work taken forward under the framework is focusing on the needs of children and families in order to ensure that the most urgent and significant problems in our society are addressed, including deprivation, social exclusion and disadvantage.

In line with this initial focus, we recently agreed a Children and Young Persons Early Action Document which identifies key priorities to be taken forward over the coming years. The initial six Signature Programmes which we announced on 10 October 2012 have been designed to address some of the key priorities identified within the Early Action Document.

We are keen that further such programmes are identified as a rolling programme of initiatives and are currently giving consideration to a range of possible future signature programmes for a second phase

of work to be taken forward. This may include the development of further interventions to specifically tackle the issue of child poverty.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Byrne asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the work of the Victims and Survivors service.

(AQO 3410/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims and Survivors Service, which opened in April 2012, aims to provide a high quality service to victims and survivors based on individual assessed needs and the provision of high quality services to meet these needs through the funding of Victims' groups, the direct commissioning of interventions and financial assistance to individuals in difficulty.

The Service is committed to ensuring that, through the individual assessment process, victims are made aware of the full range of services appropriate to their needs. The aim is to empower victims and survivors, introducing them to organisations and locations where they can avail of appropriate and effective treatment and/or support tailored to their specific needs. The Service has conducted nearly 300 assessments to date.

Additionally, the Service is in the final stages of completing the assessment of more than 50 applications from groups for funding from the Victim Support Programme 2013-15. This programme will enable groups to provide a wide range of health and wellbeing and social support services directly to victims and survivors in need of help and assistance.

Once the necessary final pre-contract checks have been completed, the Service anticipates that Letters of Offer will be issued to successful groups from March 2013.

Delivering Social Change Signature Projects

Ms McCorley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they plan to bring forward any further Delivering Social Change Signature Projects in the future.

(AQO 3411/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The early work taken forward under the Delivering Social Change Framework is focusing on the needs of children and families in order to ensure that the most urgent and significant problems in our society are addressed – problems such as poor educational outcomes, poor physical and mental health, economic activity, social exclusion and disadvantage.

In line with this initial focus, we recently agreed a Children and Young Persons Early Action Document which identifies key priorities to be taken forward over the coming years. The initial six Signature Programmes we announced on 10 October 2012 were designed to address some of the key priorities identified within the Early Action Document.

The Delivering Social Change Framework aims to reduce poverty and associated issues across all ages, and so whilst this initial focus is on the needs of our children and young people through the delivery of these six Signature Programmes, its longer term objective is to lay the basis for sustained social improvement for all our vulnerable groups. We are therefore keen that further such programmes are identified as a rolling programme of initiatives and are currently giving consideration to a number of possible future signature programmes for a second phase of work to be taken forward.

Family Fund

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what actions they have taken, or intend to take, to address the financial shortfalls facing the Family Fund, given their role in co-ordinating disability issues.

(AQW 20030/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Family Fund is supported financially by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Decisions about the allocation of resources to the Fund rest with Minister Poots.

Our Department has co-ordinated the delivery of a new Disability Strategy which will place the rights of people with disabilities firmly in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Under the Strategy, the Executive is committed to reducing poverty among people with disabilities and their families and to protecting their right to an adequate standard of living. Ministers from all relevant departments will be reporting through the Delivering Social Change framework on the progress they are making towards achieving that goal.

Childcare Funding

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what criteria were set for Departments to bid for the £12m funding ring-fenced for childcare.

(AQW 20031/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive has allocated £12 million over the current Comprehensive Spending Review period to support the development of the Childcare Strategy.

In bidding for a share of the Fund, departments must demonstrate that their proposal contributes to the development of childcare and that it is additional to existing baseline provision for the delivery of childcare services.

Social Protection Fund

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) to detail the bids received for the funding set aside for the Social Protection Fund; (ii) to outline the process that Departments must follow to submit a bid; and (iii) how their Department is addressing the immediate requirements of people who may need to avail of this funding.

(AQW 20090/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would refer you to the answers in AQW 18548/11-15 and AQW 19590/11-15 dated 24 January and 14 February respectively.

Childcare Fund

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 19221/11-15, what mechanism will be used to distribute the remaining money in the Childcare Fund; and will it be opened up for non-government organisations to apply.

(AQW 20174/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: At present, the Executive Childcare Fund is open to bids from Government Departments only. However, these departments can and do bid for funding that ultimately could be delivered to non-governmental organisations or they could bid for a scheme for non-governmental organisations to apply to. A decision on how to proceed with the Fund over its remaining years 2013/14 and 2014/15 will be taken during the development of the Childcare Strategy. This will allow the deployment of the remaining money in the Childcare Fund to align with the emerging priorities of the Strategy.

Conflict Transformation Facility, Maze

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many residential bedrooms will be constructed as part of the Conflict Transformation facility at the Maze.

(AQW 20224/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The planned facilities at the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre currently include shared office space along with conference and meeting facilities

that can be utilised by local and visiting groups to help further the aims and objectives of organisations working in this important sector. The plans do not include residential bedrooms at this stage.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Horse Meat in Beef Products

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures she is putting in place to ensure that there is no recurrence of the contamination of beef with horsemeat.

(AQW 18685/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The Food Standards Agency (FSA in NI) is the central competent authority in matters of food safety and authenticity here. DARD is the competent authority in NI for the Beef Labelling Regulations.

All slaughter premises here (including the facility that formerly slaughtered equines) are staffed by DARD veterinarians and Meat Inspectors. DARD staff are present at all times when slaughter is occurring, to ensure the Food Business Operators' compliance with public health legislation and traceability. Local cutting premises are subject to regular, risk-based audit by DARD vets, for the same purposes.

These activities are governed by a Service Level Agreement with the FSA in NI. Senior officials from DARD and FSA maintain regular formal and informal contact to ensure consistent and effective delivery to the agreed standard, and the FSA performs regular checks and independent audits to ensure the quality of work delivered on its behalf.

These measures have proven effective with to date no reports from the FSA of any finding of horse cross contamination or carryover connected to any of the local slaughter plants.

In response to the recent findings, and current concerns, however, the FSA has developed a 4 point action plan which is being implemented in conjunction with the food industry and other government departments (including DARD) here and across Britain.

In addition to the FSA's food authenticity survey of processed meat products, I asked the FSA (NI) to urgently begin an enhanced programme of inspections in cold stores, and in other meat processing establishments, across the north. This enhanced regime commenced on 6 February and will sit alongside the wider sampling survey.

As part of this, DARD officials have also initiated a series of enhanced checks and inspections in all the red meat slaughter and cutting premises for which it is the FSA's delivery agent. My officials are also working closely with the FSA to ensure that public confidence in beef from animals that have been born, raised and slaughtered here is maintained.

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

Consideration will be given by my officials as to what further actions are appropriate and proportionate, when the investigations under way are complete.

Halal Meat Products

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what legislation exists in relation to the processing, sale and distribution of Halal meat products; and how such processes are inspected.

(AQW 19660/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Food Standards Agency in the north is the central competent authority in matters of food safety, composition and labelling of food offered for human consumption. The statutory rules and regulations that apply to traditional meat and meat products also apply in relation to processing, sale and distribution of meat and meat products described as Halal. In relation to hygiene, processing, authenticity, labelling, sales and distribution, the Food Safety Order 1991 and subordinate legislation apply.

In relation to the welfare of animals, the method of slaughter for the provision of Halal meat is controlled by DARD under the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1996.

All meat placed on the market is produced in accordance with EU food hygiene legislation and is inspected to the same standard.

Enforcement of food safety, food composition and labelling requirements are conducted by Council Environmental Health Officers who carry out hygiene and food standards inspections. Each food business is registered on a premises database and assigned a risk rating to facilitate a programme of inspections/interventions. The scope of hygiene and food standards inspections/interventions is set out in the Food Law Code of Practice and the Practice Guidance.

All slaughter premises here are staffed by DARD Veterinarians and Meat Inspectors. DARD staff are present at all times when slaughter is occurring to ensure the Food Business Operators' compliance with public health and animal welfare legislation and traceability. Local cutting premises are subject to regular, risk-based audits by DARD vets, for the same purposes.

These activities are governed by a Service Level Agreement with the FSA in the north. Senior officials from DARD and the FSA maintain regular formal and informal contact to ensure consistent and effective delivery to the agreed standard, and the FSA performs regular checks and independent audits to ensure the quality of the work delivered on its behalf.

Under the Beef and Veal Labelling Regulations 2010 there is a requirement for any non-compulsory labelling information regarding the characteristics of the meat, such as method of production or breed, to be approved as a voluntary claim. This would include claims for Halal beef. These Regulations apply to fresh and frozen beef and veal but not processed products. All voluntary claims must be approved by DARD, following verification by an independent verifier. These claims are checked during DARD beef labelling inspections and independently verified on an annual basis.

Horse Meat

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the interaction her Department has had with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs with regard to tackling the horse meat scandal.

(AQW 19662/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DEFRA is responsible for matters of food authenticity in England and Wales, while the FSA has this responsibility in Scotland and here.

FSA is responsible for Food Safety in all areas of the country.

As the current issue is primarily one of authenticity rather than safety, DARD officials have been in regular contact with officials from the FSA (NI) with whom responsibility for both authenticity and food safety here rests.

I have participated in tele-conferences with the Defra Ministers and Devolved Administrations on 3 occasions, and most recently in Brussels on 25th February when possible improvements to horse traceability, extension of DNA testing regimes, and the acceleration for enhanced Country-of-origin labelling proposals were discussed.

DARD officials have also contributed to the development of an Action Plan with FSA and Defra.

Central Investigation Service: Fraud Investigation Case

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the process used to decide whether the Central Investigation Service will proceed with a fraud investigation case.

(AQW 19746/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Cases of suspected fraud referred to the Central Investigation Service (CIS) for investigation are immediately registered on the CIS database and reported to the NIAO.

The Head of Central Investigation Service (HCIS) is responsible for reviewing all suspected fraud case referrals and assessing whether or not they merit investigation. While all case referrals merit consideration for investigation, the circumstances of each case will differ and, therefore, each must be considered on its own merits. The HCIS considers a broad range of factors as detailed in the CIS Procedures Manual.

If the HCIS identifies any significant issues of concern, and where it is proposed to not to proceed to fraud investigation, the views of the Head of Branch and the Investigation Officers (IO) will always be sought.

After deliberations the case will either proceed to fraud investigation or the case will be assessed and returned to the relevant business area with the rationale for closure and appropriate recommendations regarding redress.

The CIS Procedures Manual contains policies, procedures and aide memoires for staff reference and adherence, where applicable.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to ongoing Bovine Viral Diarrhoea schemes, what plans her Department has to incentivise farmers to efficiently dispose of infected persistent infection calves rather than allow them to return to the herd.

(AQW 19971/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At farm level, production diseases such as BVD and Johne's Disease can have a significant impact on productivity. Such diseases are not subject to national control programmes and because their impacts are mainly at farm level, it is the responsibility of industry to take the lead in tackling them.

I therefore welcome the launch last year of Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI), which has been set up by industry to lead on the development and promotion of initiatives to tackle such diseases.

In support of this industry-led initiative I am pleased to announce that my Department will provide start-up funding to help Animal Health and Welfare NI deliver its BVD eradication programme and to develop a Johne's Disease control programme.

I have no plans to incentivise farmers who participate in the AHWNI BVD eradication programme to dispose of 'persistently infected' calves. This issue did not form part of AHWNI's Strategic Plan on which the economic appraisal was based. However, as an additional incentive, the proposed start-up funding to AHWNI includes support to subsidise the cost of confirmatory testing of positive animals and their dams. The aim of this testing is to confirm that such animals are PI animals, and not transiently infected, before they are sent to slaughter.

The success of AHWNI's BVD initiative will depend on farmers' buy-in, not just in terms of their participation in the voluntary testing, but also in terms of their willingness to take the necessary actions to deal with infected animals.

In addition to the financial support for the BVD initiative, my Department is also delivering BVD awareness training through the Rural Development Plan in conjunction with AHWNI. The purpose of this training is to help make farmers and PVPs aware of the steps they can take to tackle BVD and the clear economic advantages to the farmer of so doing. Horse Meat

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether farmers have incurred any costs as a result of the horse meat crisis.

(AQW 19999/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There has been extensive testing of meat and meat products in the past few weeks to identify the presence of equine DNA in food. These have included tests carried out by the FSA, DARD and the industry itself.

Farmers have not incurred the cost of these tests.

I met with retailer representatives on 13 February and made it clear to them that the cost of sampling food should fall on those businesses importing or utilising product which doesn't have the authentication provided by our own local traceability systems and that such costs must not fall to our primary producers whose product is second to none.

Fishing Fleet

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department is helping the fishing fleet.

(AQW 20000/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department, through the European Fisheries Fund, provides significant financial support to the local fishing fleet. As well as offering individual grants to vessel owners wishing to modernise their vessels, grant awards have also been made under the Collective Action measure to initiatives which seek to, among other things, improve safety on board, provide training opportunities and improve the sustainability of the marine stocks. To date over £1.75m of EFF and DARD funds have been committed to projects which directly benefit the catching sector. An additional £3.36m has been awarded for improvements to harbour facilities and £0.98m to science projects which both provide indirect benefits to the NI fishing fleet.

My Department also assists the fishing fleet by working to maintain and increase the fishing fleet's fishing opportunities. My Department funds the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) who carry out fish stock surveys and data collection, which contribute to scientific stock assessments. Where these assessments demonstrate that fishing is sustainable my Department will argue in Europe for fishing opportunities to be maintained or increased. For example at the December 2012 Fisheries Council we were able to secure a 6% increase in the Area VII prawn quota, which is our most important stock, as well as a freeze in annual cuts in fishing effort. In addition, during 2012, my Department worked with the industry and the Commission to obtain an increase in the Irish Sea herring quota over a two year period. This was made possible thanks to additional DARD funded AFBI stock surveys that provided evidence that the herring stock could sustain higher fishing levels.

Sporting Rights in Ballypatrick Forest

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) who has sporting rights in Ballypatrick Forest; (ii) what are their responsibilities; and (iii) does their public liability insurance cover car owners on the public road.

(AQW 20047/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) My Department does not own the sporting rights for Ballypatrick forest. I am not in a position to provide you with the name of the private individual owning the sporting rights. The name of the private individual is withheld in line with their expectations of confidentiality and that all processing will take place in accord with Data Protection Principles,

(ii) key responsibilities of those exercising sporting rights are given in the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011,

(iii) my Department does not hold information on the public liability insurance cover of this private individual.

Horse Meat

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many meetings she has had with food retailers and trade bodies since the news of the horsemeat scandal became public knowledge.

(AQW 20056/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have had one joint meeting with representatives of the NI Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) whose members include Spar, Costcutter, Vivo, NISA and many local traders, the NI Retail Consortium (NIRC) whose members include Tesco, Sainsburys, Marks & Spencer and Asda, and a Lidl representative, to discuss the horsemeat issue and promote the reputation of local produce.

I have also had further meetings with the Equine Council for NI (ECNI) and the Chief Executive of Safefood in Dublin since the news of the horsemeat scandal became public knowledge.

Horse Meat

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) how she plans to mitigate the damage caused by the horsemeat scandal to the business of exporting meat; and (ii) the discussions she has had with InvestNI on this matter.

(AQW 20058/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The ongoing horsemeat issue facing the meat processing industry is deeply concerning to consumers, and to the wider meat sector as it is an important part of the agri-food industry which sustains up to 92,000 jobs, and represents around 20 per cent of total private sector employment.

I will continue to work closely with the Food Standards Agency and other government Departments and agencies, including Invest NI, to ensure all efforts are made to protect the reputation of our home grown produce, the sector, and its contribution to our economy.

To date, and to the best of my knowledge, the horsemeat issue has had a limited impact on the industry here in the North as it does not reflect the high quality and traceability of our own locally produced beef and lamb. I will continue to do all that I can to ensure that consumers are made aware, our beef is second to none and that they should have every confidence in the supply chain.

The LMC Beef & Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme and extensive traceability controls throughout the supply chain assure our customers of the total integrity of our beef and lamb. I will encourage consumers to continue to include locally produced red meat as part of their balanced diet and support our local industry. I have already met with representatives of the multiple retailers and emphasised to them the benefits of sourcing quality assured beef and lamb products from the north and building dedicated, sustainable supply chains with our farmers.

My officials have been in regular contact with their counterparts from Invest NI and continue to monitor the situation and share information on a daily basis.

I believe our industry is well placed to grasp any export opportunities that may arise due to the inevitable change in circumstances within existing supply chain arrangements in national and international markets and my Department will work alongside Invest NI and others to explore and develop any such opportunities.

Countryside Management Scheme Inspectors

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, to outline (i) the guidelines used by Countryside Management Scheme inspectors to determine the correct planting of hedgerows (a) prior to; and (b) after November 2012; and (ii) the guidelines used during these inspections.

(AQW 20062/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) DARD staff who carry out inspections for the NI Countryside Management Scheme check against management requirements for hedgerow planting which can be found on pages 59 to 65 of the Countryside Management Scheme 2007 – 2013 Information booklet. This booklet is available on the DARD website at the following link:

http://www.dardni.gov.uk/ruralni/dard_cms_info_cmb.pdf

This information was used both (a) prior to and (b) after November 2012.

- (ii) The guidelines used during these inspections are supplied in part (i) of this answer.

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, with regards to the Countryside Management Scheme, to outline the rationale behind the updated guidelines issued in November 2012.

(AQW 20063/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In November 2012 an addendum was issued as part of the NI Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS) 2007 – 2013 Information Booklet. This addendum provided updated scheme information which reflected changes to guidance for new NICMS agreements with a start date of 1 January 2013. The main changes in the addendum related to eligibility of scrub and the impact of ash die-back disease on availability of ash plants for Field Boundary Restoration.

Changes to advice about scrub reflected an alignment of NICMS with the scrub eligibility requirements developed in response to EU audit criticism.

The ash die-back advice informed scheme participants that, following the introduction of emergency legislation, supplies of ash plants will not be available for the coming planting season for the Field Boundary Restoration option within the NICMS or other options which could involve the planting of ash (such as Ungrazed Grass Margins planted with Native Trees).

Fraud Investigation Service

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the Fraud Investigation Service, to detail (i) the number of staff employed; (ii) the number of alleged fraud cases that it has investigated; (iii) the number of convictions secured; (iv) the amount of money it has recovered; and (v) the operating costs of the unit, over the last five years.

(AQW 20065/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I can confirm the following in relation to the five elements to your question:

- (i) There are currently 3.8 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff in post in DARD Central Investigation Service (CIS). This includes:

- 1.0 Deputy Principal (DP) Head of CIS
- 2.0 Staff Officer (SO) Investigators
- 0.8 Administrative Officer (AO)

At 1 April 2011 there were 4.8 FTE staff in post. During 2011/12 this reduced by 1 SO Investigator to the 3.8 FTEs currently in post.

At 1 April 2010 there were 6.8 FTE staff in post i.e. 1 DP, 5 SO Investigators and a 0.8 AO. During the 2010/11 year this reduced by 2 SO Investigators to 4.8 FTEs.

At 1 April 2009 there were also 6.8 FTE staff in post.

At 1 April 2008 there were 5 FTE staff in post i.e. 1 DP, 3 SO Investigators and 1 AO. During the 2008/09 year this increased by 2 SO Investigators to 6.8 FTEs (the AO moved to part time working).

- (ii) In the current 2012/13 year to date, 51 DARD cases of suspected fraud have been investigated by CIS. During the previous 4 year period, the following number of DARD cases were investigated:

2011/12	29 cases
2010/11	20 cases
2009/10	30 cases
2008/09	31 cases

- (iii) 3 fraud convictions have been secured in the past 5 years. In addition, in this period the CIS obtained 10 cases of successful regulatory/legislative convictions.
- (iv) It is not the responsibility of CIS to recover monies. Recommendations are made to the responsible business area, including, potentially, the application of penalties.
- (v) The running costs to DARD of the Central Investigation Service for each of the last 5 financial years were as follows:

2008/09	£172,000
2009/10	£148,000
2010/11	£122,000
2011/12	£154,000
2012/13	£137,000 (projected)

The figures provided are net of income generated from work undertaken for other Government Departments and Agencies.

Ballypatrick Forest: Sika Deer

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the damage caused to trees in Ballypatrick Forest due to the numbers of Sika deer; and, to detail the acceptable number of deer for the forest.

(AQW 20066/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The damage caused to trees in Ballypatrick forest is primarily limited to some areas of recently planted sites and does not cause a threat to the long term sustainability of the forest. Forest Service continues to keep this under review as part of their normal forest monitoring.

The capacity a forest has to hold deer at a given point in time is dependant on the available habitats and food, both inside and outside the forest. Ballypatrick Forest is a large upland forest containing 1,470 hectares where planting began in the early 1950's and the harvesting and replanting of this first crop of trees is ongoing. To protect newly planted trees, my Department would not wish to see deer numbers at Ballypatrick forest in excess of approximately 120 deer in total.

Illegally Disposed Animal Carcasses

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many cases of illegally disposed animal carcasses have there been reported in the last three years.

(AQW 20079/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There have been 110 reports of burial of cattle by farmers during the period 01/01/2010 until 31/12/2012. This method of disposal is illegal and the farmers concerned have been advised of this. Enforcement action will be taken against any farmer who repeats this action. To date no farmers have been prosecuted for this.

DARD receives reports of illegal dumping from members of the public and enforcement agencies. These reports are received on sporadic but infrequent occasions. All reports are investigated and of these 21 were investigated by the Central Enforcement Team resulting in 10 convictions.

Measure 3.1 Farm Diversification Funds

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much is uncommitted in Measure 3.1 Farm Diversification funds, in each of the groups.

(AQW 20099/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below details the figures you have requested. There are also a number of applications going through the assessment process that are not counted at this stage as committed funds.

	Completed	Issued & Accepted	Commitment	Implementation Plan Target	Uncommitted
ARC	1,307,409	1,119,791	2,427,200	3,645,613	1,218,413
DRAP	303,009	966,885	1,269,894	1,541,564	271,670
GROW	568,150	231,587	799,737	1,364,475	564,738
LRP	648,605	611,162	1,259,766	1,855,290	595,524
NER	1,120,248	1,036,243	2,156,491	2,500,000	343,509
SOAR	740,207	1,064,350	1,804,557	3,549,709	1,745,152
SWARD	1,240,889	1,412,406	2,653,295	3,820,000	1,166,705
Total	5,928,517	6,442,424	12,370,940	18,276,651	5,905,711

DARD: Legal Advice

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department has spent on legal advice in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20127/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Departments legal costs for the last three financial years, as reported in the Departments resource accounts are as follows:

Financial year	Amount
2009/2010	£182,200
2010/2011	£186,757
2011/2012	£205,079

However, please note that these costs are specific to legal fees only and do not incorporate expenditure relating to compensation, outlay and other costs. These costs do not include DSO notional charges.

Fraud Hotline: Costs

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 19384/11-15, for a breakdown of the costs incurred by her Department in relation to raising public awareness of the Fraud Hotline, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20136/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has not publicised the Fraud Hotline over the last three years and has therefore not incurred any costs. However, the Department has developed a Counter Fraud Strategy target to raise the public's awareness of the Fraud Hotline through a new poster campaign. The publicity campaign will be launched later this year.

Forest Service: Shooting Rights

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the tenure of the shooting rights for each forest owned by Forest Service.

(AQW 20145/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are currently 70 Licence Agreements in place for shooting rights in forests owned by my Department. The tenure of these forests is as follows.

CO ANTRIM

Forest	Period of Licence	
Woodburn North Carn	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Clare Ballykenver And Mazes	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Clare Kilmoyle Wood	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Clare East Capecastle	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Craigs	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Glenariff Parkmore	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Portglenone Glenone	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Portglenone Moneystaghan	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Garry Heagles	01/04/2012	31/03/2017

CO ARMAGH

Forest	Period of Licence	
Fews Aughnagurgan	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Fews Armaghbrague	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Fews Bonds Mountain	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Cold Brae	01/04/2012	31/03/2017

CO DOWN

Forest	Period of Licence	
Tollymore Clonachullion	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Mourne Crocknafeola	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Fathom	01/04/2012	31/03/2017

CO FERMANAGH

Forest	Period of Licence	
Castlearchdale	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Big Dog	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Knocks 2 Broughderg, Grogey	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Ballintempo	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Carrigan	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Sillees Coolyermer	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Sillees Glencunney	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Sillees Tullycarby	01/04/2010	31/03/2015
Doon	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Knocks 1	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Jenkin	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Lough Navar	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Spring Grove	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Riversdale and Necarne	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Tully	01/04/2009	31/03/2014

CO LONDONDERRY

Forest	Period of Licence	
Banagher Altbritain	01/04/2010	31/03/2015
Derrynoyd	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Glenshane	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Goles/Sawelbeg	01/04/2010	31/03/2015
Iniscarn	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Moydamlaght	01/04/2009	31/03/2014

Forest	Period of Licence	
Binevenagh Ballybrissel	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Binevenagh 2 Ballyleighry	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Grange Park	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Cam	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Cam Drumrammer	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Cam Kilttest	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Loughermore Knockbrack	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Loughermore East	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Loughermore	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Loughermore Tamnahern, Highmoor	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Muff Glen	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Springwell	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Aghadowey	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Gortnamoyagh	01/04/2008	31/03/2013

CO TYRONE

Forest	Period of Licence	
Dunmoyle	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Cookstown Drumcairn	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Caledon North & South Ballymagran	01/04/2010	31/03/2015
Bradkeel	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Favour Royal Carrickavoy	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Creggan	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Lough Bradan	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Knockmany Errigal	01/04/2010	31/03/2015
Knockmany Killyfaddy	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Fardross	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Ligfordrum	01/04/2008	31/03/2013
Trillick Lissaneden	01/04/2011	31/03/2016

Forest	Period of Licence	
Pigeon Top	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Seskinore	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Cookstown Drumconvis	01/04/2011	31/03/2016
Parkanaur Dunamoney And Legilly	01/04/2009	31/03/2014
Davagh Broughderg	01/04/2012	31/03/2017
Davagh	01/04/2011	31/03/2016

Forest Service Land: Public Safety

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she will ensure that the safety of members of the public accessing Forest Service land is balanced with the needs of people who use the land for recreational and sporting purposes.

(AQW 20146/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service facilitates a large and varied range of activities and events in our forests each year. The safety of forest users is primarily achieved through adherence to the Occupiers Liability Order (NI) 1987 and the implementation of the Forestry Act (NI) 2010 and the supporting Forestry Byelaws.

Permission arrangements whereby third parties use Department land for activities and events are kept under review to ensure landowner responsibilities are fulfilled and organisations carrying out activities do so safely.

It is also important that all forest users act in a manner that protects their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions and our new byelaws provide us with a means to regulate the responsible use of forestry land by visitors.

Dog Licences

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 18770/11-15, to detail the number of dog licences registered in each of the last three years, broken down by council area.

(AQW 20161/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Dog control is legislated for here by the Dogs Order 1983, as amended by the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011. Councils enforce this legislation and provide statistics to my Department regarding its operation.

The table below details the number of dog licences issued in 2010, 2011 and 2012 in each Council area.

	2010	2011	2012
Antrim	4333	4473	4759
Ards	5418	7717	6889
Armagh	4467	4156	2742
Ballymena	8609	9274	9074
Ballymoney	3081	3367	3090

	2010	2011	2012
Banbridge	3689	4238	3918
Belfast	11466	10936	9928
Carrickfergus	2277	2425	2523
Castlereagh	4500	5173	4885
Coleraine	7260	8014	7186
Cookstown	2333	2479	2409
Craigavon	5355	5386	6797
Derry	2646	2871	3004
Down	6704	7047	6556
Dungannon	2661	2650	2473
Fermanagh	5013	5091	3828
Larne	4019	4467	4274
Limavady	2346	2600	2005
Lisburn	9256	9997	10008
Magherafelt	2118	2714	2204
Moyle	1962	1972	2095
Newry	4997	4973	4893
Newtownabbey	5966	7194	6697
North Down	6632	6149	6180
Omagh	2210	2344	2125
Strabane	2302	2960	2492
Total	121620	130667	123034

Illegal Slaughterhouses or Rendering Plants

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any incidences and the location of illegal slaughterhouses or rendering plants, over the last three years; and what action was taken against the operators.

(AQW 20185/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: All approved slaughter premises here are staffed by DARD veterinarians who are present at all times when slaughter is occurring, to ensure the Food Business Operators' compliance with legislation.

There has been an instance of a suspected illegal slaughterhouse found here during the last 3 years. This was brought to DARD's attention by other enforcement authorities during investigations into criminal activities.

There are 2 rendering plants approved here to process fallen animals and carcasses. These are inspected on a monthly basis by Department staff to ensure that they are complying with the regulations. There have been no instances of illegal rendering plants found here during the last 3 years.

LPIS Mapping System

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether, prior to the discovery of the software error in the LPIS mapping system, any of the early batches of maps distributed were affected by the error.

(AQW 20189/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: None of the maps in the early batches were affected by this error.

It is possible, however, that some maps in all batches may have had fields missing for different and unrelated reasons, for example where they were not declared on the previous Single Application form or where a field had been modified during the data capture process.

Solar Energy

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 19543/11-15, to detail the value of the grant awarded to each successful application, broken down by Local Action Group.

(AQW 20200/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The grant awarded to each successful application to Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme for solar energy projects are as follows:

Cluster	Number of Successful Solar Applications	Grant Awarded £
ARC	0	0
DRAP	2	50,000 8,000
LRP	2	1,327 300
NER	1	30,000
SOAR	1	2,400
SWARD	5	10,500 11,000 11,000 26,000 19,000
GROW	0	0

BTEC Certificate in Advanced Professional Investigative Practice

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 19381/11-15, to detail the training requirements and cost of attaining the BTEC Certificate in Advanced Professional Investigative Practice.

(AQW 20230/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Central Investigation Service (CIS) does not currently have any staff undertaking the qualification. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) is the training provider. Further information on the current programme and related costs would be available on their website. WWW.cipfa.org/training.

On-Farm Inspections

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many on-farm inspections her Department has carried out in the last five years.

(AQW 20336/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In accordance with the rules governing the administration of the Single Farm Payment Scheme, my Department must carry out on-the-spot checks on at least 5% of applicants each year. These checks verify eligibility of claims under scheme rules. Table 1 summarises the number of land eligibility inspections carried out on farms claiming Single Farm Payment in each of the last five years.

TABLE 1: SINGLE FARM PAYMENT (SFP) LAND ELIGIBILITY INSPECTIONS FROM 2008 TO 2012

Year	SFP Land Eligibility Inspections
2008	1,935
2009	1,932
2010	1,921
2011	1,893
2012	1,871

Revised Single Farm Payment Entitlements

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of cases of single farm payment entitlements that have been revised in the last five years; and (ii) how many of these were following an on-farm inspection.

(AQW 20356/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- i) The number of farm businesses that have had their Single Farm Payment (SFP) entitlements revised at least once in the last five SFP scheme years is 10,931.
- ii) Our SFP Entitlement Register does not hold information that shows the specific reason(s) for SFP entitlement revisions. However, it is likely that the majority of these entitlement revisions will have taken place because of reduced eligible land identified during on-farm checks. Farmer notified changes of land eligibility can also prompt a revision of SFP entitlements.

Review of Decisions Application Form

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of applications that have been submitted for review using Review of Decisions application form in the last five years; and (ii) how many reviews have been successful.

(AQW 20357/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: From 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2012, my Department received 1,574 Stage 1 review applications and 264 SFP Stage 2 review applications. Of these, 32 Stage 1 and 20 Stage 2 applications did not proceed because the application was lodged after the required deadline or was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant.

Of the remaining 1,542 Stage 1 applications, 1,403 reviews have been completed. Of these the Department changed 182 of its original decisions either in full or in part.

Of the remaining 244 Stage 2 applications, 162 reviews have been completed. Of these the Department changed 28 of its original decisions either in full or in part.

Neonicotinoid Pesticides

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to introduce a ban on the sale or use of neonicotinoid pesticides.

(AQW 20402/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is working with the three other devolved administrations on this issue, as the European Commission have requested views on the future of neonicotinoid pesticides on a member state basis. My officials are also liaising with their counterparts in the south.

Given the environmental and economic concerns relating to neonicotinoids, it is vital to take a proportionate and evidence-based approach to this issue, considering all of the many factors that affect bee populations. Therefore, DEFRA has commissioned field trials, to assess the impact on bees, which will produce final results and evidence within the next few months.

The vast majority of neonicotinoids are used for the treatment of seeds and their use here in the north is relatively limited. Pesticide usage statistics from 2010, provided by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, indicate that the neonicotinoids were used for seed treatment on 0.6% of the agricultural land area in the north of Ireland.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with An Cumann LúthCleas Gael on the supply of ash for the manufacture of camáin (hurling sticks) and the difficulties caused by the outbreak of ash dieback disease.

(AQW 20494/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At present I have had no discussions with An Cumann LúthCleas Gael about the supply of ash for hurley making. However I met hurley stick makers and other forestry stakeholders at a meeting in October last year in Armagh. I explained the options open to us to prevent Chalara ash dieback becoming established here and I learnt from the hurley makers that there were regular imports of ash logs mainly for hurley sticks and for fire wood.

As this is a potential pathway for the introduction of Chalara ash dieback disease I explained that I thought this was an unacceptable risk to Ireland and that I intended to work closely with the authorities in the south along the lines of a "fortress Ireland" approach. The legislation which I introduced on the 6 November meant that ash can only be imported under certain technical conditions as set out in the order. I believe this is a proportionate response to the risk of introducing disease in wood which will allow manufacturers to continue producing hurley sticks.

Similar legislation has been made in the Dáil.

Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme Payments

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what the steps are being taken by her Department to ensure there are no further delays to the Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme payments.

(AQW 20511/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has taken a number of steps to ensure more timely payments are made under the NI Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS).

One of the main reasons for delayed payments for 2010 claims was that the number of inspections had to be increased in-line with EU legislation. This was because a high level of farmer non-compliance and over-declaration was detected at initial scheme inspections. In response to this my Department has assisted farmers to help them meet the management requirements of their scheme agreement.

Subsequently we have made good progress with NICMS payments for 2011 claims. At 28 February last year, 85% payments had been made for 2010 claims, whereas we had paid 99% of claims at the same

date this year. This improvement is, in part, due to my decision last year to reduce the number of new applications which were progressed to agreement stage.

My Department has already started inspecting 2012 claims and payments will begin once inspections are complete. We plan to start making 2012 payments in May, which is four months earlier than the 2011 claims commenced last year.

Badger Settle Surveys

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the total number of farmers in the 100 square kilometre area between Banbridge and Rathfriland who received letters asking for their permission for the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute to conduct badger sett surveys on their land; and (ii) the total number of (a) positive; and (b) negative responses received to date from those farmers.

(AQW 20512/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Letters issued to 619 farmers in the 100km² area between Banbridge and Rathfriland seeking their permission for AFBI to conduct a badger sett survey on their land.

To date, 295 (47.7%) 'Yes' responses and 49 (7.9%) 'No' responses have been received with a further 16 letters returned as undeliverable.

Permissions continue to be received daily and, in order to encourage timely responses and to maximise the number of permissions received, DARD Direct are phoning those landowners who have still to respond and a reminder letter also issued on 1 March 2013.

Farm Safety

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans her Department has to introduce a funding programme aimed at farming families which would allow the implementation of Health and Safety measures on farms.

(AQO 3561/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In November 2012 the Farm Safety Partnership, which incorporates representatives from my Department, the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI), Ulster Farmers Union (UFU), National Farmers Union Mutual (NFUM) and Young Farmers' Club of Ulster (YFCU) launched the Farm Safety Action Plan to look at ways to significantly reduce work related deaths, injuries and illnesses on farms and to drive up health and safety standards on farms.

One area where the Partnership has been exploring is the potential for financial assistance to farmers to promote improved health and safety on farms and I expect a report on its findings to come forward in the near future. I will give serious and immediate consideration to any recommendations from the Farm Safety Partnership in the short and medium term to fund or resource any proposals that will improve health and safety on our farms.

However it is my belief that providing funding for equipment is only part of the answer and that Health and Safety awareness must be incorporated into the day to day activities of the entire farm family. My Department has developed a new health and safety short course directed towards the farming family and this is currently being rolled out across the north and I would encourage as many farmers and family members to enrol on this course as soon as possible.

Farm Maps

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to rectify the inaccurate maps that have been sent out to farmers for the 2013 Single Farm Payments applications.

(AQO 3570/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As a result of a technical fault, 3560 farm business maps were created which had a significant number of fields missing when compared to the farmer's previous Single Application Form. The problem is confined to maps processed as part of the last batch of maps (but a minority of that batch) which issued on 6 February.

This technical problem has now been repaired. I have issued a Press Release advising affected farmers that amended maps are available on-line and via DARD Direct offices. Additionally, their Single Application Form will be printed and sent out 2 weeks later than originally planned to provide additional time to advise of any necessary map adjustments, which can be pre-printed with the updates farmers report. My Department has written to all affected farmers advising them of this.

Rural Development Programme: Grants

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the effectiveness of the Joint Committees and Local Action Groups in delivering Rural Development Programme grants.

(AQO 3566/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Undoubtedly the economic climate has greatly affected the implementation of Axis 3 however the Clusters have now spent almost £40m of the total £100m budget and most are now nearing 100% commitment of all project funds. Over 718 projects are complete with an overall investment to date of £29m and this has helped to create almost 300 much needed jobs in rural areas. More importantly many rural communities and businesses are being sustained by Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme through these difficult times and are being provided with the infrastructure and equipment to maximise recovery.

But I am not being complacent and I have introduced monthly monitoring with a quarterly review of expenditure targets to ensure that all Clusters are achieving their targeted spend and where underspend is identified that these funds are removed and utilised effectively across the programme to ensure that no funds are returned to Brussels.

Broadband: North-West

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her plans for improving rural broadband to assist rural dwellers in the North West.

(AQO 3568/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have agreed to commit £5m to the Broadband Delivery UK project to be used exclusively to target rural areas of high deprivation that currently have no fixed wire infrastructure to access broadband to try and target disadvantage in rural areas. These funds are in addition to the £2.5m my Department has already invested in the Next Generation Broadband project.

My priority is to target areas of deprivation using the multiple deprivation indicators to give rural dwellers the opportunity to be part of the digital revolution and hopefully benefit through better access to the internet and online services. This in turn will give rural businesses and dwellers the opportunity to benefit in real terms from the expansion of the digital world. It is fundamental that we put in place this important infrastructure so that rural areas are not disadvantaged. I know rural parts of the North West will be amongst those that will benefit from this investment.

Puppy Farms

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department is tackling the issue of puppy farms.

(AQO 3569/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 was passed by the Assembly on Monday 18 February 2013 and will come into operation here on 1 April 2013.

The Regulations will provide commercial dog breeders with clear standards which they must meet and maintain to ensure the welfare of all breeding bitches, stud dogs and pups in the establishment. The Regulations provide powers for action to be taken where a breeder does not meet these standards. I have ensured that Council inspectors have powers to take action and to prosecute any commercial breeder who is operating in sub-standard conditions.

I am confident that the new enforcement powers and penalties will act as a deterrent to those taking part in illegal dog breeding activities.

I appreciate that regulation alone will not stop so called "puppy farming". This will take a concerted effort by members of the public, future dog owners, good breeders and enforcement agencies working together to identify breeders, licensed or unlicensed, who put financial gain before the welfare needs of their dogs and pups. However, I believe that the new enforcement powers and tough penalties introduced by the new Regulations send out a clear message that such activities will not be tolerated. As I said in the Chamber on Monday 18 February, working together we can and will stop puppy farming.

Agrifood: Meat Contamination

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how the Veterinary Inspection Service is collaborating with Food Standards Agency officials in relation to dealing with meat contamination concerns in the agri-food sector.

(AQO 3571/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland (FSA NI) is the competent authority in matters of food safety and authenticity, while DARD delivers meat hygiene official controls on FSA's behalf in approved slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments, and hygiene inspections on dairy and egg farms. These activities are governed by Service Level Agreements with the FSA.

The response between Northern Ireland Departments has been co-ordinated through the Food and Feed Incident Management Group, which is chaired by my Chief Veterinary Officer. The Group has met a number of times.

In operational matters, senior officials from DARD and FSA in NI have maintained regular formal and informal contact throughout the incident. The Food and Feed Incident Advisory Panel, chaired by the Food Standards Agency and on which Veterinary Service is represented, has met several times. There is ongoing and regular liaison between FSA and Veterinary Service officials at all levels of both organisations.

Officials from DARD Veterinary Service and Agri-food Inspection Branch also assist the FSA with additional specific inspections on request. In this respect, Veterinary Service staff have carried out a comprehensive round of inspections of all local red meat cutting plants, in the second half of February, and with AfIB, have assisted FSA with a number of investigations during this recent incident.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what compensation arrangements are being put in place to deal with young calves classified as Persistently Infected from Bovine Viral Diarrhoea.

(AQO 3572/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At farm level, production diseases such as BVD can have a significant impact on productivity. Such diseases are not subject to national control programmes and because their impacts are mainly at farm level, it is the responsibility of industry to take the lead in tackling them.

I therefore welcome the launch last year of Animal Health and Welfare NI, which has been set up by industry to lead on the development and promotion of initiatives to tackle such diseases.

In support of this industry-led initiative I was pleased to announce that my Department will provide start-up funding to help Animal Health and Welfare NI deliver its BVD eradication programme and to develop a Johne's Disease control programme.

I have no plans to incentivise farmers who participate in the AHWNI BVD eradication programme to dispose of 'persistently infected' calves. This issue did not form part of AHWNI's Strategic Plan on which the economic appraisal was based. However, the proposed start-up funding to AHWNI includes support to subsidise the cost of confirmatory testing of positive animals and their dams. The aim of this testing is to confirm that such animals are PI animals, and not transiently infected, before they are sent to slaughter.

The success of AHWNI's BVD initiative will depend on farmers' buy-in, not just in terms of their participation in the voluntary testing, but also in terms of their willingness to take the necessary actions to deal with infected animals.

Food Exports

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the consequences for the agriculture industry from expanding its place in the global food marketplace.

(AQO 3573/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The agri-food industry here has shown steady growth over the last decade with the food and drink processing industry alone achieving sales of £4bn in 2011, mostly in external markets. We are all aware, and concerned, about the dramatic fall in farm incomes in 2012. This should be viewed as a setback, and should not deflect our desire to continue to sustainably expand the industry.

The world's population is continuing to grow, with increasing demands for the type of food that we produce – high quality meat and dairy products in particular, and I know that our food companies are well set to meet these opportunities. However, food companies will only be able to meet the rising demand in the market if they have a sustainable supply of raw materials. We know we have producers with the skills and passion to deliver, but above all they need to be profitable.

Growth in itself will not guarantee profitability. Further global expansion will bring challenges such as increased exposure to rising feed and fuel costs, tailoring product to the exacting demands of different markets, stiff competition from other growing economies, and the need to balance growth with environmental sustainability.

To reap the potential rewards of growth, the industry needs to become more efficient, productive and innovative; it needs to be able to stand over the quality, safety and traceability of its produce and also to work more closely with others in the supply chain.

I expect these and other issues to be covered by the Agri-Food Strategy Board when it releases its report in the coming weeks.

Food: Local Produce

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the recent horse meat scandal, what additional resources she will provide to encourage shoppers to buy local produce.

(AQO 3574/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: This whole issue has been regrettable and my Department continues to work with the Food Standards Agency who lead on the investigation relating to the horse meat issue. To date, and to the best of my knowledge, the horsemeat issue has had a limited impact on the industry here in the North as it does not reflect on the high quality and traceability of our own locally produced beef and lamb. I will continue to do all that I can to ensure that consumers are aware that our beef and lamb are second to none and that they should have every confidence in the supply chain.

My Department will be reopening the NI Regional Food Programme in March which will allow eligible agri-food trade and representative bodies to apply for financial assistance relating to the delivery of

agri-food initiatives. The predominant aim of the Regional Food Programme is to raise the awareness of quality, regional food both amongst domestic consumers and international markets, and to promote its consumption by providing financial support in the following four key areas – regional fairs/shows, information programmes, award ceremonies, seminars/workshops. Successful applications to the programme can obtain up to 50% financial contribution on eligible expenditure.

The objectives of the programme are to assist the local agri-food industry to develop and expand profitable and sustainable markets, to develop a thriving rural economy by raising the profile of local quality food and to increase co-operation and communication between all sectors of the local food industry, therefore providing a united front to buyers and consumers. By reopening the programme there will be a great opportunity for the industry to work together to highlight the benefits of purchasing local produce.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Projects Delivered

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the projects her Department and its arm's-lengths bodies have delivered since May 2007, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 18881/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Transfer of Department Functions

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 18947/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The functions which my Department plan to transfer are as follows:

Armagh County Museum

Armagh County Museum will transfer to the new Armagh/ Banbridge/ Craigavon Council.

Water Recreation Sites

Twenty water recreation sites will transfer to local councils. These are small sites which complement other leisure facilities owned by councils.

Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC)

The NIMC provides a support service to local government and independent museums. My department is currently completing a review of NIMC as part of its wider review of Arm's Length bodies, which includes consideration of whether any of its functions should transfer to local government.

Ice Hockey Teams

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding opportunities are available to ice hockey teams.

(AQW 19018/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, which is an arms length body of my Department and distributes funding to sport in the north of Ireland, has advised that it currently has no funding opportunities available for ice hockey teams.

However, Ice hockey teams that are affiliated to Ice Hockey UK, the recognised governing body of the sport in the north of Ireland, may be eligible to apply for future Exchequer and Lottery funded programmes offered by Sport NI. Ice hockey clubs can register via the Sport NI website to receive updates on future funding opportunities as they arise.

Lough Erne: Pike

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in relation to the motion that was carried in the Assembly on 21 February 2012, for her assessment of how the inclusion of an indigenous fish section in the Department's Action Plan is relevant to current actions in Lough Erne in relation to pike. **(AQW 19177/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL is currently taking steps to develop a strategic plan for all fish stocks on Lough Erne. The Department will use scientific advice as the basis for the sustainable management of fish stocks on the Erne and consideration will be given to all factors that may impact on stocks, including commercial fishing.

Cycling Club Funding

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding provided to cycling clubs in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19226/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Over the last five financial years, up to 31 March 2012, Sport NI has provided exchequer funding directly to three cycling clubs totalling £22,075. The details are provided in the table below: -

Date	Club Name	Programme	Amount
11/2/2010	Clann Eireann Cycling Club	Awards for Sport	£1,590
11/2/2010	Newry Wheelers Cycling Club	Awards for Sport	£3,161
16/12/2010	Ballymoney Cycling Club	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	£17,324

Cycling

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what her Department has done to develop the sport of cycling.

(AQW 19227/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Development of the sport of cycling in the north of Ireland is the responsibility of the governing body of the sport, Cycling Ulster. However, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided both exchequer and lottery funding of £1,119,797 to help Cycling Ulster develop the sport in the north over the last five financial years.

In addition, Sport NI provides on-going advice and guidance to Cycling Ulster on a range of development matters, including strategy development, governance, talented athlete support, club development and coaching standards.

Registered Boxing Clubs

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many registered boxing clubs there are in each constituency.

(AQW 19257/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are a total of one hundred and one boxing clubs across the north of Ireland which DCAL understands are currently affiliated to the governing body for the sport, the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA). The numbers affiliated to the IABA within each constituency are detailed below: -

Constituency	Number of Clubs
Belfast East	2
Belfast North	10
Belfast South	3
Belfast West	14
East Antrim	4
East Londonderry	5
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	5
Foyle	6
Lagan Valley	3
Mid Ulster	6
Newry & Armagh	7
North Antrim	3
North Down	3
South Antrim	5
South Down	9
Strangford	2
Upper Bann	6
West Tyrone	8
Total	101

Foyle Cup Annual Football Tournament

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she would consider providing departmental funding for the Foyle Cup Annual Football Tournament.

(AQW 20010/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, through the NI Tourist Board (NITB), is responsible for events policy including provision of support and funding to events including sporting events such as the Foyle Cup. Consideration may be given to future potential funding in the context of my Department's priority of "Promoting Equality and Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion.

Department of Education

Working Class Protestant Children

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education how the Education and Skills Authority will meet the needs of working class Protestant children.

(AQW 20082/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): I welcome the fact that eventually I have been asked by a unionist representative, about the needs of protestant working class children in regards to the role of ESA.

When ESA is established it will be with a balanced and representative membership incorporating the representatives of Transferors of Controlled Schools. It will be equipped with statutory responsibilities for raising standards and school improvement. Therefore, the main way that ESA shall help Protestant working class children will be by working to improve their educational outcomes. Indeed, ESA will be a regional organisation with the capacity to address our uneven profile of educational achievement and performance – within which pockets of disadvantage and underachievement have prevailed. It will bring a common approach to support services focussing on equality and consistency.

In addition to this, ESA shall also be a delivery organisation that, for the first time, has a statutory responsibility for coherent and strategic area-planning of educational provision. It will also provide a regional School Development Service and Governor Support Service.

Finally, ESA shall be supported in its functions by the sectoral body for Controlled Schools. This body will act as advocate and representative for the interests of its sector to both DE and ESA.

Area Planning Process: Further and Higher Education Colleges

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education whether he will include Further and Higher Education Colleges in the Area Planning Process; and why they have not been included to date.

(AQW 20092/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Further and Higher Education Colleges are not the responsibility of my Department. However, educational provision at these facilities may have an impact on Area Planning at post-primary level.

One of the objectives of the Terms of Reference for Area Planning is to take full account of appropriate and relevant FE sector provision for 14-19 year olds. As I stated in my statement to the Assembly on 26 February, the draft post-primary plans provide the foundation on which to move forward and will be further developed to ensure they comply with the Terms of Reference.

Literacy and Numeracy Levels

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education, in light of the recent Northern Ireland Audit Office report into literacy and numeracy levels and given that the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study results show that 76 percent of pupils learning maths were taught by teachers whose main area of study was primary education and did not include a maths specialisation, how his Department intends to raise standards.

(AQW 20116/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Our pupils performed exceptionally well in the recently published Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Our primary pupils were ranked the highest performing English speaking region in the world in both reading (ranked 5th out of 45 countries) and numeracy (ranked 6th out of 50 countries). Whilst the TIMSS study reported that 76 per cent of Year 6 pupils here were taught mathematics by teachers whose main area of study was primary education without specialisation in mathematics, it also reported that 91 per cent of pupils were taught by teachers who felt 'very well prepared' to teach mathematics.

The Department sets the minimum entry requirements for courses of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and has determined that all entrants to primary education courses must have achieved a standard equivalent to a GCSE Grade C or higher in English or English language, mathematics and in a science subject. While these are the minimum entry requirements, entry to ITE courses here is highly competitive and B Ed students generally have higher qualifications than the minimum entry requirement.

The ETI institutional inspection reports from 2009 (B Ed programmes) and 2010 (PGCE) which focused on the preparation of student teachers to develop literacy and numeracy skills amongst pupils through their teaching practice found explicit differentiation within the numeracy session between the learning

intentions for the students and those for the children; the high importance given to the link between the students' own mathematical confidence and competence and their ability to teach numeracy effectively and the provision of remedial support for those students who have particular difficulties with aspects of mathematics.

I have in place a coherent set of policies designed to improve educational outcomes for young people and to address the root causes when pupils are not achieving to their full potential. These policies are working but the challenge now is to ensure their effective implementation by all schools so that the improvement in educational outcomes continues, especially for pupils in socially deprived areas.

In addition, I launched an advertising campaign "Education Works" in September 2012. The campaign is of vital importance and aims to raise the value we, as a society, place on education. It aims to inform and engage all parents, in particular those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more involved in their child's education. It is also intended to impact upon home/family and attitudinal factors by providing parents with consistent, authoritative information on the importance of education and the steps they can take to support their child in achieving good educational outcomes.

Specific Departmental interventions, such as the Delivering Social Change project which will recruit 230 additional teachers, are intended to have a positive impact on the raising-standards agenda by improving the educational outcomes for pupils who are most at risk of underachieving.

On the 1 March I announced an additional £3m to be targeted at raising educational standards in each of the next two years. £1m per year will be used in developing literacy and numeracy programmes in disadvantaged areas. A further £2m per year will be used to develop community initiatives to increase family and community involvement in education and will be awarded to projects that can identify schemes which meet the priorities of my Department and the Programme for Government targets set by the Executive for educational improvement.

Legal Advice Costs

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how much his Department has spent on legal advice in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20128/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below sets out how much my Department has spent on legal advice in each of the last three financial years. This includes notional costs in relation to the Departmental Solicitors Office (DSO), which are identified separately and the movement in legal provisions which is included in Other legal below. The credit figure in 2011-12 is due to the write back of a number of provisions relating to legal costs which were deemed no longer necessary.

	DSO Notional Fees £'000	Other legal £'000	Total legal £'000
2009-10	197	5	202
2010-11	108	110	218
2011-12	109	(68)	41

End Child Poverty Campaign

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the correlation between the findings of the recently published report by the End Child Poverty campaign and the level of educational underachievement.

(AQW 20156/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Social background is the strongest factor impacting on attainment here. I note the findings of the End Child Poverty campaign report, which again underlines the strong correlation between social background and attainment. I note particularly that the West Belfast parliamentary constituency

has the highest level of child poverty in the north of Ireland and also had the lowest level of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent), including English and Maths in 2011.

I am determined to break the link between disadvantage and underachievement - through encouraging schools to set high expectations for their pupils and supporting and, where necessary, challenging schools to improve. I have a coherent suite of policies in place to raise standards and tackle educational underachievement in schools. These policies include the school improvement policy, the literacy and numeracy strategy, the revised curriculum, entitlement framework, the framework for early years education and learning and the SEN and inclusion review.

However, the continued use of academic selection by grammar schools is a barrier to addressing underachievement in disadvantaged communities. It disadvantages children from those communities even further as evidenced by the disproportionately low number of pupils entitled to free school meals who attend grammar schools. It damages children's confidence, their motivation to learn, and lowers their expectations of themselves contributing to the high levels of underachievement we are seeking to tackle. That is why academic selection needs to end now and my Department is working to bring that about.

In addition to my policies, my Department provides a range of assistance, programmes and services to ensure that disadvantaged children have access to and can fully participate in school life, obtain formal qualifications, enhance their employment opportunities and ultimately provide a route out of poverty. These include the provision of Free School Meals and clothing allowances and a range of programmes targeted at socially deprived areas, including Sure Start, extended schools, full service provision, Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry Bright Futures and nurture units.

Mergers of Schools

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Education to set out the legal position in relation to schools from different sectors who wish to merge; and whether he has any plans to revisit this in light of Area Planning. **(AQW 20159/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: Under current legislation there is nothing to preclude schools of different management types merging. The legislative vehicle for such a merger would be a development proposal under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986.

This would require the publication of a development proposal which should specify the size, location and management type of the proposed new school. The management type would have to draw from those covered by current legislation which are controlled (including controlled integrated), Catholic maintained, grant-maintained integrated or voluntary maintained. There is no provision for hybrid status.

I have no plans to change the legislative provision on this issue at this time. However, I will keep this under review in light of whatever recommendations emerge from the Shared Education Advisory Group.

Development of Integrated Education

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education how his Department has delivered on the Belfast Agreement commitment to facilitate the development of integrated education. **(AQW 20219/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: As well as the commitment made in the Belfast Agreement, the Department of Education also has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, which was introduced in 1989. I take that statutory duty, and the subsequent commitment made in the Belfast Agreement, very seriously.

The integrated education sector is one that has seen considerable growth. Since the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 1998, the numbers of pupils availing of integrated education has increased from 11,382 to 21,031 according to the latest school census figures. The number of integrated schools has also increased from 40 in 1998 to 62 in 2013.

To help with the facilitation of integrated education, my Department provides funding to the Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) to assist the development of integrated schools for public benefit. Funding of £628k has been allocated for 2012/13.

In addition, DE also provides funding to help schools with the process of transformation to integrated status. This assists schools in the initial stages of the transformation process and with the employment of a teacher, from the minority community in the school, to assist with religious education. The budget available for 2012/13 is £261k.

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

However, as is the case for all of the other education sectors, my Department responds to parental demand for integrated education. It funds integrated schools that are robust, do not involve unreasonable public expenditure and meet the specified criteria. It does not favour one education sector over another.

Professional Qualification for Headship

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19187/11-15, whether he intends to make the Professional Qualification for Headship qualification mandatory; and when this will occur. **(AQW 20243/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: During school inspections the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) assesses the effectiveness of leadership and management but does not routinely investigate which qualifications the principal may or may not hold. The most recent summary of ETI evaluations of leadership and management can be found in the Chief Inspector's report for 2010-2012.

However, ETI has recently completed a three year review of school leadership development with a main focus on the Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH) programme. The report is being finalised and a publication date will be advised shortly.

In light of:-

- the development of a new professional support service in the Education and Skills Authority (ESA);
- The current review of teacher education encompassing leadership development; and
- The challenging financial climate

the Department plans to review leadership programmes to ensure that they continue to be responsive to the needs of schools and reflect the challenges of education in the 21st century.

These deliberations will inform any decisions on making leadership programmes mandatory.

Schools: New Computer Based Assessment System

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19583/11-15, what is the anticipated timescale for the completion of the review. **(AQW 20244/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: I have asked for all elements of the review to be completed before June 2013 to allow communication on the way forward in good time for the autumn term of 2013.

Professional Qualification for Headship

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the effectiveness of the leadership across the 449 schools where the Principals hold a Professional Qualification for Headship qualification.

(AQW 20245/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: During school inspections the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) assesses the effectiveness of leadership and management but does not routinely investigate which qualifications the principal may or may not hold. The most recent summary of ETI evaluations of leadership and management can be found in the Chief Inspector's report for 2010-2012.

However, ETI has recently completed a three year review of school leadership development with a main focus on the Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH) programme. The report is being finalised and a publication date will be advised shortly.

In light of:-

- the development of a new professional support service in the Education and Skills Authority (ESA);
- The current review of teacher education encompassing leadership development; and
- The challenging financial climate

the Department plans to review leadership programmes to ensure that they continue to be responsive to the needs of schools and reflect the challenges of education in the 21st century.

These deliberations will inform any decisions on making leadership programmes mandatory.

Learning Support Units: South Eastern Area

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19963/11-15, for his assessment of the distribution of Learning Support Units within the controlled sector in the South Eastern area in relation to geographic convenience; and how he proposes to address any existing deficit.

(AQW 20259/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is the Education and Library Boards which are responsible under special education legislation for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making special educational provision for children with special educational needs in their areas. The distribution of Learning Support Units in the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) area is, therefore, the responsibility of that board.

The SEELB has advised that the location of Units in the controlled sector should be viewed in the context of other specialist provision namely;

- i Special Schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties located at Beechlawn Special School, Hillsborough; Killard House Special School, Donaghadee and Longstone Special School, Dundonald;
- ii. Specialist provision for pupils with social communication difficulties including Autistic Spectrum Disorder located at The High School, Ballynahinch; Fort Hill Integrated College, Lisburn and Priory Integrated College, Holywood.

The Board reviews the number, type and location of all Learning Support Units and specialist provision on an annual basis.

Integrated Schools

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education what priority he places on the identification of schools as suitable for merger or transformation to integrated status as a priority; and how his Department is supporting schools through this process.

(AQW 20264/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not identify schools as suitable for merger or transformation to integrated status. The impetus for transformation comes from a number of sources, for example, the school Board of Governors, Principal, staff or parents, or the wider community.

However the Department does provide funding to help schools with the process of transformation to integrated status. This assists schools in the initial stages of the transformation process, and with the

employment of a teacher from the minority community in the school to assist with religious education. The budget available for 2012/13 was £261k.

The Department also funds the NI Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)

to promote, encourage and facilitate integrated education. This includes the provision of support for transformation as appropriate.

Area Planning Process: Rural Proofed

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has had with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development on ensuring that the area planning process is rural proofed.

(AQW 20266/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department's Sustainable Schools Policy is the framework used for assessing the viability and long term sustainability of schools and it is a key driver for the Area Planning process.

The policy was assessed against the Rural Development Council's rural proofing checklist set out in its report, *Striking the Balance*, before publication in 2009 and no adverse impact was identified. My Department also engaged with officials from the Rural Policy Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development when the policy was being developed to ensure that it adequately addressed rural needs.

The policy recognises the needs of rural communities and this is reflected in the lower enrolment threshold for rural primary schools and the accessibility criterion which provides guidance on home to school travel times.

I fully appreciate the central place a school has for many communities, both urban and rural, and this is recognised explicitly in the Sustainable School Policy through the Strong Links with the Community criterion.

Mergers of Schools

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education what consideration will be given to the merger of schools across sectors as a way of ensuring access to education provision.

(AQW 20267/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have said, and it is specified in in the Terms of Reference for Area Planning, that I would welcome realistic, innovative and creative solutions to address need, including opportunities for shared schooling on a cross sectoral basis which maximises the use and sharing of the existing schools estate.

It is a matter for school managing authorities in the first instance to identify where these opportunities exist. Any proposals brought forward to my Department will be given serious consideration, but will need to align with Area Planning, be sustainable, have the support of the school management, parents and the local community and conform to current legislation.

I await the report from the independent Ministerial Advisory Group on advancing Shared Education, which is due with me very shortly. Any recommendations arising from that report will be taken into consideration as area planning develops.

Professional Support

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the £25m savings from the budget for professional support.

(AQW 20278/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The £25m of recurring savings from the budget for professional support are to be delivered from the following areas:

Spending Areas	£m
ELB School-related Centre Budgets	9.5
School Improvement Programme	6.9
Curriculum Development	6.0
CCEA	0.8
Regional Training Unit	1.6
Early Professional Development	0.2
Schools Transitional Costs	0.1
Total Savings	25.0

* Table may not add due to roundings

DE: Administration and Management Costs

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the make up of the £15m savings being made per year from administration and management costs and the years in which the savings will be achieved.

(AQW 20279/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's published Savings Delivery Plan details the areas where savings are to be delivered across the 4 year Budget Period 2011-15. The table below details out the areas from where the administration and management costs savings are to be delivered:

Spending Area	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
ELB School-related Centre Costs CCostsResource Budgets	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
CCEA	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
CCMS	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Staff Commission	0.05	0.1	0.1	0.1
ELBs Youth	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Youth Council	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total Savings*	15.0	15.3	15.3	15.3

* Table may not add due to roundings

Education and Library Boards: Variation in Practice and Costs

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the variation in practice and costs across each of the Education and Library Boards.

(AQW 20280/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The reports prepared by the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit set out examples of variation in practice and costs across a range of services provided by the Education and Library Boards.

These reports have been published on the Department's website and placed in the Assembly Library.

Lisnaskea High School Closure

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education whether a Community Impact Assessment will be carried out on the possible closure of Lisnaskea High School; and to outline the rationale behind this decision. **(AQW 20313/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: As I advised the Member on 25 February, in my answer to his earlier question on this issue, I am aware that the Western Education and Library Board is currently processing a statutory Development Proposal (DP) to support the merger of Lisnaskea High School with Devenish College. However, until a Proposal is published, the issues involved are entirely a matter for the Western Board to consider.

Rural Proofing Training

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education how many staff from (i) the Education and Library Boards; (ii) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; (iii) his Department have undergone rural proofing training; and how many of these staff are involved in Area Planning. **(AQW 20337/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details the number of staff who have undergone Rural Proofing training and how many of these staff are involved in Area Planning:

	(i) ELBs	(ii) CCMS	(iii) DE
Attended Rural Proofing training	9	0	2
Involved in Area Planning	8	n/a	0

School Meals: Horse Meat

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what steps are being taken to ensure that school meals do not contain products contaminated with horse meat. **(AQW 20343/11-15)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shared Education

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to encourage shared education within the area planning process, particularly within the legislative process.

(AQW 20368/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Terms of Reference for Area Planning requires engagement across all sectors and explicitly encourages creative and innovative solutions, including opportunities for shared schooling across sectors. The degrees of sharing may, however, be different to reflect local circumstances.

Area Planning Guidance issued by my Department in February 2012 also emphasises the commitment to shared education, highlighting the need for a willingness to develop more opportunities for sharing of both curricular provision and infrastructure in line with Departmental commitments in the Programme for Government.

I am also awaiting the report of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education, which is due shortly and I will consider the need for any further guidance in relation to how schools can share education after I have had time to consider their advice.

Schools: Merge and Share Education

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education when he will issue guidance on how schools from different sectors can merge or share education as part of the Area Planning process.

(AQW 20369/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Terms of Reference for Area Planning requires engagement across all sectors and explicitly encourages creative and innovative solutions, including opportunities for shared schooling across sectors. The degrees of sharing may, however, be different to reflect local circumstances.

Area Planning Guidance issued by my Department in February 2012 also emphasises the commitment to shared education, highlighting the need for a willingness to develop more opportunities for sharing of both curricular provision and infrastructure in line with Departmental commitments in the Programme for Government.

I am also awaiting the report of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education, which is due shortly and I will consider the need for any further guidance in relation to how schools can share education after I have had time to consider their advice.

Primary School Pupils

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many children attend primary school in (i) Millisle; and (ii) Donaghadee.

(AQW 20371/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are two primary schools in Donaghadee in 2012/13. These are: Donaghadee Primary School, which has an enrolment of 431 pupils; and,

St Anne's Primary School, which has an enrolment of 46 pupils.

There is one primary school in Millisle, Millisle Primary School. This school recorded an enrolment of 190 pupils in the 2012/13 school census.

Area Based Plans

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education at what stage of development are the Area Based Plans for (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary schools in North Down.

(AQW 20393/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) Primary Area Plans

The Primary Area Plans I commissioned were received in my Department at the end of January 2013. I have directed the Boards that these be released for consultation on the 19th March, with an extended consultation period open until the end of June. This will allow for wide ranging discussion and further development of the plans.

My intention is that dialogue at local level, taking onboard the lessons learned in the post-primary process will result in more practical and sustainable solutions, including the potential, where appropriate, of increased sharing of accommodation and resources.

(ii) Post-primary Area Plans

Following my statement to the Assembly on 26 February 2013, the revised area plans for post-primary provision were released by the Education and Library Boards. The revised plans for the North Down area are available on the South Eastern Education and Library Board website - <http://www.seelb.org.uk/>

I have written to each Board outlining my Department's views on their plan and setting out how I plan to move forward. In the coming weeks my officials will meet with the Boards and CCMS to discuss in detail the Department's assessment of the plans and to identify areas where further work is needed.

A Steering Group will be established to assist the Department to co-ordinate and oversee the continuing development of the area plans. My Department will chair this group and it will include representatives from the Controlled, Maintained, Integrated and Irish-medium sectors. The group's work programme will aim to fill the gaps in the current area plans, to embed a single approach to area planning and to identify priority areas for action in the short to medium term.

Area Based Planning

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how an area is defined under Area Based Planning.

(AQW 20396/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards, working with CCMS and engaging with other school sectors, have been tasked with developing strategic plans based on each Board area. Board areas comprise varying numbers of complete District Council areas ranging from one for the Belfast Board area to nine for the North-Eastern Board area.

District Council area level is the lowest level for which official population projections are published. These data, together with schools' census data, provide basic information necessary for projecting the levels of provision required. However, planning authorities may develop local solutions for areas within District Council boundaries providing that these are, in aggregate, consistent with the overall need for places.

Children in Schools: Entrepreneurship

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what actions he is taking to promote entrepreneurship as a viable career option to children in schools.

(AQW 20399/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Employability, including entrepreneurship, is a key theme underpinning the revised curriculum which aims to better prepare all our young people for all aspects of life and work and enable them to develop as confident and articulate individuals, able to play their full part in our society and economy.

At primary level through the area of Personal Development & Mutual Understanding, pupils are now given opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, attitudes and personal qualities related to enterprise and entrepreneurship.

At post-primary level, entrepreneurship is covered under the Employability strand of Learning for Life and Work with a focus on Work in the Local and Global Economy, Career Management and Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. Pupils are given opportunity to reflect on their own skills and areas for self-development; to explore the changing concept of 'career' and various types of jobs, including in the local area; to explore enterprise and entrepreneurship; and to develop and practise some of the skills and attributes associated with being enterprising.

In addition to schools delegated budgets, my Department also provides funding to a number of organisations to provide enterprise, employability and innovation events and programmes either in school or at larger regional events, for both primary and post-primary pupils. These organisations include Young Enterprise, Sentinus, School Employer Connections, Charter Work Experience and a number of Business Education Partnerships. My Department, in partnership with Invest NI, has also provided funding to a number of enterprise/innovation programmes, including the 'Make Your Mark Challenge', as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week, and 'The Stock Market Challenge' event. Such events help to promote an enterprise culture within the classroom and to develop in our young people more innovative and enterprising skills and attitudes that our economy needs.

Dundonald High School

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to outline the rationale for the proposal to cease education at Dundonald High school from 2014.

(AQW 20403/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Responsibility for planning the Controlled schools' estate is a matter for the Education & Library Boards in the first instance. In the case of Dundonald High School (HS) this is the South-Eastern Education & Library Board (SEELB).

Any proposal to close a school requires publication of a statutory Development Proposal (DP). I understand that at present the Board is conducting a pre-publication consultation on the possible closure of Dundonald HS. This would involve consultation with the school's Board of Governors, parents of pupils at the school and staff at the school, and with other schools which the Board considers might be affected by the proposal. Following this, the Board will decide whether or not to proceed with the DP.

Should the Board decide to proceed, a two month consultation period will follow publication of the DP. This provides the opportunity for all interested parties to comment. It is only after the consultation period, when I have all the pertinent information and the comments received in support of or objecting to the proposal, that I will consider the rationale underpinning it in deciding whether to approve the DP.

Dundonald High School

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how many pupils left Dundonald High School with five or more GCSEs at grades A*- C, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20405/11-15)

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

THE NUMBER OF PUPILS LEAVING DUNDONALD HIGH SCHOOL WHO ACHIEVED AT LEAST 5 GCSEs A*-C (INC. EQUIVALENTS) 2006/07 TO 2010/11

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Number achieving at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. equivalents)	*	11	11	11	*
Total Leavers	97	96	67	59	54

Source: School Leavers Survey

* denotes fewer than five pupils

Dundonald High School was subject to a follow-up inspection in October 2012 undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). The ETI reported that overall, the quality of education provided by the school was inadequate. The areas for improvement identified by the ETI in the report include the need to raise standards across the school, including performance in public examinations.

Based on the findings of this follow-up inspection, the school re-entered the Formal Intervention Process with effect from 17 December 2012. The school had previously been in the Formal Intervention Process from December 2009 to September 2010.

Dundonald High School

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what consultation has been undertaken on the proposal to cease education at Dundonald High School from 2014; and for his assessment of the community response to this proposal.

(AQW 20406/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Responsibility for planning the Controlled schools' estate is a matter for the Education & Library Boards in the first instance. In the case of Dundonald High School (HS) this is the South-Eastern Education & Library Board (SEELB).

Any proposal to close a school requires publication of a statutory Development Proposal (DP). I understand that at present the Board is conducting a pre-publication consultation on the possible closure of Dundonald HS. This would involve consultation with the school's Board of Governors, parents of pupils at the school and staff at the school, and with other schools which the Board considers might be affected by the proposal. Following this, the Board will decide whether or not to proceed with the DP.

Should the Board decide to proceed, a two month consultation period will follow publication of the DP. This provides the opportunity for all interested parties to comment. It is only after the consultation period, when I have all the pertinent information and the comments received in support of or objecting to the proposal, that I will consider the rationale underpinning it in deciding whether to approve the DP.

Education and Skills Authority Headquarters

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what locations are under consideration for the headquarters of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 20409/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education & Skills Authority will be a regional organisation with a very strong local presence to provide effective support to schools, children and young people. At present any work on future location is focussed on maintaining continuity of service through staff based in their current locations.

It is anticipated that when restructuring is complete, services will be organised to achieve maximum effectiveness. ESA headquarters will be established to support the ESA Chair, ESA Board members and the Chief Executive.

No specific locations for an ESA headquarters are currently under consideration.

Discussions on Headteachers

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19842/11-15, which discussions between departmental officials and unions and employers have been on the position of headteachers; and what were the outcomes of these discussions.

(AQW 20480/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There have been discussions about an Efficient Discharge Scheme which would enable Employing Authorities to terminate the employment of teachers of any grade, including principals and vice-principals. There have been no discussions specifically on the position of headteachers.

Pupils Studying Languages

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils who studied (i) French; (ii) German; and (iii) Spanish to GCSE level in schools in the South Belfast constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20490/11-15)

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

NUMBER OF YEAR 12 PUPILS WITH EXAMINATION ENTRIES IN GCSE FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH IN SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH BELFAST CONSTITUENCY, 2008/09 -2010/11

Subject	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
GCSE French	643	558	595
GCSE German	146	150	116
GCSE Spanish	355	394	367

Source: RM data solutions

Pupils Studying Languages

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils who studied (i) French; (ii) German; and (iii) Spanish to A level in schools in the South Belfast constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20491/11-15)

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

PUPILS WITH EXAMINATION ENTRIES IN A LEVEL FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH IN SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH BELFAST CONSTITUENCY, 2008/09 -2010/11

Subject	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
A Level French	104	74	68
A Level German	23	27	19
A Level Spanish	57	71	44

Source: RM data solutions

Department for Employment and Learning

University of Ulster: Day Care Nursery, Jordanstown Campus

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) what assistance his Department is providing to staff and students who made use of the childcare facility at the University of Ulster to find alternative arrangements; (ii) what assurances he can give in the absence of a childcare strategy for NI that everyone will now be able to access suitable and affordable alternative arrangements; and (iii) whether he has any concerns that the University of Ulster has broken its contract with students who have paid to study at the University on the basis that it provided childcare facilities.

(AQW 19911/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The University of Ulster has advised that it is to close its university managed childcare facilities in the Magee and Jordanstown campuses from 31 July 2013. The University has reported that the provision was sustaining an ongoing annual deficit of

approximately £114k and therefore the University no longer considers it to be economically viable. The University has pointed out that between the two campuses 23 students currently use the childcare facilities.

To assist students and staff in their search to find alternative arrangements the University has compiled a list of all nurseries in the relevant areas, their availability and average costs. My officials have also contacted both the Western and Northern Health and Social Care Trusts to determine the extent of alternative childcare provision within a 3 mile radius of the Magee and Jordanstown campuses. There are 12 day nurseries in the Magee campus area and 10 in the Jordanstown campus area. Both Trusts have advised that there are a considerable number of registered childminders within each area. Many of the childcare providers report falling levels of occupancy for full-time places.

The average cost of full-time childcare nursery placements is between £120 and £140 per week at Magee and between £140 and £152.50 per week at Jordanstown. Childminding costs are around £3 to £4 per hour. These costs are in line with that charged by the University.

The package of financial support available to students with childcare responsibilities will remain unchanged. My Department makes available a means tested Childcare Grant to full-time students who have dependent children in registered or approved childcare. Payment is based on actual childcare costs paid in respect of registered or approved childcare for children under 15 (or 17 if the child is registered as having special educational needs). In addition, full time students with dependent children may be entitled to a means tested parent's learning allowance.

The University has advised that it will maintain its current levels of financial support for childcare for those students who are in need. Student parents can apply to the Student Support Fund and are also eligible to apply to the Student Hardship Fund. The amounts awarded are discretionary and dependant on students' individual circumstances. This support is paid irrespective of where the care is provided.

In the case of university staff a Salary Sacrifice Childcare Voucher Scheme is available for staff who use external childcare facilities. Staff are given the option of exchanging part of their gross salary for Childcare Credit voucher credit in order to save on the cost of childcare fees. Because the deduction is from gross salary, staff are effectively using some of their tax and National Insurance contributions to meet childcare costs. .

I appreciate that the closures may well inconvenience a small number of staff and students. However, given that the financial support packages available for childcare will be unchanged and also because there is evidence of alternative provision being available locally at a cost similar to that charged by the University for its on-site provision, those affected by the closure should be able to access suitable and affordable alternative arrangements. My officials will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that there are no adverse affects on my Department's objectives to widen participation in higher education.

The University has provided my Department with assurance that it remains committed to its Student Charter including the Charter for Student Support. The University maintains that it is providing financial support for childcare in the form that the vast majority of students prefer, namely direct financial support. Most of the University of Ulster students who are supported for childcare choose to use the direct financial support available in order to avail of childcare facilities at locations which suit their individual needs.

Local Employment Intermediary Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the reach of the Local Employment Intermediary Service is sufficiently cross-community and whether it has been audited in relation to this and its Section 75 obligations.

(AQW 19925/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) is a community employment initiative designed to help the "hardest to reach" in the targeted areas of Belfast, Londonderry, Strabane, Newry & Mourne, Moyle and Cookstown find employment. In addition to these areas, LEMIS is also available on an outreach basis throughout Northern Ireland to individuals with a common employability barrier to

finding work i.e. the homeless, ex-offenders/ex-prisoners, people with a history of drug/alcohol misuse and care leavers.

Analysis of LEMIS data indicates that the religious background of participants is as expected in each area e.g. the majority of participants in the Greater Shankill are perceived as Protestant while the majority of participants on the Cityside in Londonderry are perceived as Catholic. In the other less defined areas the religious background of participants tends to be more mixed. All the community organisations who deliver the LEMIS service work together as a network. They meet on a regular basis, formally and informally, to share best practice, help each other and work collaboratively on joint projects. LEMIS data indicates that clients from all the priority groups originally agreed are accessing the service. Section 75 data in respect of religious background, ethnicity, age, marital status, gender, dependents and disability for all LEMIS clients is recorded and collated on a quarterly basis. This information is used to inform the Labour Market bulletins produced by the Department and is copied to the Equality Commission for information.

Higher Education: Student Mothers

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the impact on student mothers and their continuing capacity to avail of higher education, following the decision by the University of Ulster to close the day care nursery at its Jordanstown campus.

(AQW 19940/11-15)

Dr Farry: On 8th February 2013 the University of Ulster confirmed its decision to close its university managed childcare facilities in the Magee and Jordanstown campuses from 31 July 2013. The University has advised that the decision has been taken because the childcare provision has continued to sustain a significant annual deficit of approximately £114k and is therefore no longer economically viable. Also, the University points out that only 14 students use the childcare facilities at the Jordanstown campus with the majority of students with childcare needs choosing to use all direct financial support available in order to avail of childcare facilities closer to their homes/places of residence.

The package of financial support available to students with childcare responsibilities will remain unchanged. My Department makes available a means tested Childcare Grant to full-time students who have dependent children in registered or approved childcare. Payment is based on actual childcare costs paid in respect of children under 15 (or 17 if the child is registered as having special educational needs). A student with one child can receive up to £148.75 a week (85% of actual costs of £175 a week). Full time students with dependent children may also be entitled to a means tested parent's learning allowance.

In addition, the University has advised that it will maintain its current levels of financial support for childcare for those students who are in need. Student parents can apply to the Student Support Fund and are also eligible to apply to the Student Hardship Fund. The amounts awarded are discretionary and dependant on the student's individual circumstances. This support and the services I have mentioned already are paid irrespective of where the care is provided.

To assist students in their search to find alternative arrangements the University has compiled a list of nurseries in the Jordanstown area, their availability and average costs. Also, my Officials have been advised by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust that within 3 miles of the Jordanstown campus there are 10 nurseries registered for 397 places. On occasions these are only running at about 70% of capacity. The average cost ranges between £140 and £152.50 per week which is in line with the £150 charged by the University for a full-time childcare place. There are also 104 childminders registered within the comparable area for 570 places. Most childminders would charge parents £3 - £4 per hour and many are reporting that they do not have their full registered numbers.

I appreciate that the closure may well inconvenience a small number of students. However, given that the financial support package available for childcare is unchanged and also because there is evidence of alternative provision being available locally at a cost similar to that charged by the University for its on-site facility the closure of the childcare unit should not impact adversely on the ability of student mothers to continue their higher education studies.

Young People with a Dyslexia Related Disability

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the proportion of young people with a dyslexia related disability admitted to Health Profession courses at the University of Ulster compared to the other faculties of the University, in each of the last three academic years. **(AQW 19975/11-15)**

Dr Farry: The table below details the proportion of first year enrolments admitted to courses within the “Subjects Allied to Medicine” subject area, aged 20 and under, at the University of Ulster who have self-declared that they have a dyslexia related difficulty compared to all other courses in each of the last three academic years, for which data are available.

Academic year	Subjects Allied to Medicine	All Other Courses
2009/10	2.4%	2.6%
2010/11	2.0%	2.4%
2011/12	1.5%	3.3%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- Information on disability is collected on the basis of a student’s self assessment.
- HESA’s disability coding frame changed in 2010/11 and therefore the figures for 2009/10 are not directly comparable with the 2010/11 and 2011/12 figures. In 2009/10, students with dyslexia related difficulties are those who assessed themselves as having a “specific learning difficulty e.g. dyslexia.” Whilst in 2010/11 and 2011/12 students with dyslexia related difficulties are those who assessed themselves as having a “specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D”.
- Health Profession Courses at the University of Ulster have been classified as Subjects Allied to Medicine.
- ‘Young people’ have been defined as aged 20 and under.

Young People with a Dyslexia Related Difficulties

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of young people with dyslexia related difficulties who have been admitted to Health Profession courses at the University of Ulster, in each of the last three academic years. **(AQW 19976/11-15)**

Dr Farry: The table below details the number of first year enrolments admitted to courses within the “Subjects Allied to Medicine” subject area, aged 20 and under, at the University of Ulster and who have self-declared that they have a dyslexia related difficulty in each of the last three academic years, for which data are available.

Academic year	Enrolments
2009/10	15
2010/11	10
2011/12	10

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- Information on disability is collected on the basis of a student’s self assessment.
- HESA’s disability coding frame changed in 2010/11 and therefore the figures for 2009/10 are not directly comparable with the 2010/11 and 2011/12 figures. In 2009/10, students with dyslexia related difficulties are those who assessed themselves as having a “specific learning difficulty e.g. dyslexia.” Whilst in

2010/11 and 2011/12 students with dyslexia related difficulties are those who assessed themselves as having a “specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D”.

- 7 Health Profession Courses at the University of Ulster have been classified as Subjects Allied to Medicine.
- 8 ‘Young people’ have been defined as aged 20 and under.
- 9 Figures in the table are rounded to the nearest 5.

DEL: Counsellors

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQO 3267/11-15, to outline what forums are available for employers and professional bodies to identify and articulate their education and training requirements, in order to inform colleges.

(AQW 20013/11-15)

Dr Farry: Skills for Care & Development is the sector skills council for social work, social care and children’s services in Northern Ireland. Its Northern Ireland Board, “Workforce Development Partnership” meets every quarter.

The Workforce Development Partnership is made up of representatives from the NI Social Care Council, DHSSPS, DEL, Health Boards, public and private employers and trade unions in the Social Care Sector. It is a representative body which brings the needs of employers in the sector to the attention of the sector skills council.

While Further and Higher education colleges do not attend the Workforce Development Partnership, Gerry Cunningham, Head of Qualifications and Standards, NI Social Care Council meets the colleges on a quarterly basis as part of the post graduate course review.

My officials have also contacted the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety who have confirmed the following.

“The Post Registration Nursing Education Commissioning Group (ECG) provides a forum where any specific training requirements can be raised for discussion and evaluation. Training courses may then be commissioned by the Department as part of the annual ECG Plan. The current ECG Plan does not include any training relating to counselling.”

Executive Childcare Fund: Childcare Provision at the University of Ulster in Jordanstown

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) whether he submitted a bid for monies from the Executive Childcare Fund to sustain childcare provision at the University of Ulster in Jordanstown; (ii) the outcome; and (iii) if no bid was submitted, to outline the reasons for this.

(AQW 20021/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster has taken a decision to close its university managed childcare facilities in the Magee and Jordanstown campuses from 31 July 2013. The University informs that the childcare provision has continued to sustain an annual deficit of approximately £114k and is therefore no longer economically viable. The University points out that 14 students use the childcare facilities at Jordanstown with the majority of students with childcare needs choosing to use the direct financial support available in order to avail of childcare facilities which suit their individual needs.

The University of Ulster is an autonomous body and as such is entirely responsible for its own policies around student services including childcare provision. It would therefore be inappropriate for my Department to bid for funding for such a service.

University of Ulster: Day Care Nursery, Jordanstown Campus

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the decision by the University of Ulster to close the day care nursery at the Jordanstown campus.

(AQW 20023/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster has decided to close its university managed childcare facilities in the Magee and Jordanstown campuses from 31 July 2013. The decision has been taken because the provision has continued to sustain an annual deficit of around £114k and as such the University believes it is no longer economically viable. Also, the University points out that 14 students use the facilities at Jordanstown.

The University has stated that it will maintain its current levels of financial support for childcare for those students who are in need. Student parents can apply to the Student Support Fund and also to the Student Hardship Fund. The amounts awarded are discretionary and dependant on the student's individual circumstances. This support and the sources I have mentioned already are paid irrespective of where the care is provided.

My Department makes available a Childcare Grant to full-time students who have dependent children in registered or approved childcare. The maximum grant differs depending on the circumstances of the student. In addition, full time students with dependent children may be entitled to a means-tested parent's learning allowance.

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust have advised that within 3 miles of the Jordanstown campus there are 10 nurseries registered for 397 places. These are running at about 70% of capacity. The average cost ranges between £140 and £152.50 per week. This is in line with the £150 charged by the University for a full-time place. There are also 104 childminders registered within the comparable area for 570 places. Most childminders would charge parents £3 - £4 per hour, which is on a par with university crèche charges, and many are reporting that they do not have their full registered numbers.

I appreciate that the closure may well inconvenience a small number of students. However, the financial support package available for childcare is unchanged and also there is evidence of alternative provision being available locally at a cost similar to that charged by the University for its on-site facility. The closure of the childcare unit may not, therefore, impact adversely on the ability of student parents to continue their higher education studies. My officials will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that there are no adverse affects on my Department's objectives to widen participation in higher education.

University of Ulster: Day Care Nursery, Jordanstown Campus

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how the decision by the University of Ulster to close the day care nursery at the Jordanstown campus correlates with his Department's target of widening participation in higher education.

(AQW 20025/11-15)

Dr Farry: Widening Participation in Higher Education by students from those groups which are currently under-represented, in particular students from disadvantaged backgrounds continues to be a key priority for my Department. Last September, I was pleased to launch Access to Success the regional strategy for widening participation in higher education. The vision of this strategy is that any individual in Northern Ireland should be able to gain access to the higher education that is right for them, irrespective of their personal circumstances.

The University of Ulster argues that it took a decision to close its university managed childcare facilities in the Magee and Jordanstown campuses from 31 July 2013 because the provision sustains an annual deficit of approximately £114k and is therefore no longer considered economically viable. The University points out that 14 students use the childcare facilities at the Jordanstown campus.

I appreciate that the closure of the childcare facilities may inconvenience a small number of students. However, because of the financial support which is currently available to students, and also because

alternative childcare provision is available locally at a cost similar to that currently charged by the University, the closure may not impact adversely on my Department's objective to widen participation in higher education. My officials will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that there are no adverse affects on my Department's objectives to widen participation in higher education.

The package of financial support available to students with childcare responsibilities will remain unchanged. My Department makes available a means tested Childcare Grant to full-time students who have dependent children in registered or approved childcare. Payment is based on actual childcare costs paid in respect of registered or approved childcare for children under 15 (or 17 if the child is registered as having special educational needs). In addition, full time students with dependent children may be entitled to a means tested parent's learning allowance.

The University has stated that it remains committed to providing direct financial support for childcare, which is the expressed preference of the majority of eligible students. Student parents can apply directly to the university's Student Support Fund and/or Student Hardship Fund. The amounts awarded are discretionary and dependant on students' individual circumstances. All of the available support is paid irrespective of where care is provided. This allows students more flexibility to choose the childcare provision which best meets their needs and to avail of childcare facilities closer to their homes.

My officials have been advised by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust that there is a range of available nursery provision within 3 miles of the Jordanstown campus, some of which are operating at about 70% of capacity. The average nursery cost ranges between £140 and £152.50 per week which is in line with the £150 charged by the University for a full-time childcare place. There is also a range of childminding provision with most childminders charging parents £3 - £4 per hour and with many reporting that they do not have their full registered numbers.

The Access to Success strategy will require each higher education provider to produce a detailed annual Widening Access and Participation Plan, which will clearly set out its activities and expenditure to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The strategy seeks to put in place a student centred approach with tailored support mechanisms to ensure the successful progression and retention of students, including those with dependents.

People Aged Over 45 Back to Work

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the employment schemes that are specifically aimed at getting people aged over 45 back to work.

(AQW 20135/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department provides a range of employment programmes that are available to adults of all ages.

Steps to Work (StW) is the Department's main adult return to work programme. The aim of the programme is to assist the unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment. StW is available to anyone aged 18 years old or over (16 in the case of lone parents) who is unemployed or economically inactive, irrespective of whether or not they are in receipt of benefit. The programme has no upper age limit.

Participation in StW provision is a mandatory requirement for all Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants aged 25 and over who have been claiming JSA for 18 months.

Between September 2008 and September 2012 (the latest date for which statistics are available) 17,430 participants (17% of all starts) aged over 45 started the StW programme. Between September 2008 and June 2012 (the latest date for which statistics are available) 13,030 participants aged over 45 left the StW programme. Of these leavers 3,080 (24%) moved into unsubsidised employment.

In direct response to the economic downturn my Department, as part of the Northern Ireland Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative, introduced an additional employment strand to the StW programme. This strand, called Step Ahead 50+, will provide eligible participants aged 50 and over who have been out of work and in receipt of benefit for 12 months or more with the opportunity to avail of a

fixed term job lasting up to 26 weeks in the Community and Voluntary Sector. Step Ahead 50+ will offer 300 job opportunities in 2012/13, 400 in 2013/14 and a further 400 in 2014/15. At 26 February 2013 a total of 75 clients have started this new strand of StW provision.

My Department is currently developing a new adult return to work programme which will replace StW in 2014. This new programme, called Steps 2 Success, will be available to unemployed people aged 18 and over. The mandatory point at which clients aged 25 and over will join Steps 2 Success will be 12 months in receipt of JSA. This is 6 months earlier than the current StW programme which has a mandatory entry point after 18 months in receipt of JSA for this age group. Clients who have been identified as having significant barriers to employment will be able to join Steps 2 Success early.

The Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) is a community employment initiative designed to help the "hardest to reach" in the targeted areas of Belfast, Londonderry, Strabane, Newry & Mourne, Moyle and Cookstown, find employment. In addition to these areas, LEMIS is also available on an outreach basis throughout Northern Ireland to individuals with a common employability barrier to finding work i.e. the homeless, ex-offenders/ex-prisoners, people with a history of drug/alcohol misuse and care leavers.

There is no age restriction on people who want to use the LEMIS service. During the period April 2011 to March 2012, 352 LEMIS clients (16%) of those case loaded were in the 41 to 50 age group. A further 258 clients (12%) of those case loaded were in the 50 plus age group. Of these numbers 69 clients (15%) of LEMIS participants who moved into employment were in the 41 to 50 age group and a further 41 clients who moved into employment were in the 50 plus age group.

Finally, my Department's Disability Employment Service has a range of programmes and services, targeted at people of all ages, and specifically designed to support those who have health and disability related barriers to employment. These include, Work Connect, Condition Management Programme, Workable (NI) and Access to Work.

More detailed information on my Department's programmes can be found on the Department's website (www.delni.gov.uk) or by contacting a local Job Centre/Jobs and Benefits office.

DEL: Information Service Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many staff are employed in his Department's Information Service; and what is the annual cost of this service.

(AQW 20168/11-15)

Dr Farry: There are 4 Information Officers employed in press functions and 4 Information Officers employed in marketing functions. There are 8 administrative staff employed in providing support in marketing, event management, internet, intranet and web administration functions.

The annual cost of this service at the end of the last full financial year (2011-2012) totalled £582,780.

Education Maintenance Allowance Budget

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the proposed budget for the Education Maintenance Allowance; and what proportion of this is funded by his Department.

(AQW 20242/11-15)

Dr Farry: Following the agreement by the Executive at its meeting on 7 February to introduce a number of changes to better target the means tested Education Maintenance Allowance scheme, its estimated budget requirement for the financial year 2013/14 is £25.8m, to which the Department of Education will contribute £1.85m and the balance of £23.95m will come from my Department.

Students attending Universities in England

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students from Northern Ireland have attended universities in England as first year undergraduates, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20249/11-15)

Dr Farry: The information on total Northern Ireland domiciled student enrolments at English Higher Education Institutions as first year undergraduates in each of the last five years is detailed below.

Year	Total
2007/08	3,635
2008/09	3,640
2009/10	3,520
2010/11	3,935
2011/12	4,420

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- 1 Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
- 2 The above figures include enrolments for first year undergraduates only.
- 3 Figures for NI domiciled enrolments at the Open University have been excluded from the above table. Although The Open University is defined as an English Institution it is likely that any NI domiciled enrolments will not be based in England.

Distance Learning Higher Education Qualifications

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he has taken to develop distance learning higher education qualifications based in local universities.

(AQW 20251/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland, "Graduating to Success", published in April 2012, identifies the need for a more flexible learning environment which includes the expansion of distance and online learning. Distance learning is currently available through the Open University and other private providers. The strategy has set the objective that by 2018, modular and distance learning will be expanded to all students in higher education. A project team is currently being established to take forward this commitment

In December 2012, I met with the Director of the Open University in Ireland to discuss Northern Ireland's Higher Education Institutions' involvement with their Futurelearn initiative. Futurelearn will bring together a range of free, open, online courses from leading United Kingdom Universities, drawing upon the Open University's expertise in delivering distance learning and pioneering open education resources whilst increasing accessibility to higher education for students across the UK and in the rest of the world. Queen's University, Belfast is one of 17 UK Higher Education Institutions to become a supporting and working partner of Futurelearn Ltd.

Further and Higher Education Colleges: Degrees

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students have been studying for higher and degree level qualifications in further education colleges, as opposed to universities, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20253/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of students studying for higher and degree level qualifications in further education colleges in each of the last five years for which data are available is detailed in the table overleaf.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES AT NI FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES (2007/08 - 2011/12)

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
9,250	9,510	10,545	10,480	10,745

Source: Further Education Statistical Record (FESR)

Notes:

- (1) The figures presented above are a student headcount as opposed to enrolments (where the same student can be enrolled more than once).
- (3) Data are rounded to the nearest 5 in line with data disclosure protocols.

Further and Higher Education Colleges: Degrees

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many degrees from universities in Northern Ireland and elsewhere have been studied under licence in local further and higher education colleges.

(AQW 20254/11-15)

Dr Farry: All of the 'Degree' level courses delivered by the six Further Education Regional Colleges or the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise are either validated by Northern Ireland Universities or franchised from UK Universities.

Validated courses, namely Foundation degrees, are courses that are developed and delivered by the partner institution (ie. the college) and where a student on the course is an associate student of the validating University. There are currently 32 full-time and 25 part-time Foundation degree courses available across the Further Education Regional Colleges and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise. Many of these programmes are offered in more than one local college.

Franchised courses, namely Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees, are courses which are developed by a UK University and taught by a partner institution with the same content, structure, delivery and assessment as the home course at the University. Students are registered students of the awarding University. There are currently 12 such full-time degree courses and 18 part-time degree courses delivered across the six Further Education Regional Colleges and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise.

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he foresees any changes being made to Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

(AQW 20269/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department is in the process of conducting a public consultation on proposed changes to the TUPE Regulations, and this consultation will remain open until 11 April 2013. Any potential changes to the TUPE Regulations will only be decided upon after careful consideration of all responses to the consultation, and a full assessment of the impacts of any possible changes.

Industrial Tribunal Hearing

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether a litigant in person can arrange to make an audio record of the proceedings at an Industrial Tribunal hearing.

(AQW 20314/11-15)

Dr Farry: The default position, by virtue of the Contempt of Court Act 1981, is that tribunal proceedings may not be recorded without leave of the tribunal. However, the Rules of Procedure governing industrial tribunals grant broad discretion for a tribunal chair to manage proceedings on a hearing by hearing basis. Therefore, should any party apply to make an audio recording of the proceedings, it is a matter for the tribunal chair to consider and decide, in all the circumstances of the case, whether to grant leave.

In addition, the majority of industrial tribunal proceedings are now digitally recorded by the tribunal and a transcript can be made available to parties where a matter is before the Court of Appeal or the High Court, in the circumstances set out in the Tribunal President's Practice Direction which is available on the tribunals' website, www.employmenttribunalsni.co.uk.

Local Industry: Careers Advice and Training Programmes

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department ensures that careers advice and training programmes meet the needs of local industry and how often this is reviewed.

(AQW 20332/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's Employer Engagement Plan sets out how we will work with employers to help them up-skill and re-skill their workforce to meet the current and future needs of our businesses and the economy. A wide range of activities is taken forward in support of this objective.

Careers Advisers ensure that any advice they give is always tailored to the individual needs of the client but is informed by relevant and up to date Labour Market Information, which is developed and maintained by my Department, coupled with the regular briefing provided by the Sector Skills Councils. All Careers Advisers receive continuous professional development to ensure that their knowledge of industry and its requirements is fully up-to-date and embedded in their working practices.

The ultimate aim of my Department's Skills Solutions Service is to help companies become more productive and competitive within their sector. The Skills Solutions Service works proactively with local industry, helping companies to access all of the services available to recruit staff suited to their needs, and providing them with the opportunity to upskill and re-skill their current employees through the provision of bespoke training.

My Department's leadership and management development programmes were reviewed in 2011, leading to the introduction of a new, enhanced suite of programmes in January 2013.

The ApprenticeshipsNI programme offers high quality training to apprentices to equip them with the knowledge, understanding and competence to work at a high level in their chosen occupation. Each apprentice follows an industry recognised framework which is agreed with the relevant Sector Skills Council or Industry-Led Representative body who, on behalf of the sector's employers, determine the skills, knowledge and relevant standards required. You will already be aware that I recently announced plans to undertake a review of apprenticeships and youth training. My intention is to make the review process inclusive and to engage with all the relevant stakeholders. The review findings will be reported in the autumn of this year.

Tribunals User Group

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline (i) whether attendance at the Tribunals User Group, established by the Office of the Industrial Tribunals, is open to a litigant in person; and (ii) to detail any other similar user groups for such people.

(AQW 20354/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Tribunal User Group was established as a forum for employment law practitioners and representatives from interested bodies such as the Labour Relations Agency, the Equality Commission and my Department to engage with the industrial tribunal and Fair Employment Tribunal judiciary on the technical operation of tribunal rules and practices.

The objective of this engagement is to ensure that tribunals meet their overriding objective, namely to deal with cases justly; to ensure that parties are on an equal footing; to deal with cases in ways which

are proportionate to the complexity or importance of the issues; to ensure that matters are dealt with expeditiously and fairly; and to save expense. This is not an appropriate forum for tribunal claimants or respondents.

I am, nonetheless, conscious of the need for the tribunal system to respond to the needs of all of its users. My Department has supported a number of tribunal research projects which have engaged existing and former tribunal claimants and respondents in informing the direction of tribunal reform. Furthermore, as part of the ongoing employment law review, my Department is engaging with organisations representing the interests of individual claimants as well as more frequent users of the system.

Finally, if any claimant or respondent is unhappy about either the tribunals' administrative service or judicial conduct, there are procedures in place to raise concerns and have them investigated. Where parties provide feedback on their tribunal experience with suggestions for improvement, all options are considered and, where appropriate, implemented.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

City of Culture 2013

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department is taking to specifically market the City of Culture 2013.

(AQW 19370/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): I would refer the Member to the reply I gave to AQW 19087/11-15 regarding NITB's activity to promote the UK City of Culture 2013 programme of events.

In addition, Tourism Ireland is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland in Great Britain and overseas markets and in 2013 will support the UK City of Culture by implementing a major programme of promotional activity focusing on Londonderry UK City of Culture and on other big events taking place in 2013 such as the World Police and Fire Games and the G8 summit. Activity includes an eight page supplement on Londonderry in the Sunday Telegraph, a series of advertorials placed in travel sections of national press and an e-marketing campaign targeting approximately 800,000 potential GB visitors.

Further activity from both agencies will take place as the year progresses.

Trade Contacts with China

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what business opportunities are available following the development of trade contacts with China.

(AQW 19923/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am delighted to report that a broad range of opportunities exist in China for Northern Ireland businesses. Announcements were made during the last trade mission in November by Wrightbus, Yelo, textHELP and Glenarm Salmon. I visited the Shenyang Aircraft Corporation and Shenyang Dimplex Electric companies both of which are important links in the supply chain of our companies here. I also promoted our universities and FE colleges in government meetings. Companies both on the multi-sector trade mission and exhibiting at the Food Hotel China Show have generated a significant number of leads which will require follow up. With commitment from our companies, there are clearly opportunities to grow our export sales to China.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board Funding: Multi-Lingual Signage

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether legal advice has been sought and received on Northern Ireland Tourist Board funding for the erection of multi-lingual signage.

(AQW 19982/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board sought and received legal advice on this issue.

Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she expects the Northern Ireland Tourist Board commissioned Oxford Economics research into Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand to be released.

(AQW 19984/11-15)

Mrs Foster: This research, completed in 2011, relates to tourist accommodation supply and the potential shortfall against visitor projections to 2020. The research was commissioned for internal use only, with a view to contributing to the evidence base for future accommodation policy. A consultation exercise is planned for later this year which will also be used to inform the Department's policy position on this matter.

It was not planned to externally release the research.

Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why the Oxford Economics research into Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand has not yet been released.

(AQW 19985/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the reply I gave to AQW 19984/11-15.

Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail any engagement her Department has had with the Department of the Environment on the results of the Oxford Economics research into Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand.

(AQW 19986/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There has been no engagement with the Department of the Environment on the results of this research.

Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for his assessment of the Oxford Economics research into Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand; and whether he is proposing any action based on this research.

(AQW 19992/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the replies I gave to AQW 19984/11-15 and AQW 19986/11-15.

Multi-Site Foreign Direct Investors

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the measures in place to ensure that multi-site Foreign Direct Investors award equal pay.

(AQW 20006/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not have the authority to dictate the level of pay offered by international investors. Furthermore, it is essential that companies are allowed the scope to invest where they consider they will operate most profitably. This includes taking into consideration the market rate for salaries and other operating costs. Companies will pay the levels that they believe reflect the skills and experience needed to fill a range of roles and functions, which themselves may vary by location.

Northern Ireland Businesses

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many Northern Ireland businesses are represented on the Prime Minister's current visit to India.

(AQW 20131/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Radox Laboratories and Wrightbus were asked to participate in the Prime Minister's trade mission to India. Unfortunately, neither company were able to participate due to other business commitments.

Invest Northern Ireland's next organised trade mission to India is planned for 15th-19th April, it is anticipated that fifteen local companies will take part.

The mission will visit Mumbai and New Delhi and will be supported by Invest Northern Ireland's office in Mumbai.

Indian Sub-Continent

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the measures her Department is taking to encourage inward investment from the Indian sub-continent.

(AQW 20132/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest Northern Ireland has permanent offices within the British High Commission network in India, located in Mumbai and Bangalore. The offices focus on inward investment, trade development and university linkages.

In December 2011, Invest NI appointed a new country manager in Mumbai and added a new Business Development Director in Bangalore to increase sales and promotional activities. Their primary focus is seeking Indian IT and Business Service companies to establish near shore operations in Northern Ireland to service UK and European clients. They are also establishing linkages with a fast emerging aerospace industry.

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the discussions she has had with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills regarding the Regional Aid position post 2013.

(AQW 20139/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) leads on the UK's interaction with the European Commission on Regional Aid Guidelines (RAG). My officials, along with their counterparts in the other devolved administrations, are working closely with BIS officials to ensure that the interests of the devolved administrations are fully and appropriately reflected in the UK's interactions with the Commission. In particular, my Department has been keen to ensure that, post 2013, Northern Ireland's continuing unique circumstances are reflected in the revised RAG which are currently being developed.

Over the last eighteen months, I and my officials have been engaging extensively with BIS, at both a Ministerial and official level, regarding proposed revisions to the RAG and in particular on the UK Government's proposal to remove Northern Ireland's automatic assisted area status post 2013. This engagement has included several discussions and correspondence between myself and the Minister of State for Business and Enterprise, as well as ongoing correspondence with the Business Secretary of State Vince Cable on the issue.

I and my officials will be continuing to press BIS, at both a Ministerial and official level, over the coming months to highlight the Northern Ireland position in relation to Regional Aid in order to secure the best possible outcome in this regard.

Local Conferencing Facilities

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of local conferencing facilities; and the action she intends to take to improve the facilities.

(AQW 20140/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Business Tourism, which includes Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions, is worth £100 million to the visitor economy in Northern Ireland.

The Belfast Waterfront is awaiting funding decisions to enable a £20 million extension to be operational by the start of 2016. The venue will then have an additional 2,000sqm exhibition space, 5 breakout rooms each to accommodate 200 delegates and a banqueting facility for 750 people transforming it into a fully integrated convention centre.

This extension is being supported by my Department through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

G8 Summit: Visitors

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many visitors are expected to attend the G8 summit.

(AQW 20141/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The G8 Summit is recognised as an unprecedented opportunity to show the world what a great place Northern Ireland is to invest, work, study and visit. NITB, Tourism Ireland and Invest NI will be capitalising on the worldwide marketing opportunities it presents. It is not possible to estimate at this stage the future impact on visitor numbers arising from the Summit.

Flag Protests

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what additional actions have been undertaken by her Department in light of the impact of the flags protests on (i) tourism; and (ii) local business.

(AQW 20142/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department continues to work closely with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), Tourism Ireland and Invest NI to ensure that the benefits of Northern Ireland are promoted as a place to invest, work, visit and study.

My Department, through NITB and Tourism Ireland has agreed to provide a financial stimulus package to help promote Belfast. The elements of this package include a contribution to the Backin Belfast marketing campaign and broader tourism messaging in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain markets, including a co-operative marketing campaign with carriers.

In addition NITB will continue to promote Northern Ireland as a visitor destination to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland markets through its Spring 2013 campaign which was launched on the 28 January 2013 featuring TV, Radio, Press, Outdoor, Digital and Social media coverage.

Tourism Ireland will implement a campaign of targeted marketing activities for Northern Ireland, targeting visitor growth from GB and from Europe through the targeting of the six top performing markets of Germany, France, Italy, Nordics, Spain and the Netherlands and from the US.

Invest NI has recently completed a series of inward investment company visits over a nine week period. In total nineteen company visits have taken place since 3 December, with no visits cancelled, including seven company visits with the Japanese Ambassador on 16 & 17 December.

On 16 January Oxford Consulting Group announced the creation of 33 new jobs in Northern Ireland.

Financial Services Authority: Credit Unions

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 19822/11-15, to detail (i) the financial assistance that has been provided to the Irish League of Credit Unions and to the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions to help credit unions that require guidance and assistance on the transitional arrangements; (ii) the remaining financial assistance available; and (iii) the date when the financial assistance will no longer be available.

(AQW 20206/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Detailed separate proposals put forward by each of the representative bodies have been considered and officials are finalising the terms of bespoke Letters of Offer with the intention that financial support of up to £20,000 each will be available to the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions and the Irish League of Credit Unions to claim against expenditure incurred from the date of my statement to the Assembly on 22nd May 2012. It is anticipated that representative bodies will submit claims shortly after acceptance of the Letters of Offer.

Banks Presence on High Streets

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she is taking to encourage banks not to reduce their presence in high streets of towns.

(AQW 20288/11-15)

Mrs Foster: While my Department has no statutory control of the banking sector, I fully recognise the challenges banks are facing as they seek to recapitalise and restructure and the implications this has on local operations and staff.

The DFP Minister and I have recently met with all the main banks in Northern Ireland and the various issues and impacts around bank restructuring were raised during these meetings. However, it should be recognised that bank locations are ultimately commercial decisions.

I have also previously met with representatives from the Irish Bank Officials' Association, the Finance Union, to discuss the issue of job losses in the banking sector and I am aware that the Finance Minister is due to meet with them again in the near future. We will continue to monitor this situation closely.

G8 Summit

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether there will be opportunities during the G8 summit to promote Northern Ireland internationally as a tourist and investment location.

(AQW 20307/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The G8 Summit at Lough Erne will provide unprecedented opportunities for both Tourism Ireland and Invest NI to promote Northern Ireland internationally. Both organisations are developing marketing plans to capitalise on the great opportunities the Summit presents.

Giro d'Italia 2014

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the planned route of the Giro d'Italia 2014 will take include the Mourne area.

(AQW 20384/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Grande Partenza or Big Start of the Giro d'Italia is coming to Northern Ireland in May 2014. This is one of the three classic cycling races in the world, attracting huge media coverage across the globe.

The exact route has yet to be finalised. This is the remit of RCS Sport who will work with the teams to develop the route. RCS Sport has many years experience designing cycling routes that will be challenging for the cyclists and entertaining for the thousands of spectators and TV viewers to watch.

NITB would be keen that they include the Mourne in the route, as one of Northern Ireland's designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and will be working with them to encourage this where possible. However this will be dependent on the feasibility of this as judged by RCS Sport.

Available Rooms in the South Down Constituency Area

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of available rooms in (i) bed and breakfasts; (ii) hostels; and (iii) hotels, in the South Down constituency area.

(AQW 20385/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The number of available rooms in the Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne District Council areas is as follows:

(i)	Bed & Breakfasts (Includes Guest Houses, Bed & Breakfasts and Guest Accommodation)	406
(ii)	Hostels	115
(iii)	Hotels	575

The breakdown of rooms by category and council area is as follows:

Category	District Council Area	Rooms Units	Total Premises
Hotel	Banbridge District Council	35	3
	Down District Council	309	6
	Newry & Mourne District Council	231	6
	Total	575	15
Guest House	Banbridge District Council	4	1
	Down District Council	90	12
	Newry & Mourne District Council	41	5
	Total	135	18
Guest Accommodation	Banbridge District Council	-	-
	Down District Council	5	1
	Newry & Mourne District Council	17	2
	Total	22	3
Bed & Breakfast	Banbridge District Council	24	9
	Down District Council	138	40
	Newry & Mourne District Council	87	32
	Total	249	81
Hostel	Banbridge District Council	-	-
	Down District Council	77	4
	Newry & Mourne District Council	38	5
	Total	115	9
	Grand Total	1096	126

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board does not hold this information on a constituency basis.

Tourist Accommodation

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what venues in South Down are registered with her Department to provide tourist accommodation.

(AQW 20386/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are 283 premises certified by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) to provide tourist accommodation in the Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne District Council Areas.

The information requested is only available in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format and a copy has been placed in the Assembly Library.

NITB has provided the list by categories of tourist accommodation. NITB does not hold this information on a constituency basis.

Department of the Environment

Unconventional Gas Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether, in conformity with the approach of the Irish Secretary of State for Natural Resources, Fergus O'Dowd, he can assure the public that his Department will not make a decision on whether to permit unconventional gas extraction ahead of the publication of the Irish Environmental Protection Agency report into the safety of the process.

(AQW 18643/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): I consider that it is best to assess unconventional gas extraction when more and fuller science is available. At that stage, a fuller evidence base will be available than currently. Consequently, I firmly believe that only with a fuller range of science, including that from the FEPA which DOE is participating in and helping to fund, will there be a science basis to consider and conclude the proposal for fracking.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ireland, in conjunction with a Steering Committee, which includes officials from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, is taking forward a programme of research into the issue of Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction. I believe this is important work.

It is also important to note that this is a programme of research and the Steering Committee intends to publish a number of interim reports while the programme is underway, with a final report published at the end of the programme.

No planning applications or other environmental permissions have yet been received by my Department; however should such applications be received the nature of the proposal will be assessed against the existing scientific evidence base. As I have said, this will include the outputs from the EPA led programme of research as well as scientific evidence from a wider Britain, European and global context.

I have always said it is essential see the fullest range of science before any decisions are taken on permitting hydraulic fracturing. That is firmly what I believe. That is firmly how we should proceed.

Hare Coursing Ban

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what is being done to enforce the ban on hare coursing.

(AQW 18857/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The PSNI is responsible for enforcement of this legislation. However, while such authority is not within my control, given my responsibility for protecting our wildlife, I take a close interest in the work of the Partnership Against Wildlife Crime (PAWNI) which brings together all bodies involved in

and with an interest in protecting our wildlife, including the PSNI. I will continue to support PAWNI in promoting effective enforcement of the law.

North Down Taxis

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many taxis operate in North Down.
(AQW 18914/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are 519 taxis licensed in the North Down area broken down as follows:-

BT19	143
BT20	70
BT21	21
BT22	75
BT23	210

Illegal Taxis: Prosecutions

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many prosecutions there have been for illegal taxis in North Down over the last three years.
(AQW 18915/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The numbers of inspections, prosecutions and fixed penalty tickets issued to taxis detected in the North Down area are tabulated below. The figures do not cover a full three-year period because the Driver & Vehicle Agency's enforcement database was not in operation until 1 April 2010.

Period	Number of Taxis Stopped	Number of Prosecutions	Number of Fixed Penalty Tickets Issued*
1 Apr 2010 – 31 Mar 2011	20	5	0
1 Apr 2011 – 31 Mar 2012	62	2	7
1 Apr 2012 – 30 Sep 2012	19	3	4

* DVA enforcement officers did not begin issuing fixed penalty tickets until April 2011.

The figures for prosecutions and fixed penalty tickets issued relate to a variety of public service vehicle offences, as there is no specific code for an illegal taxi.

Bangor Health Centre

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) whether his Department has received a planning application to extend Bangor health centre; and (ii) at what stage of the planning process the application currently sits.
(AQW 19313/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department received a planning application on 31st March 2011 for the refurbishment and extension of the existing Bangor Health Centre. Full planning permission was granted for the development on 27th May 2011. To date, the Department has received no further applications to extend the building.

Pump Street, Derry: Excavations

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking in relation to excavations occurring in Pump Street, Derry.

(AQW 19317/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I recognise that a number of interested parties, including the Health and Safety Executive, PSNI, Roads Service, the Dean of the Cathedral and Derry City Council, have all expressed concern over reports of the clearing of this 'tunnel' in Pump Street, Derry. After this activity was first reported in 2009, NIEA Built Heritage staff officers contacted the person engaged in this tunnelling and sent him two letters expressing their serious concerns about the potential for collapse, explosion or damage to services, such as electricity supply. They requested him to stop, whilst also working to make all relevant agencies aware of the potential dangers. However, my staff in NIEA: Built Heritage inform me that because this is a late 18th or 19th century drain of little archaeological value, they do not believe that it falls within their remit to take matters further. I understand that no built heritage legislation has been broken, so consequently it is difficult for me to recommend any further action by NIEA: Built Heritage on this matter unless there is a significant change in circumstances. However, I can report that the Derry Area Planning Office, who closed an enforcement investigation into this case in March 2010, has recently received additional information and reports of work. My staff in the Derry Area Office has informed me that they will expedite a fresh investigation as a matter of urgency to determine if any unauthorised tunnelling has taken place. If a breach of planning control is indentified, I have instructed that appropriate enforcement should be taken to remedy the breach as a matter of urgency.

Renewable Energy Planning Applications: Lagan Valley Area

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will ensure that Roads Service does not cause unnecessary delays to renewable energy planning applications that can have significant economic benefit to the economy in the Lagan Valley area.

(AQO 3292/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Minister for Regional Development has advised that his Department's Roads Service has received consultation requests from DOE Planning, relating to three separate applications for proposed anaerobic digester plants within the Lagan Valley area. Roads Service has responded positively on two of the applications and is seeking further information on the third.

Roads Service has advised that it dealt with the applications (following receipt of the necessary information from the applicant) in accordance with the response times set out in its service level agreement with my Department.

On receipt of responses from DRD Roads Service my officials prioritised the further processing of the applications.

Drumclay Crannog in Co. Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment where the artefacts that were excavated from Drumclay Crannog in Co. Fermanagh will be displayed once the excavation process is complete.

(AQO 3297/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The excavations at Drumclay Crannóg have revealed a huge variety of artefacts and information, and the excavations are still ongoing. The ownership of the artefacts being found rests, at present, with the Department of Regional Development, as they have been recovered from their land. However, it would be appropriate for these artefacts to be put on permanent display in County Fermanagh, and the Fermanagh County Museum is a potential home. There have been other suggestions in relation to the display of artefacts, even the re-creation of the Crannog and more than one location in Co. Fermanagh has been suggested. Work is still going on at the crannog, and my officials will be in discussion with their counterparts in DRD Roads Service about post excavation requirements, including the long-term display of these artefacts. Officials in NIEA: Built Heritage already

talked with the Manager of Fermanagh County Museum about creating an exhibition of the Drumclay finds.

The importance of and the character of the Crannog finds means a comprehensive approach is needed. In moving forward, I will meet with those who have expressed an interest in being involved in the future management of other artefacts.

Tackling Dereliction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQO 3284/11-15, which councils have put forward proposals to tackle dereliction.

(AQW 19369/11-15)

Mr Attwood: 22 councils put forward proposals to tackle dereliction and these are listed below. Additionally there was a proposal received from the Causeway Coast and Glen Cluster.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ■ Antrim Borough Council | ■ Down District Council |
| ■ Ards Borough Council | ■ Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council |
| ■ Armagh City and District Council | ■ Fermanagh District Council |
| ■ Ballymena Borough Council | ■ Larne Borough Council |
| ■ Ballymoney Borough Council | ■ Limavady Borough Council |
| ■ Banbridge District Council | ■ Lisburn City Council |
| ■ Belfast City Council | ■ Moyle District Council |
| ■ Carrickfergus Borough Council | ■ Newry & Mourne District Council |
| ■ Castlereagh Borough Council | ■ Newtownabbey Borough Council |
| ■ Coleraine Borough Council | ■ Omagh District Council |
| ■ Cookstown District Council | ■ Strabane District Council |

25-year Incineration Contracts

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the progress being made with the award of 25-year incineration contracts by the three waste management authorities.

(AQW 19587/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Much of the detailed information pertaining to the waste infrastructure procurements is subject to restrictions imposed by public procurement law and commercial confidentiality requirements. However, I can provide the following summary of the current position of each project.

On 15 October 2012, SWaMP2008 announced the termination of its long-term waste infrastructure procurement following its decision on the basis of legal advice not to contest a challenge to the legality of its bidder consortium. The Department has requested a Post Project Evaluation from SWaMP2008.

The NWRWMG procurement is to provide Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) (140,000 tonnes capacity) and a Gasification plant (80,000 tonnes capacity), its Joint Committee having previously ruled out mass burn incineration as a potential solution.

At its meeting on 13 December 2012 the Executive agreed the provision of financial support to the NWRWMG to a maximum of £35 million over fourteen years. This commitment would materialise once the proposed waste infrastructure has been constructed and is operational, which NWRWMG has forecast will happen during 2015/16, subject to council ratification.

Following approval of the NWRWMG Appointment Business Case for its project by DOE and DFP, the members of its Joint Committee decided at their meeting on 19 December to recommend the appointment of a Preferred Bidder to deliver new waste infrastructure for the north-west region to their

constituent councils for their consideration. That recommendation is currently progressing through the democratic cycle of council meetings.

The arc21 procurement involves a two stage process with up front Mechanical Biological Treatment (240,000 tonnes capacity) of Municipal Solid Waste to gain additional recyclate and biologically treat the remaining material to produce a fuel for combustion in a second stage conventional Energy from Waste facility (210,000 tonnes capacity).

arc21 is in the latter stages of dialogue with its remaining bidder and is working through a range of procurement issues, including affordability, land assembly and planning and permitting. It had previously forecast appointment of a Preferred Bidder in February 2013 but does not now expect that to happen until September 2013.

Council Invoices

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment to explain the delay in responding to AQW 18186/11-15; and to list by (i) name; and (ii) date the information received by his Department from each council.

(AQW 19677/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My department does not hold the information requested which had to be requested from each of the 26 councils. The response therefore took longer to collate than the standard response time for Assembly Questions. The details requested relating to responses are set out in the table below. The question has now been responded to and I attach a copy for your information.

Date Information Received	Council
09/01/2013	Ards
	Cookstown
	Craigavon
	Dungannon
	Larne
	North Down
10/01/2013	Ballymoney
	Derry
	Fermanagh
11/01/2013	Castlereagh
14/01/2013	Lisburn
	Strabane
15/01/2013	Armagh
	Coleraine
	Limavady
	Moyle

Date Information Received	Council
16/01/2013	Antrim
	Ballymena
	Banbridge
	Belfast
	Down
	Magherafelt
	Newtownabbey
	Omagh
17/01/2013	Carrickfergus
25/01/2013	Newry & Mourne

Local Government Staff: Compassionate Leave

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the procedures for compassionate leave for local government staff.

(AQW 19873/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The vast majority of employees in district councils are employed under the employment conditions set out in the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service. That agreement provides for Special Leave under Part 3, paragraph 7.9 in the following terms:

“Additional leave with or without pay may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the employing authority. Authorities shall give particular consideration to granting reasonable paid time off for dependants as defined under the Employment Relations Act 1999”.

The Labour Relations Agency advises that -

- a dependant is the husband, wife, child or parent of the employee. It also includes someone who lives in the same household as the employee. It does not include tenants or boarders living in the family home, or someone who lives in the household as an employee, such as a live-in housekeeper; and
- in cases of illness or injury, or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance. The employee is entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off in the above circumstances. The legislation does not specify the amount of time off which is reasonable, since this will vary according to the circumstances of the emergency. The time off is not for caring but for making longer term care arrangements.

Clause 2 of the 2012 Planning Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what assessment he has made of the assertion by the Confederation of British Industry, in its summary of the January Planning forum, that clause 2 in the Planning Bill would give more weight when making decisions to economic considerations; and whether he has received legal advice on this issue.

(AQW 19903/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Clause 2 of the Planning Bill does not give economic considerations more weight over other material considerations in the determination of applications for planning permission. I can confirm that the Department has received legal advice on this issue.

Flood Plains

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of (i) domestic; and (ii) non-domestic properties which have been built on flood plains, broken down either by council area or constituency.

(AQW 19912/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Historically many cities and towns in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere in UK, have been built in valleys and along river corridors and thus have resulted in increased flood risk. The Department recognises that the effects of flooding on human activity are wide ranging, impacting on the economy, social well being and the environment.

In the last 5 years from April 2008 to September 2012 5,363 residential and 3,995 non-residential planning applications were approved within flood plains. This figure includes new and replacement developments as well as alterations and extensions to existing properties. This is categorised by Council District and year in the table attached. The Department does not hold records detailing how many of these approved applications were constructed.

The planning system cannot in itself prevent the flooding of properties but it does acknowledge the risks and uncertainties associated with climate change. The Department considers that actions to address these matters through the planning system should be based on a precautionary approach. This approach is embodied in the policies set out in Planning Policy Statement 15 'Planning and Flood Risk' to ensure that the development decisions we make today and in the future does not increase flood risk.

APPENDIX 1

THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL¹ APPLICATIONS² THAT WERE APPROVED ON FLOOD PLAINS³, 2008/09 TO 2012/13 Q2⁴

Planning Area	LGD	2008/09			2009/10			2010/11			2011/12			2012/13 Q1 & Q2 ⁴		
		Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total
Belfast	Ard s	62	26	88	58	27	85	42	36	78	23	37	60	13	13	26
	Belfast	104	215	319	60	162	222	40	145	185	40	152	192	9	33	42
	Castlereagh	19	15	34	26	21	47	14	18	32	14	9	23	3	7	10
	Lisburn	71	33	104	76	27	103	42	17	59	50	16	66	14	9	23
	North Down	37	10	47	28	10	38	19	10	29	14	15	29	1	0	1
	Total	293	299	592	248	247	495	157	226	383	141	229	370	40	62	102
Northern	Ballymoney	40	7	47	19	22	41	24	12	36	19	10	29	1	2	3
	Coleraine	59	38	97	53	37	90	45	23	68	20	30	50	2	2	4
	Derry	36	68	104	25	72	97	30	50	80	21	70	91	5	11	16
	Limavady	47	12	59	24	22	46	34	16	50	18	25	43	5	8	13
	Moyle	31	23	54	38	35	73	28	28	56	13	20	33	3	6	9
	Strabane	70	45	115	36	34	70	27	39	66	26	28	54	5	5	10
	Total	283	193	476	195	222	417	188	168	356	117	183	300	21	34	55

Planning Area	LGD	2008/09			2009/10			2010/11			2011/12			2012/13 Q1 & Q2 ⁴		
		Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total
South Antrim	Antrim	58	37	95	55	31	86	54	24	78	27	24	51	1	3	4
	Ballymena	94	38	132	73	36	109	55	45	100	38	33	71	9	4	13
	Carrickfergus	21	15	36	18	8	26	14	8	22	7	7	14	1	2	3
	Larne	16	12	28	30	11	41	12	4	16	9	8	17	2	3	5
	Newtownabbey	26	15	41	27	26	53	25	29	54	16	19	35	5	6	11
	Total	215	117	332	203	112	315	160	110	270	97	91	188	18	18	36
Southern	Armagh	79	24	103	67	23	90	47	23	70	65	23	88	9	4	13
	Banbridge	67	35	102	36	26	62	28	18	46	17	21	38	5	7	12
	Craigavon	71	52	123	64	47	111	48	23	71	34	30	64	8	6	14
	Down	80	24	104	80	39	119	48	29	77	40	47	87	12	9	21
	Newry and Mourne	93	80	173	89	80	169	63	88	151	72	80	152	21	23	44
	Total	390	215	605	336	215	551	234	181	415	228	201	429	55	49	104

Planning Area	LGD	2008/09			2009/10			2010/11			2011/12			2012/13 Q1 & Q2 ⁴		
		Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total	Residential	Non-Residential ¹	Total
Western	Cookstown	55	15	70	58	13	71	40	7	47	40	16	56	1	7	8
	Dungannon	149	56	205	92	34	126	74	31	105	48	25	73	5	6	11
	Fermanagh	191	67	258	227	90	317	128	54	182	89	59	148	6	9	15
	Magherafelt	70	27	97	67	21	88	57	27	84	33	17	50	5	5	10
	Omagh	117	73	190	79	58	137	53	48	101	49	51	100	11	7	18
	Total	582	238	820	523	216	739	352	167	519	259	168	427	28	34	62
Total		1,763	2,825	1,062	1,505	1,012	2,517	1,091	852	1,943	842	872	1,714	162	197	359

Notes:

- 1 Non-residential applications will include all applications, i.e. there will applications included in the table that are not properties.
- 2 The figures will include some applications that were for alterations/extensions.
- 3 The applications on flood plains have been sourced from the Q100 (2030) floodplain dataset.
- 4 Q2 of 2012/13 is our latest published information.

Review of the Learner and Restricted Driver Schemes and Graduated Driver Licensing Consultation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration will be given to (i) non-regulatory approaches in reducing night time collisions involving young and other new drivers; and (ii) the feasibility of technological solutions, following the outcome of the Review of the Learner and Restricted Driver Schemes and Graduated Driver Licensing Consultation.

(AQW 19913/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) Following the consultation on the review of the Learner and Restricted Driver Schemes and Graduated Driver Licensing, I decided not to include night time restrictions in the package of measures I announced in May 2012, due to concerns about the enforceability of such restrictions and the extent to which they would impact on access to jobs, education and sporting and social activities especially in rural areas.

Instead I have decided on an alternative approach to reduce the number of night time collisions involving young and other new drivers, through the development of awareness campaigns which highlight the risks associated with new drivers driving at night, together with improved driver training.

One of the measures to be included in the forthcoming Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill will require the completion of a 'Learning to Drive' syllabus evidenced by a compulsory student logbook. Consideration is being given to requiring learner drivers to undertake and record that they have taken some driving lessons and/ or practice at night.

Regulating for night time restrictions is however an area which I may need to return to in future if the current proposals, including a passenger carrying restriction, do not prove sufficient in reducing night time collisions involving young and other inexperienced new drivers.

- (ii) A further non regulatory measure my Department is taking forward at my behest is the impact and feasibility of technological solutions in improving the road safety of young drivers.

In particular my officials have been exploring with the local motor insurance industry the potential impact of young driver "Pay How You Drive" insurance products linked to in car technology capable of monitoring driving performance. In addition to monitoring and providing feedback on their driving performance and thereby helping to improve it, these products in effect also incentivise young drivers to adopt voluntary night time driving restrictions by offering cheaper insurance premiums for drivers who avoid driving at night.

A pilot study using information from local insurance companies' own pilot studies is to be undertaken to assess the impacts of telematics and its potential effectiveness in changing driver behaviour.

Vacancies for Professional Planners

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many vacancies for professional planners exist in each planning division.

(AQW 19918/11-15)

Mr Attwood: DOE currently does not have any vacancies for professional planners.

Question for Written Answer: AQW 18041/11-15

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 18041/11-15, when he intends to answer this question given that it is now significantly overdue.

(AQW 19978/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The response to AQW 18041/11-15 issued on 24 February 2013.

Beeches with Blue Flag Status

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment which beaches have Blue Flag status.
(AQW 19998/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In 2012 Northern Ireland had 11 Blue Flag Beaches: Magilligan (Benone), Magilligan (Downhill), Castlerock, Portstewart, Portrush Mill (West), Portrush Curran (East), Portrush (Whiterocks), Crawfordsburn, Tyrella, Murlough (Co Down) and Cranfield Bay.

The international Blue Flag scheme is administered in Northern Ireland by Tidy Northern Ireland. Blue Flag awards for 2013 have not been announced yet. The announcement is not expected before late May or early June.

Shale Oil Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether his Department has been informed of any proposals to extract shale oil; (ii) to detail the method of shale oil extraction that is being considered; and (iii) what understanding his Department has of the environmental impact of shale oil extraction.
(AQW 20012/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has not been informed of any proposals to extract shale oil in Northern Ireland. My Department therefore has no information on extraction methods being considered, given DOE has received nothing on a proposal, if there is any.

Quarry in Drumnakilly Flooding Issue

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment when he intends to bring a resolution to the flooding issue with the quarry in Drumnakilly that is affecting local residents; and whether his Department has made this issue a priority since it was raised on 16 January 2013.
(AQW 20014/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Flooding in itself does not fall within my Department's remit, Rivers Agency is the body with statutory responsibility for flooding issues. In an effort to expedite a resolution to this issue I have instructed my officials in NIEA to take a multi-agency approach with Rivers Agency, DOE Planning and DRD Roads Service. As I have said, I am turning over every stone to have this matter resolved.

As part of this approach, at a recent meeting between NIEA and Rivers Agency, on 24 January 2013, it was identified that a number of investigatory actions were required to identify the specific cause or causes of the flooding and ultimately to determine how the issue can be resolved.

NIEA, Rivers Agency and Road Service have undertaken investigations on the site to determine the cause of the flooding. These investigations revealed two significant blockages. One blockage consisted of a plastic fertiliser bag in a gully on the McKiernan's property and the second blockage, in the storm line below the McKiernan's property, consisted of silt and other debris.

The plastic bag blockage was removed and the sand and gravel cleared by jetting the pipeline. Once the 2nd blockage was removed the floodwater began to dissipate immediately. A camera survey of the pipeline was also carried out which indicated that poor levels in the pipeline may be the most likely cause of the silt and other debris accumulation. Investigations are ongoing as to how the pipeline levels issue will be resolved. A follow up Rivers Agency inspection of the site, on 14 February 2013, confirmed that the flooding had ceased.

There continues to be an issue with discharge of water from the sand quarry upstream of the affected property. There is no record of the quarry owner having received consent from Rivers Agency, to discharge storm water from the quarry. In order to get retrospective consent the Quarry owner made application on 31 January 2013 in accordance with the Drainage (NI) Order 1973 to discharge storm water into the upstream end of the culvert that runs through the affected property. I am advised that Rivers Agency is currently withholding consent until a detailed drainage assessment has been carried out and submitted to the Agency for approval.

I can assure you that my Department has given this case a high priority and in addition to the proactive measures taken, as outlined above, both DOE Planning and NIEA have previously taken robust enforcement action in relation to this site and a number of further enforcement processes are currently ongoing.

My Department will keep all stakeholders updated on progress at this site, including the residents affected by this issue, and their representatives.

In addition, planning applications have been recommended for refusal and temporary stop notices have been served, with the opportunity to proceed to full enforcement. Moreover, a prosecution file has been submitted to the PPS.

In all the above ways, it is very clear the priority given by my Department.

Marine Bill

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment when the Marine Bill will proceed to Consideration Stage.

(AQW 20054/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It is my intention that the Marine Bill proceed to Consideration Stage as soon as possible, subject to agreement of proposed amendments by my Executive colleagues and scheduling by the Business Office. I have asked my Marine Bill paper to be considered by the Executive, under the “three meetings” rule.

Planning Appeals

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning appeals have been lost by the Planning Service over the last three years.

(AQW 20078/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The number of appeals received by the PAC, decided and allowed in the last three business years is set out in the table below.

Business Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Appeals Received	515	435	451
Appeals Decided	1304	681	332
Appeals Allowed	516	226	91

Source: Planning and Water Appeals Commission Annual Report April 2011/March 2012

Councils: Chief Executives

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment which councils employ a Chief Executive on a (i) temporary; or (ii) part-time contract.

(AQW 20115/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) The following councils employ Chief Executives on a temporary basis:
- Cookstown District Council
 - Down District Council
 - Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
 - Strabane District Council.
- (ii) The Chief Executive of Strabane District Council is employed on a part-time contract.

Staff Travel Claims

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost to his Department of staff travel claims in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20194/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides the expenditure on staff travel claims in the Department for the last three years 2009/10 to 2011/12.

Business Area	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
Department (excluding agencies)	389,958	298,636	287,656
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	260,282	289,446	292,362
Driver and Vehicle Agency	300,161	256,682	331,572
Total	950,401	844,764	911,590

The general increase in costs between 2010-11 and 2011-12 is in a small part, a consequence of the change in the NICS mileage rate from 40 to 45 pence. I have asked for a breakdown in the increase in NIEA travel, year on year, for the last three years, the increase in DVA costs by 18% 2010/11 – 2011/12 (partly due to training in relation to the migration from a previous financial system to Account NI) and how the costs generally can be controlled.

Beach Summit

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment when the next Beach Summit will take place.

(AQW 20198/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The next Good Beach Summit will take place in late May or Early June. A firm date has not been fixed yet because the Summit is to run in conjunction with the presentation of international Blue Flag Awards to our best beaches. Tidy Northern Ireland administers the Blue Flag Awards in Northern Ireland.

Quality of Beaches

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the progress that has been made on improving the quality of beaches.

(AQW 20199/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have now hosted five Good Beach Summits and meaningful progress has been made in a wide range of priority areas which collectively contribute to better beaches and a better beach experience.

The multi-strand action Plan groups work streams under four headings;

- Improve Water Quality;
- Improve Beach Cleanliness, Facilities, Management and Signage;
- Keep the Public and Media Better Informed;
- Support the Coastal economy.

Notable areas where particularly good progress has been made include:

- Sewerage infrastructure improvements (eg Ballyholme and Newcastle);
- Catchment source apportionment studies (specifically including septic tanks) at Waterfoot, Ballygally, Browns Bay, Ballyholme and Ballywalter;
- Signage Project – in line with revised Bathing Waters Directive;

- Development of a Marine Litter Strategy.
- Protection of the public from polluted bathing water through a warning system.
- Development of a dedicated beaches web site – BeachNI.

All participants agree that the Good Beach Summits should continue although, there is an ongoing drive to include more coastal community and representative groups. The next Summit will be run in conjunction with the presentation of Blue Flags to our best beaches at the end of May or in early June. The Blue Flag Awards scheme is administered in Northern Ireland by Tidy Northern Ireland.

Wind Farm Applications

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment how many wind farm applications were (i) accepted on appeal; and (ii) withdrawn, in each year since 2008.

(AQW 20201/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the period 1 April 2008 to 30 September 2012 a total of 4 appeals were allowed and 14 withdrawn for wind farm applications as detailed in the table below.

Table 1

Financial Year	Allowed on Appeal	Application Withdrawn
2008/2009	0	3
2009/2010	0	2
2010/2011	3	7
2011/2012	1	1
Q1 & Q2 of 2012/2013	0	1
Total	4	14

Notes:

- 1 This is the number of wind farm applications that were appealed to PAC and subsequently allowed.
- 2 Q2 of 2012/13 is our latest published information.

Planning Applications for Rural Dwellings

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for rural dwellings have been received since June 2011, broken down by district council area; and how many were (i) refused; and (ii) approved.

(AQW 20209/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the period 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2012, a total of 4,532 planning applications for rural dwellings have been received and 1,560 have been decided – 1390 (89%) approved and 170 refused. The table below shows these categorised by local government district.

Local Government District	Applications Received 01/04/11-30/09/12	Applications Approved	Applications Refused
Ards	196	159	10
Belfast	3	4	0
Castlereagh	42	35	1
Lisburn	251	239	7

Local Government District	Applications Received 01/04/11-30/09/12	Applications Approved	Applications Refused
North Down	37	28	0
Ballymoney	259	108	8
Coleraine	145	134	7
Derry	88	95	4
Limavady	123	121	12
Moyle	101	91	3
Strabane	118	114	6
Antrim	201	182	4
Ballymena	245	250	5
Carrickfergus	21	23	1
Larne	98	70	3
Newtownabbey	67	54	1
Armagh	279	447	10
Banbridge	189	209	3
Craigavon	176	183	6
Down	264	287	16
Newry & Mourne	467	558	36
Cookstown	183	214	3
Dungannon	264	254	5
Fermanagh	354	353	3
Magherafelt	272	216	5
Omagh	237	261	11
Total	4532	4689	680

Planning Applications for Farm Dwellings

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for farm dwellings have been received since June 2011, broken down by district council area; and how many were (i) refused; and (ii) approved.

(AQW 20210/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the period 1st June 2011 and 30 September 2012, 1358 planning applications have been received for a new dwelling on a farm. This figure is inclusive of applications for dwellings on a farm, replacement farm dwellings and dwellings for horse breeders.

The breakdown of this figure by District Council Area is set out in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: The number of planning applications received for farm dwellings, between June 2011 and September 2012

		Applications received 2011/12 (Jun11 to Mar12)	Applications received 2012/13 (Q1 & Q2)	Total Received
Belfast	Ards	44	23	67
	Castlereagh	7	6	13
	Lisburn	61	24	85
	North Down	6	2	8
	Total	118	55	173
Northern	Ballymoney	19	18	37
	Coleraine	24	13	37
	Derry	29	14	43
	Limavady	27	26	53
	Moyle	24	20	44
	Strabane	25	12	37
	Total	138	91	229
South Antrim	Antrim	55	20	75
	Ballymena	52	25	77
	Carrickfergus	6	1	7
	Larne	28	19	47
	Newtownabbey	14	10	24
	Total	155	75	230
Southern	Armagh	50	22	72
	Banbridge	32	21	53
	Craigavon	27	18	45
	Down	54	31	85
	Newry and Mourne	69	44	113
	Total	232	136	368
Western	Cookstown	43	10	53
	Dungannon	36	17	53
	Fermanagh	39	29	68
	Magherafelt	68	41	109
	Omagh	35	18	53
	Total	221	115	336
Total		874	484	1358

TABLE 2: THE NUMBER OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS APPROVED AND REFUSED FOR FARM DWELLINGS, BETWEEN JUNE 2011 AND SEPTEMBER 2012

	2011/12 (Jun11 to Mar12)			2012/13 (Q1 & Q2)			Total		
	Approvals	Refusals	Total	Approvals	Refusals	Total	Approvals	Refusals	Total
Belfast									
Ards	4	0	4	25	3	28	29	3	32
Castlereagh	0	1	1	5	0	5	5	1	6
Lisburn	6	0	6	39	1	40	45	1	46
North Down	3	1	4	2	0	2	5	1	6
Total	13	2	15	71	4	75	84	6	90
Northern									
Ballymoney	5	2	7	8	2	10	13	4	17
Coleraine	9	1	10	11	3	14	20	4	24
Derry	5	0	5	18	0	18	23	0	23
Limavady	5	0	5	14	5	19	19	5	24
Moyle	6	0	6	13	1	14	19	1	20
Strabane	13	0	13	7	3	10	20	3	23
Total	43	3	46	71	14	85	114	17	131
South Antrim									
Antrim	36	0	36	21	1	22	57	1	58
Ballymena	28	0	28	24	0	24	52	0	52
Carrickfergus	2	0	2	1	1	2	3	1	4
Larne	11	0	11	12	1	13	23	1	24
Newtownabbey	4	1	5	4	1	5	8	2	10
Total	81	1	82	62	4	66	143	5	148

	2011/12 (Jun11 to Mar12)			2012/13 (Q1 & Q2)			Total			
	Approvals	Refusals	Total	Approvals	Refusals	Total	Approvals	Refusals	Total	
Southern	Armagh	13	0	13	35	0	35	48	0	48
	Banbridge	11	0	11	25	1	26	36	1	37
	Craigavon	12	0	12	18	1	19	30	1	31
	Down	6	0	6	41	6	47	47	6	53
	Newry and Mourne	14	4	18	37	3	40	51	7	58
	Total	56	4	60	156	11	167	212	15	227
Western	Cookstown	21	0	21	16	1	17	37	1	38
	Dungannon	18	0	18	17	1	18	35	1	36
	Fermanagh	29	3	32	22	0	22	51	3	54
	Magherafelt	28	3	31	26	2	28	54	5	59
	Omagh	13	1	14	17	3	20	30	4	34
	Total	109	7	116	98	7	105	207	14	221
Total	302	17	319	458	40	498	760	57	817	

Planning Applications for Retirement Dwellings

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for retirement dwellings have been approved since June 2011, broken down by district council area.

(AQW 20211/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the period 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2012, 4,532 planning applications were received for rural dwellings and 1,560 applications decided of which 89% (1,390) were approved.

The information provided in the description of a proposed development does not always detail whether the proposal is for a retirement dwelling. As a result the Department is unable to further categorise this information in the detail requested.

The Table below shows the number of applications received, approved and refused per district council area from 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2012.

District Council Area	Applications Received	Applications Approved	Applications Refused
Ards	196	159	10
Belfast	3	4	0
Castlereagh	42	35	1
Lisburn	251	239	7
North Down	37	28	0
Ballymoney	259	108	8
Coleraine	145	134	7
Derry	88	95	4
Limavady	123	121	12
Moyle	101	91	3
Strabane	118	114	6
Antrim	201	182	4
Ballymena	245	250	5
Carrickfergus	21	23	1
Larne	98	70	3
Newtownabbey	67	54	1
Armagh	279	447	10
Banbridge	189	209	3
Craigavon	176	183	6
Down	264	287	16
Newry & Mourne	467	558	36
Cookstown	183	214	3
Dungannon	264	254	5
Fermanagh	354	353	3

District Council Area	Applications Received	Applications Approved	Applications Refused
Magherafelt	272	216	5
Omagh	237	261	11
Total	4532	4689	680

Planning Applications for Business Premises

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for business premises have been (i) refused; and (ii) approved, since June 2011, broken down by district council area.

(AQW 20212/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the period June 2011 to end of September 2012, 801 applications identified as proposals for business premises have been decided, 753(94%) of which have been approved and 48 (6%) have been refused. This is broken down by local government district in the table below.

TABLE 1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS PREMISES DECIDED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT BETWEEN 1 JUNE 2011 AND 30 SEPTEMBER 2012

	Total Decided	Approved		Refused
		Total Approved	Approval Rate (%)	Total Refused
Antrim	23	22	96	1
Ards	33	32	97	1
Armagh	25	23	92	2
Ballymena	34	33	97	1
Ballymoney	12	12	100	0
Banbridge	18	17	94	1
Belfast	130	119	92	11
Carrickfergus	17	15	88	2
Castlereagh	12	11	92	1
Coleraine	40	38	95	2
Cookstown	33	32	97	1
Craigavon	46	43	93	3
Derry	53	51	96	2
Down	34	31	91	3
Dungannon	27	26	96	1
Fermanagh	40	39	98	1
Larne	3	3	100	0
Limavady	10	8	80	2
Lisburn	32	31	97	1

	Total Decided	Approved		Refused
		Total Approved	Approval Rate (%)	Total Refused
Magherafelt	15	14	93	1
Moyle	10	9	90	1
Newry and Mourne	62	56	90	6
Newtownabbey	23	23	100	0
North Down	33	32	97	1
Omagh	22	21	95	1
Strabane	14	12	86	2
Total	801	753	94	48

Notes:

1 September 2012 Is Our Latest Published Information.

Planning Application Q/2011/0220/0

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 18988/11-15, why he has yet to reply to correspondence from my office on planning application Q/2011/0220/0.

(AQW 20229/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The response to AQW 18988/11-15 issued on 21 February 2013.

Multiple Wind Turbines on Agricultural Land

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the current planning applications for multiple wind turbines on agricultural land in North Down.

(AQW 20247/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are no current planning applications for multiple wind turbines on agricultural land in North Down however, the Department is currently processing two planning applications for single wind turbines on agricultural land within the same jurisdiction.

Planning application W/2011/0268/F was received on 24 May 2011. It seeks permission for a single 225kw wind turbine with a blade diameter of 27m and hub height of 30m at a site 210m North East of 78 Ballymiscaw Road, Holywood.

Planning application W/2011/0549/F was received on 08 December 2011. It seeks permission for a single wind turbine with a 30m hub height and 30m blade diameter with maximum output not exceeding 250kw at a site 457m South East of 69 Green Road, Bangor.

Single Wind Turbines on Agricultural Land

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the current planning applications for single wind turbines on agricultural land in North Down.

(AQW 20248/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are no current planning applications for multiple wind turbines on agricultural land in North Down however, the Department is currently processing two planning applications for single wind turbines on agricultural land within the same jurisdiction.

Planning application W/2011/0268/F was received on 24 May 2011. It seeks permission for a single 225kw wind turbine with a blade diameter of 27m and hub height of 30m at a site 210m North East of 78 Ballymiscaw Road, Holywood.

Planning application W/2011/0549/F was received on 08 December 2011. It seeks permission for a single wind turbine with a 30m hub height and 30m blade diameter with maximum output not exceeding 250kw at a site 457m South East of 69 Green Road, Bangor.

Cars with High Intensity Discharge Headlamps

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration is being given to altering MOT test regulation on cars with high intensity discharge headlamps.

(AQW 20300/11-15)

Mr Attwood: High Intensity Discharge (HID) headlights have been fitted in certain motor vehicles for a number of years. Compared with the more common Halogen headlights, HID headlights are more efficient, have a longer life and can be up to three times brighter. The benefit of this extra brightness is that it enables drivers using HID lights to see approximately 30% further than a Halogen System. The downside of this extra brightness is the potential to cause excessive dazzle to oncoming traffic. Dazzle can be caused if the lamps are dirty or aimed too high. Vehicles with HID headlights are therefore legally required to have a headlamp washer system and levelling system fitted before they are permitted to enter into service within Europe.

The assessment of the presence and operation of these headlamp cleaning and levelling devices was introduced into the annual vehicle test in compliance with European Roadworthiness Directive 2010/48/EU. This requirement was introduced into the annual vehicle (MOT) test in Northern Ireland on an advisory basis from 1 February 2012, and became a reason for failure from 1 May 2012. The use of vehicles on the road which do not have the washer or levelling system fitted to HID headlights is illegal and poses a potential road safety risk. A vehicle will fail the test in Northern Ireland where a mandatory headlight washer or levelling device is missing, inoperative or otherwise obviously defective.

The Department's operations, as detailed above, are fully in line with European Roadworthiness Directive 2010/48/EU and we therefore have no plans to alter the current MOT test regulation on cars with high intensity discharge headlights.

Visits to Local Council Meetings

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment on how many occasions he has made official visits to local council meetings in the last 12 months.

(AQW 20306/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since January 2012, I have attended a meeting of each of the 11 Voluntary Transition Committees. I have also chaired four Regional Transition Committee meetings. I have attended a number of other meetings with Councils and their members. These were not in full Council formats. I have also met a range of local Council delegations on a number of matters.

2014 Giro Italia Cycle Race

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the announcement that a stage of the 2014 Giro Italia cycle race will be held in Armagh City, whether he will consider working with the local council to address issues of dereliction and gap sites with funding similar to that which was made available to Derry and Portrush for the City of Culture and the Irish Open respectively.

(AQW 20316/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As members know I believe the dereliction intervention should be "rolled out" across all NI Councils. To date, 8 Councils have benefitted from funding.

I am keen to assist any council where dereliction funding might be worthwhile and effective. I will be bidding to maintain into 2014. The Armagh bid, along with all other council bids, will be reconsidered

as and when further funding becomes available and I hope it will become available quickly including through in-year monitoring rounds.

Any council can refresh its original bid if it wishes. Indeed I am writing to Councils to ask if they wish to adjust their bid. Armagh City Council may wish to reflect the importance of the 2014 Giro Italia cycle race in any revised bid.

Statutory Implementation of Transition Committees

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the timeframe for the statutory implementation of transition committees.

(AQO 3477/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I expect to lay the draft regulations for the operation of the Statutory Transition Committees in the Assembly in April. Subject to their passage through the Assembly process, this would enable Transition Committees to be placed on a statutory footing in May/June 2013.

To achieve this, I intend using the existing primary powers contained in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Act 2010. However, as part of the process to constitute the Statutory Transition Committees, the regulations must be considered firstly by the Environment Committee and then debated in a plenary session of the Assembly and later approved by resolution of the Assembly before they can be made.

Scrap Metal

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment whether he intends to introduce legislation to further regulate the scrap metal trade.

(AQO 3478/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Regulation of the scrap metal trade as an industry falls outwith the powers of the Department of the Environment. Therefore, I have no plans to introduce further legislation to regulate the industry as such.

However, what the DOE can and does do is regulate the waste/environmental activities carried out by scrap metal dealers and I am already taking steps to strengthen environmental legislation to help combat this problem.

While environmental measures will not address fully the problem of metal theft, it is considered that they will be useful to assist in dealing with the problem, since it has been identified that environmental legislation has a role to play in tackling the issue of metal theft, due to the fact that metal thieves often also commit environmental offences.

Therefore, with effect from 4th March 2013, the Department is commencing the powers contained in Articles 5, 9, 14, 15 and 16 of the Waste (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 and Sections 1 and 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Amendment) Act (NI) 2011. When commenced these provisions will:

- Allow the Department to issue fixed penalty notices for certain offences;
- Allow authorised officers (and in some cases constables) to stop, search and seize vehicles and to detain seized property; and
- Provide the Department with powers to make subordinate legislation in relation to waste carriers, including the power to impose certain conditions on waste carriers and to inspect vehicles to ensure compliance with such conditions.

A number of these primary legislative provisions, once commenced, will require further subordinate legislation. Therefore, commencement of the above powers will not, necessarily, provide a quick fix, as policy development and consultation will be required but work on this legislation is already started and

officials are working to progress the necessary subordinate legislation as quickly as possible, taking account of other work priorities.

In addition, other proposals being looked at by the Department include amending the Duty of Care Regulations to remove the 7-days grace for waste carriers/holders to produce documentation to the Department upon request. The intention of this amendment is to make it a requirement to carry/hold the appropriate documentation with the waste to which it refers and make it an offence not to do so. This will allow authorised officers or the police to 'weed out' illegal transfer of wastes, including metal. Consultation on these proposals has already commenced and will close on 26 April 2013. Allowing for Assembly processes it is hoped that this legislation will be introduced by early Summer 2013.

Hazardous and Non-Hazardous Waste

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the number of outstanding referrals or complaints of fly-tipping of hazardous and non-hazardous waste that were reported to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency within the past year.

(AQO 3479/11-15)

Mr Attwood: NIEA have currently four referrals reported under the fly-tipping pilot arrangements which remain outstanding.

Retail Planning Application at Sprucefield

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department had made an assessment of the impact of the former retail planning application at Sprucefield on other retail centres in Lurgan, Portadown and Craigavon.

(AQO 3481/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A major Article 31 planning application for a retail scheme including a Department Store, 19 Retail Units, restaurants and associated infrastructural development at Sprucefield, Lisburn for Sprucefield Centre Limited (S/2009/1045/F) was withdrawn by the applicant on the 31 January 2013.

This was on the eve of the date on which evidence was due to be submitted to the Planning Appeals Commission by the parties to the anticipated Public Inquiry on the 15 April 2013. The Department had in preparation for the inquiry considered the potential retail impact of the proposal on settlements within 60 minute drive time from the proposal. This assessment indicated that the proposal, when considered with other approved retail development of a similar nature, would significantly detract from the retail centres of Lurgan, Portadown and Craigavon with cumulative impacts respectively of 7.7%, 18.3% and 35.6 % respectively.

Vehicle Licensing Integration Project

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Vehicle Licensing Integration Project.

(AQO 3483/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in Swansea are responsible for vehicle licensing throughout the United Kingdom but services are provided to customers in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency under an agreement between my Department and the Department for Transport.

At present there are two separate IT systems involved, one for Northern Ireland and one for Britain, and DVLA are currently in the process of developing a fully integrated system for the whole of the UK.

An integrated system, which DVLA plan to have ready by November 2013, will enable customers here to get access to the enhanced services that have been available in Britain for many years, services denied to motorists in Northern Ireland by a lack of investment by DVLA in the IT system here. When this system is implemented, customers will be able to renew tax discs online or by telephone and carry out a wide range of transactions at Post Offices.

Although the introduction of online facilities and better services at Post Offices would be positive developments in themselves, DVLA are also proposing to use the integrated computer system to transfer all of the work not done online or in Post Offices to Swansea and to terminate the agreement with DVA, mirroring the planned closure of the regional and local motor tax offices in Britain and the centralisation of work in Swansea. That would take away the funding for 323 jobs in DVA, and reduce the quality of the services provided locally to those who rely currently on access to trained staff.

I am completely opposed to this proposal because of the impact on staff in DVA, who have consistently provided exceptionally high standards of service; because of the impact on the local economy, especially in Coleraine, where most of the jobs are based; and because of the impact on the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole. I have made it clear to Ministers in London that now is not the time to be cutting further public sector jobs when the Executive is working hard to stimulate and re-balance the economy, in difficult and challenging economic circumstances.

I am meeting the Transport Minister in London again on 5 March to discuss the current position and to press the case for the retention of vehicles licensing services, and the associated jobs, in Northern Ireland.

Cost of Car Insurance

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions he has had with the Minister of Justice and others to produce a package of measures that could lead to a lowering of the cost of car insurance, particularly for young drivers.

(AQO 3484/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am committed and taking any action. Separately, and working with the Minister of Justice, other Executive colleagues and relevant interests, the aim is to bear down on motor insurance costs.

To this end, I have been engaging extensively with insurance, legal and consumer organisations to identify and monitor concrete actions that can be taken to tackle the high cost of insurance premiums here. This work includes consideration of the issues of legal costs, referral fees and claims management companies, personal injury claims and telematics products. This work has included two recent meetings with the Association of British Insurers, Law Society (NI) and Consumer Council on 14/11/2012 and 08/02/2013. The agenda has been to decisively address insurance premiums, particularly for young drivers and rural dwellers. Motor insurance issues are also discussed at meetings of the Ministerial Group on Road Safety which I chair and which Minister Ford attends.

In addition, as part of my response to the problem, there are some practical and legal measures being taken forward in the Department. My officials are progressing a number of major road safety initiatives including graduated driver licensing, anti-drink and drug driving measures and mutual recognition of penalty points across the island of Ireland. The primary objective of these measures is to clearly reduce road deaths and serious injuries, but subsequent reductions in insurance costs would be an important secondary benefit. In my meeting with the ABI, I have been making the argument that if Northern Ireland has the most bold and radical driving regime in these islands and a consequence on road deaths/serious injuries, the insurance industry must reflect this in premiums, especially for young drivers.

MOT Testing Guidelines

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any plans to align MOT testing guidelines with those in England and Wales, particularly in the case of pre 1960 classic or antique vehicles; and when this alignment will occur.

(AQW 20365/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has consulted on possible exemption of certain categories of historic vehicles from MOT testing. The responses indicated that there is broad support for exemption of pre-1960 vehicles from periodic testing, in line with the British Government's exemption which has been in place since 18 November 2012.

The Environment Committee has indicated that it is content with the Department's proposed way forward following the consultation, which is to make use of the exemption in Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC concerning the periodic testing of pre-1960 vehicles.

However on 13 July 2012, the European Commission published a 'Roadworthiness Package' which, amongst other things, addresses periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles, therein making changes to the rules that apply to historic vehicles; the proposals are expected to be introduced no earlier than August 2014.

If implemented as then drafted, these proposals would narrow the parameters within which the Department can provide for exemptions to historic vehicles, as the definition of a historical vehicle was more prescriptively described. While the Department's policy intentions remained the same; that is to make exempt pre-1960 vehicles from the MOT regime, we had to be mindful of the changing legislative context, to ensure that any changes we make are not made redundant by incoming EC Regulations.

Following receipt of a further update on the EU negotiations regarding the roadworthiness package, one of the main amendments in which was a change to the definition of "historic vehicles" which allows vehicles that have not undergone "substantial" changes to be still classed as historic, I have instructed officials to proceed with legislative amendment to exempt pre-1960 vehicles from the MOT test.

There are a number of issues that have needed to be resolved, including provision for a voluntary MOT test for such vehicles (for purposes including cherished plate transfer), where Northern Ireland law differs from British law and have needed careful attention. However, I believe that we are now close to resolving these issues with the Departmental Solicitors. Subject to receipt of final advice, the Department will now amend the relevant legislation to exempt pre-1960 vehicles from MOT testing and I will shortly confirm the timescale to bring about this legislative change.

Shadow Councils

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment, given the short time frame envisaged for the Statutory Transition Committees, is he is still planning to introduce Shadow Councils in 2014. **(AQO 3542/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The Executive believes it is essential to provide for a shadow period prior to the new councils assuming their full range of powers and functions.

The Statutory Transition Committees, which will come into effect in May/June 2013, will play a key role taking forward convergence work and in gathering information for the use of successor councils in shadow form, to enable the new councils to "hit the ground running" as quickly as possible following the next local government elections. The new councils will, during the shadow period, use the information and advice provided by Statutory Transition Committees to aid them in taking key decisions in the run down to assuming their full range of powers and functions on 1 April 2015.

Some key tasks for completion during the shadow period will include: striking the rate for 2015/16; agreeing a budget for the new councils; deciding upon the name and status of the new councils, and agreeing key documents such as the corporate and business plan of the new councils.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Childcare for Employees

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what Departments are doing to provide childcare for their employees. **(AQW 19791/11-15)**

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Departments do not provide childcare for civil servants. They will however reimburse staff for the costs of additional registered childcare if they are

required to attend work outside their normal work pattern, in line with the provisions of the NICS HR Handbook

In addition, the Northern Ireland Civil Service operates a Salary Sacrifice Childcare Voucher Scheme to assist staff with the costs of registered childcare. Under this arrangement staff agree to sacrifice a proportion of their salary in order to receive vouchers that are used to pay for registered childcare.

North/South Pension Scheme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 19001/11-15, what the current contribution rates are for (i) employees; and (ii) the employer in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme compared with the North/South Pension Scheme; and whether the intended alignment will include removal of final salary provision from the North/South scheme.

(AQW 20039/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Contribution levels in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) are as follows:

(i) Employee			(ii) Employer	
Salary range (full-time equivalent)	Classic members	Premium, classic plus and nuvos members	Salary range (full-time equivalent)	
Under £15,000	1.50%	3.50%		
£15,001 - £21,000	2.10%	4.10%		
£21,001 - £30,000	2.70%	4.70%	To £23,099	18%
£30,001 - £50,000	3.10%	5.10%	£23,100-46,899	20%
£50,001 - £60,000	3.50%	5.50%	£46,900-100,999	23.5%
Over £60,000	3.90%	5.90%	£101,000 +	25%

Contribution levels in the North/South Pension Scheme are as follows:

(i) Employee	(ii) Employer
1.5%	See below

A single employers' contribution rate for North/South Bodies is not available for the North/South Pension Scheme. The total pension costs for each body are disclosed in their annual accounts alongside wages and salary costs. These figures allow the computation of an effective employer's rate for each individual body, for example DFP sponsors one North/South Body, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). The effective employer's contribution rate for SEUPB in the calendar year 2011 was 31.2%.

The intended alignment will include removal of final salary provision from the North/South scheme, subject to transitional protection arrangements for existing members.

Surplus Public Sector Land or Property

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why surplus public sector land or property is offered first to other public sector bodies; and under what legislation or authority is this policy enforced.

(AQW 20081/11-15)

Mr Wilson: This advice is contained within my Department's policy documents Managing Public Money NI and Central Advisory Unit's Disposal of Surplus Public Sector Property in Northern Ireland (March 2010 edition).

Once requirements are clearly identified and where it makes sound commercial and economic sense to do so, surplus public sector land or property is normally offered, in the first instance, to other public sector bodies at market value. This saves the public purse significant additional costs involved in having to locate and acquire alternative property, which would be costly both in time and money, particularly where the exercise of compulsory purchase powers might otherwise be necessary.

Unemployment Figures

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people, currently registered as unemployed, have been out of work for a period of (i) up to six months; (ii) between six months and a year; (iii) between one and two years; (iv) between two and three years; (v) between three and four years; and (vi) over four years.

(AQW 20133/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS is a sample survey and the information overleaf for unemployment by duration is not sourced to the LFS because of the relatively large confidence intervals around the estimates. This is due to sample size constraints in the LFS.

The table overleaf is sourced to the claimant count measure of unemployment. This shows the number of persons claiming unemployment related benefits in Northern Ireland at January 2013 disaggregated by the requested durations.

TABLE 1 – NI CLAIMANT COUNT BY DURATION AT JANUARY 2013

Duration	Total
0-6 Months	33,225
6-12 Months	15,110
12-24 Months	13,575
24-36 Months	2,725
36-48 Months	615
48+ Months	335
NI Total	65,590

This table may not add up due to roundings.

Unemployment Numbers

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people registered as unemployed for two or more years are aged (i) under 25; (ii) 25-35; (iii) 35-45; and (iv) over 45.

(AQW 20134/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS is a sample survey and the information attached for unemployment by age and duration is not sourced to the LFS because of the relatively large confidence intervals around such estimates. This is due to sample size constraints in the LFS.

The table overleaf is sourced to the claimant count measure of unemployment. This shows the number of persons claiming unemployment related benefits in Northern Ireland at January 2013 for two or more years, disaggregated by the requested age groups.

TABLE 1 – NI CLAIMANT COUNT BY AGE AT JANUARY 2013 FOR CLAIMANTS CLAIMING TWO OR MORE YEARS.

Age	Total claiming for two or more years
Under 25	225
25-34	875
35-44	940
45 and Over	1,635
NI Total	3,675

Narrow Water Bridge

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when he will make an announcement on whether his Department has approved INTERREG IVA Programme funding for the Narrow Water Bridge. **(AQW 20149/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: The Narrow Water Bridge project is currently seeking funding through the INTERREG IVA Programme and DFP are the accountable department in Northern Ireland.

DFP is currently involved in the process of critically reviewing the project. In addition, input has been sought and received from interested departments, DOE and DRD, to ensure the project can fully comply with all requirements imposed.

The project must fully progress through the agreed assessment process and all issues satisfactorily dealt with before a decision can be taken.

Titanic Signature Building

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps were taken to ensure that the tendering process surrounding the Titanic Signature Building was compliant with EU tendering requirements. **(AQW 20181/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) advised the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment (DETI) in relation to the procurement of the Titanic Signature Building (TSB). This procurement was covered by the requirements of The Public Contract Regulations 2006 (the Regulations).

DETI took the view that there was no other realistic or feasible location, other than the site on which the TSB is located. The TSB could not be constructed without the consent of the leasehold owner of the site, Titanic Quarter Limited (TQL). TQL was not prepared to relinquish its exclusive rights to the site to enable competitive tendering of the development.

In these circumstances - where the contracting authority does not have a choice between different tenderers when awarding a contract - direct negotiation with one contractor can be used. Compliance of this approach with the Regulations was confirmed by legal counsel.

CPD therefore recommended that DETI award a contract to TQL on the basis of a single tender negotiation.

Public Spending Schemes: Protect Sub-Contractors and Suppliers

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the measures which are being undertaken by his Department to protect sub-contractors and suppliers in public spending schemes; and what is entailed in the proposed Project Bank Accounts. **(AQW 20222/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: On 15 November 2012 the Procurement Board, which I chair, endorsed measures to protect subcontractors and suppliers in government construction contracts. The measures include:

- Ensuring that contractors are paid within 10 days of the date of their invoice;
- Ensuring that all contractors are signed up to the Construction Industry Forum Northern Ireland (CIFNI) Fair Payment Charter;
- Ensuring that Project Managers check that subcontractors and suppliers are being paid promptly; and
- Ensuring that government contracts are not awarded to contractors who:
 - are in administration;
 - habitually fail to pay their subcontractors and suppliers promptly; or
 - submit abnormally low tenders or sub-economic tenders.

On 12 December 2012 I wrote to my Ministerial colleagues asking them to introduce these measures in their departments and Centres of Procurement Expertise.

Project Bank Accounts (PBAs) were introduced in January 2013 for all new construction contracts tendered by Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) that have an estimated value of over £1million and a significant subcontracting element.

A Project Bank Account is a bank account which holds the money in trust for the supply chain. This helps to protect the money in the event of administration or receivership and accelerates payment to the supply chain. Suppliers, including the main contractor, are paid simultaneously, usually within five days of the contracting authority depositing funds into the Project Bank Account.

DFP Information Service Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many staff are employed in his Department's Information Service; and what is the annual cost of this service.

(AQW 20261/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are currently six posts in the Department's Information Service, consisting of five Information Officer posts and one administrative support post. However, due to staff turnover, two of the Information Officer posts are currently vacant.

In the financial year 2011/12, the latest complete year for which information is available, the total cost of Information Service staff in DFP was £228,878.

Narrow Water Bridge Project

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the motion agreed by the Assembly on 4 December 2012, for an update on the provision of funding for the Narrow Water Bridge project.

(AQW 20301/11-15)

Mr Wilson: At the Assembly debate on the 4 December 2012 the factors influencing the decision making process for the Narrow Water Bridge project were clearly outlined. A decision on the project could not be prejudged and the costs, benefits, value for money, deliverability and risk would be key issues in the assessment process being undertaken by the department. This remains the position.

DFP is currently undertaking an internal critical review of the project. This process also involves input and discussion with DRD and DOE as policy responsible departments for elements of the proposal. These departments must also ensure the project adheres with relevant statutory undertakings.

DFP officials have and will continue to progress the project through the assessment process in a timely manner. A decision on the project will be taken when all information is in place to do so.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on support services for patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis.

(AQW 19949/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Board that an outline service model has been developed for patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) with input from patients, carers and service providers. The key elements of the model are: a designated clinical lead for ME/CFS in each Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust; a regional network of expertise; and, the provision of systematic programmes to support patients to manage their condition.

It is anticipated that a draft commissioning specification will be drawn up by the end of March 2013 which will guide the implementation of the service model in each Local Commissioning Group area to ensure consistency across Northern Ireland.

The Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency will work with HSC Trusts to develop a regional care pathway and network. Following on from this HSC Trusts and primary care will work together to ensure that local care pathways are implemented, consistent with the model.

Health Infrastructure Board

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 15307/11-15, for an update on the Health Infrastructure Board, particularly in relation to the development the Health and Social Care campus for Derry.

(AQW 19955/11-15)

Mr Poots: As previously indicated, the HSCB consultation document on 'Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action' included an illustrative model of 'hub and spoke' Health and Care Centres, which included Waterside and Cityside.

The HSCB is currently analysing all of the consultation responses for Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action and will report to my Department shortly on the findings of this consultation. I will then review the HSCB's consultation report and will make an announcement on the way forward.

The Health Infrastructure Board is continuing to explore alternative funding models to support this programme of work. Future developments in this area will be dependent on the outcome of both this work and the TYC consultation process and will be subject to the normal business case approval process.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust: Legal Advice Costs

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has spent on legal advice for issues that have arisen through their complaints department, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19959/11-15)

Mr Poots: The spend by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust on legal advice for issues that have arisen through their complaints department, in each of the last five years, is set out in the table below:

2011/12	2010/11	2009/1	2008/09	2007/08
£263	£287	£2,512	£984	£346

Prisoners Treated for Illegal Drugs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times prisoners have been treated for the effects of illegal drugs in each of the last five years, broken down by prison facility, including HMP Hydebank Young Offenders Centre.

(AQW 19979/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has been responsible for the delivery of healthcare services in NI Prison Service establishments since 1 April 2008. However, due to the fact that prisoners are often moved around all three prison establishments, it is not possible to break the requested statistics into specific locations. Information on the number of prisoners who have been treated for the effects of illegal drugs is set out in the table below.

Year	Number of prisoners treated for the effects of illegal drugs
2008	17
2009	14
2010	30
2011	35
2012	40

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Paramedics

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of hours worked by paramedics in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust in each month of the last three years; and what is the forecast of the number of hours which will be worked in each of the next twelve months.

(AQW 20022/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information is not available in the format requested and could only be obtained by the NI Ambulance Services Trust at a disproportionate cost. However the Trust has provided the number of hours worked by Paramedics, Paramedics in Training and Emergency Medical Technicians based in stations and deployment points which are located within the South Eastern Local Commissioning Group area as follows:

	Actual Number of Hours Worked			Forecast Number of Hours that will be Worked	
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2012-2013	2013-2014
Apr	10480.15	10919.15	10291.25		10319.00
May	10988.45	11241.22	10783.42		10703.30
Jun	10589.30	11211.25	10642.20		10314.00
Jul	10849.30	10534.53	10587.22		10669.00
Aug	10576.00	11023.00	10080.55		10696.30
Sep	10950.00	11057.37	10240.12		10309.30
Oct	10676.45	11299.49	10930.22		10680.30
Nov	10224.30	10911.19	10567.04		10346.30
Dec	10109.17	10855.28	10370.51		10648.00

	Actual Number of Hours Worked			Forecast Number of Hours that will be Worked	
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2012-2013	2013-2014
Jan	10369.55	10758.23	10513.34		10703.30
Feb	9876.45	10406.13	N/A	9760.00	
Mar	11356.50	11091.00	N/A	10771.30	
Total	127,048.02 Hours	131,309.44 Hours	105,007.47 Hours		125,921.30 Hours

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what self-management programmes are available for people diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 20029/11-15)

Mr Poots: People diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis are supported through a variety of ways to self manage their condition. This may include access to structured patient education programmes, but often will involve information and self management advice provided on a one to one basis. For example, specialist MS nurses will often meet with people who are newly diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis to provide them with information and guidance to help them self manage their condition and will continue to be available to provide ongoing advice and support according to an individual's needs and wishes as their condition evolves.

Currently, there is no comprehensive dataset of the number and type of dedicated structured patient education and self-management programmes available across Northern Ireland for people with long term conditions, including those with Multiple Sclerosis.

However, my Department has a Programme for Government commitment which is to enrol people with a long term condition (and who want to be enrolled) on a dedicated chronic condition management programme. The year one milestone for 2012-13 is to identify patient education and self-management programmes that are in place in each HSC Trust area, including information about the number and type of programmes, provider organisations, and the number of attendees. My officials are working with the Public Health Agency to establish a dataset of such programmes for the baseline year 2011-12, and this is on target for completion by 31 March 2013.

Once in place, this will help inform priorities for commissioning of patient education and self management programmes into the future. Arrangements will also be put in place to monitor progress against the PfG commitment over time, including the number and type of patient education and self management programmes available.

Electrophysiology (EP) Procedures

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 17786/11-15, how recent staffing changes at the Southern Health and Social Care Trust will affect the delivery of future electrophysiology (EP) procedures and the additional proposed sessions; and for a breakdown of patient waiting times for EP tests.

(AQW 20033/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust that an Electrophysiology (EP) clinician will be leaving in April 2013 and the Trust is currently working to fill this vacancy. Additional sessions commenced in January 2013 and additional capacity has also been secured from the Independent Sector for this service. The Trust is working with the Health and Social Care Board to retain and further expand this capacity during 2013/14.

A breakdown of the numbers waiting for an EP test is given in the table below.

Weeks waiting	Number of patients¹
0 – 9 weeks	13
>9 – 13 weeks	14
>13 – 21 weeks	27
>21 – 26 weeks	11
>26 – 36 weeks	29
> 36 weeks	44

1 This information has been supplied by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Paramedics: Non-Driving Duties

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many paramedics, who have been employed in the last five years, are restricted to non-driving duties because of medical conditions.

(AQW 20035/11-15)

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

Year	Number of Paramedics/Paramedic Supervisors restricted to non-driving duties because of medical conditions
2007/08	5
2008/09	4
2009/10	4
2010/11	4
2011/12	7

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service: Lost Driving Licences

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many paramedics and emergency vehicle drivers in the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service have lost their driving licence in the past five years because of (i) alcohol related offences; and (ii) other traffic offences; and how many of these personnel are still serving as paramedics in the service.

(AQW 20036/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service has advised that three paramedics were disqualified from driving in the past five years because of alcohol related offences of whom two remain employed as paramedics. One emergency vehicle driver was disqualified for another traffic offence.

Cushendall Fire Station

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why Cushendall has not yet been provided with a new fire station; and what is the timescale for providing this facility.

(AQW 20040/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Cushendall Fire Station is not sufficiently high up the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service list of priorities to be funded in the current budget period. Until decisions are made on priorities for the next budget period, it is not possible to set a timescale for this project.

Crèche and Daycare Facilities: North Down Constituency

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) crèche and daycare facilities in the North Down constituency; (ii) children registered at each facility; and (iii) children on the waiting list for each facility.

(AQW 20044/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details the number of crèche and daycare facilities in the North Down constituency

Parliamentary Constituency	Day Nurseries	Out of Schools	Crèches	Playgroups	Total
North Down	19	6	3	30	58

It is not possible to provide detail on the number of children registered at each facility or waiting lists for each establishment as this information is not held by HSC Trusts.

Organ Donors

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many registered organ donors there were in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20046/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested has been supplied by NHS Blood and Transplant, which is the organ donation organisation for the UK and is responsible for matching and allocating donated organs.

The information is shown in the following table –

Date	Total number on the organ donor register	New registrations ¹	Registrations still on the organ donor register
31/03/2007	377,533		
31/03/2008	396,718	36,451	36,301
31/03/2009	440,123	43,394	43,275
31/03/2010	477,150	37,419	37,307
31/03/2011	485,050	14,492	14,431
31/03/2012	521,040	36,570	36,479
19/02/2013	547,774	27,260	27,219

Note: 1 excluding duplicate withdrawals and withdrawals registered in error. 2 registrations in the period 1 April 2012 to 19 February 2013.

Example, the total on the ODR as at 31/03/2007 was 377,533 and there were 36,451 new registrations between 01/04/2007 and 31/03/2008. But the numbers will not add up to 396,718 due to withdrawals due to death or other reasons. 36,301 out of 36,451 registrations were still on the ODR as at 19/02/2013 and are included in the total of 547,774.

Organ Donors

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many new people have joined the organ donor list in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20048/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested has been supplied by NHS Blood and Transplant, which is the organ donation organisation for the UK and is responsible for matching and allocating donated organs.

The information is shown in the following table –

Date	Total number on the organ donor register	New registrations ¹	Registrations still on the organ donor register
31/03/2007	377,533		
31/03/2008	396,718	36,451	36,301
31/03/2009	440,123	43,394	43,275
31/03/2010	477,150	37,419	37,307
31/03/2011	485,050	14,492	14,431
31/03/2012	521,040	36,570	36,479
19/02/2013	547,774	27,260	27,219

Note: ¹ excluding duplicate withdrawals and withdrawals registered in error. 2 registrations in the period 1 April 2012 to 19 February 2013.

Example, the total on the ODR as at 31/03/2007 was 377,533 and there were 36,451 new registrations between 01/04/2007 and 31/03/2008. But the numbers will not add up to 396,718 due to withdrawals due to death or other reasons. 36,301 out of 36,451 registrations were still on the ODR as at 19/02/2013 and are included in the total of 547,774.

IVF Treatment

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has considered providing three full cycles of IVF treatment to couples, as recommended in National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines.

(AQW 20057/11-15)

Mr Poots: The 2004 NICE guidelines on fertility treatment recommended that eligible couples should be offered up to three stimulated cycles of treatment. As this was published before my Department entered into an agreement with NICE in July 2006, the guidelines have not been endorsed for Northern Ireland.

Currently, although we aspire to provide up to three cycles of treatment as recommended by the 2004 NICE guidelines, financial restrictions make this unachievable. Currently we provide one publicly funded treatment to those who meet the criteria and, from 1 April 2012, one frozen embryo transfer is also offered to new referrals who meet the clinical criteria. To increase the number of individual treatments provided within current funding could limit the number of women who could access the service.

NICE has recently published revised guidelines on fertility, which updates and replaces the 2004 guidelines. These guidelines will now be considered by my Department for their applicability to Health and Social Care service provision in Northern Ireland. We will reach a view on this as soon as possible.

Water Supply: Flouride

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to add flouride to the water supply.

(AQW 20075/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am still considering my position on fluoridation of the water supply in Northern Ireland and continue to consult with Executive colleagues on the matter before I come to a decision.

If a proposal to fluoridate the water supplies is made, the appropriate evidence from reputable scientific and medical sources will be considered, and we are required under The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to consult and ascertain public opinion. Should such a consultation proceed, we would welcome the views of all interested parties, at that time.

Crisis Centres and Service Providers for Victims

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the increase in incidents of domestic violence, whether any additional funding will be made available for crisis centres and service providers for victims.

(AQW 20091/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department provides funding for organisations and projects with a regional focus and in this context Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland as a regional organisation, receives core funding for central administration costs. In addition to this, my Department also contributes funding towards the running of the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline.

Work is underway to appoint a service provider for the provision of an

independent advocacy service for potential high risk victims of domestic violence across Northern Ireland. My Department will contribute towards the running costs of this service.

My Department does not directly fund health and social care related services provided by local groups; these services are supported by the Health and Social Care Trusts for the delivery of appropriate services.

Emergency Ambulances: Paramedics

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to remove paramedic assistants from emergency ambulances and replace them with drivers, leaving only one paramedic staffing emergency ambulances.

(AQW 20102/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no Paramedic Assistants in the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust. The reform and modernisation of the ambulance service is primarily a matter for the Chief Executive and Board of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust. In considering the potential for any change to the provision of emergency ambulance services I would expect the Trust to reflect on best practice in relation to the workforce and the required skills and scope of practice to ensure safe and effective patient care.

Rapid Response Vehicles

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is a difference in the criteria for Rapid Response Vehicles used locally compared with those used in England.

(AQW 20110/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) has advised that there are some differences between rapid response vehicles (RRVs) working in Northern Ireland and those operating in England. This can include different vehicle profiles, specifications, hours of operation and suitability of calls.

In addition, all NIAS RRVs are crewed by highly skilled paramedics who perform a wide range of clinical interventions, whereas those in England may be crewed by lower grade emergency medical technicians. Furthermore, NIAS RRVs operate between 08:00hrs and midnight whereas some Ambulance Trusts in England operate RRVs on a 24hr basis.

Rapid Response Vehicles: Lone Worker Policy

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the lone worker policy will impact on the use of Rapid Response Vehicles.

(AQW 20112/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) introduced a formal lone worker policy in 2007 following recommendations from its Health and Safety Committee. However, NIAS already had lone worker and dispatch procedures in place since 2003 to support its rapid response vehicle (RRV) paramedics.

NIAS reviewed these procedures during 2012 and is now working to amalgamate them into a more comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for RRVs. NIAS does not expect the revised SOP to have any impact on the RRV response model which has now been in place for 10 years. It remains the case that RRV paramedics can be stood down from certain calls, for example those that might place them at risk of harm.

Rapid Response Vehicles

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, over the last twelve months, what was the average time that Rapid Response Vehicles had to remain at a call out whilst waiting for an ambulance to arrive, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 20113/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the average time between the arrival of a Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) to a call out and the arrival of a conveying A&E ambulance is provided by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust in the table below1:

HSC Trust	Average Time from Arrival of a Rapid Response Vehicle until Arrival of an A&E Conveying Ambulance (01/02/2012 – 31/01/2013)2
Belfast	00:14:28
Northern	00:13:26
South Eastern	00:16:20
Southern	00:12:39
Western	00:11:22
Total	00:14:06

Source: Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Health & Social Care Trust

- 1 These figures should not be interpreted as 'waiting times' as RRV paramedics will provide life sustaining care including defibrillation, airway protection and drug administration until the conveying A&E ambulance arrives.
- 2 Includes all Emergency and Urgent calls where a RRV arrived at the scene of the incident and was followed by a conveying ambulance.

Health and Social Care Trust: Ambulance

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many ambulances are available in each Health and Social Care Trust; and how many of these ambulances are used to provide cover in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 20114/11-15)

Mr Poots: Ambulances are stationed in particular locations across Northern Ireland, with allocation based on the nearest available appropriate ambulance at any given time, resulting in resources crossing over HSC Trust boundaries on a daily basis. It should therefore be noted that the number of ambulances available in each HSC Trust does not reflect the cover provided at any given time.

Information on the number of emergency ambulance vehicles available at ambulance stations within each division/HSC Trust area is shown in the table below:

Division / HSC Trust	Number
Belfast	15
South Eastern	21
Northern	32
Southern	22
Western	24
Total	114

Source: Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Health & Social Care Trust

It is not possible to accurately detail the number of ambulances used to provide cover in the Belfast HSC Trust as cover and availability vary due to changeable factors and could only be measured at a point in time.

Intensive Care Units

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of Intensive Care Units that were operational in each of the last five years; and how many units there were per million of the population.

(AQW 20123/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of intensive care units that were operational in each of the last five years and the number of units per million of the population are detailed below;

Year	Number of Intensive Care Units	NI Population	Rate Per 1,000,000 Population
2007/08	12	1,759,148	6.8
2008/09	12	1,775,003	6.8
2009/10	12	1,788,896	6.7
2010/11	12	1,799,392	6.7
2011/12	12	1,806,873	6.6

Source: HSC Trusts, NISRA GRO

Ovarian Cancer

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what advice his Department issues to GPs regarding the early detection of ovarian cancer.

(AQW 20138/11-15)

Mr Poots: In May 2012 my Department endorsed NICE Clinical Guideline CG122 – The recognition and initial management of ovarian cancer. The Department passed this to the HSC Board for dissemination to service providers including GPs.

The HSC Board draft Commissioning Plan for 2013/14, which is to be considered and approved by my Department, includes reference to NICE CG122 on ovarian cancer.

Ovarian Cancer

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many women have been diagnosed with the early stages of ovarian cancer in each year since 2010.

(AQW 20147/11-15)

Mr Poots: ANSWER (input from Northern Ireland Cancer Registry)

The table below gives the number of women diagnosed with both the early and advanced stages of ovarian cancer in each year since 2010.

THE NUMBER OF WOMEN DIAGNOSED WITH OVARIAN CANCER (ICD-10 C56) IN N. IRELAND IN THE YEARS 2010 AND 2011, BY STAGE OF DISEASE

Stage group	Number of women	
	Year of diagnosis	
	2010	2011
FIGO I (Early stage)	25	41
FIGO II	10	6
FIGO III	49	58
FIGO IV (Late stage)	35	31
Unknown stage	14	16
Total	133	152

* For a listing and explanation of ICD10 topology or site codes see: International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, World Health Organisation, Geneva. Or view online at <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en#/II>

Ovarian Cancer

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many women have been diagnosed with advanced stage ovarian cancer in each year since 2010.

(AQW 20148/11-15)

Mr Poots: ANSWER (input from Northern Ireland Cancer Registry)

The table below gives the number of women diagnosed with both the early and advanced stages of ovarian cancer in each year since 2010.

THE NUMBER OF WOMEN DIAGNOSED WITH OVARIAN CANCER (ICD-10 C56) IN N. IRELAND IN THE YEARS 2010 AND 2011, BY STAGE OF DISEASE

Stage group	Number of women	
	Year of diagnosis	
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Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People Report

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People report "Still Vulnerable - the impact of early childhood experiences on adolescent suicide and accidental death".

(AQW 20163/11-15)

Mr Poots: I welcome the publication of the report by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People. It supports the findings of an overview report commissioned and launched by my department earlier this year. The overview report analysed the findings of a number of case reviews undertaken by the Regional Child Protection Committee following the death or serious injury of children, in circumstances where abuse was a known or suspected factor. Key learning points from the overview report will be taken forward by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) which came into operation in September last year. Within its draft Strategic Plan, the SBNI has identified as a strategic priority the need to improve inter and intra-agency assessment processes to ensure that they take account of children's experience of multiple adversities as well as focusing on individual incidents.

If we are going to be able to respond effectively to childhood adversity, we need to build and strengthen parental capacity. My Department's Families Matter strategy recognises the need for parents and families to be supported in bringing up their children, particularly through the provision of early intervention support mechanisms such as Family Support Hubs. We are in the process of establishing Family Support Hubs across Northern Ireland. The objective of each Hub is to enhance awareness, accessibility, co-ordination and provision of family support resources in local areas, with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

Regrettably, as demonstrated by the Commissioner's report, too many young people die each year in Northern Ireland following suicide or accidental death. It is essential that Departments work together to provide services which intervene earlier in a sustained and co-ordinated approach to reduce these tragic incidents. We published the Protect Life Strategy in June 2012 and the Public Health Agency (PHA) has in place a training action plan for suicide awareness and mental health promotion which seeks to deliver and improve uptake of training by those in "gateway" positions such as GPs, A&E staff, teachers, youth workers, youth custody officers and sports coaches.

Finally, a number of the recommendations in the Commissioner's report were directed at my department in conjunction with the Health and Social Care Board, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, the Public Health Agency or the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. These are actively being considered.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Meals

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total number and average cost of (i) breakfasts; (ii) lunches; and (iii) dinners served in (a) hospitals; and (b) nursing and residential care homes, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area over the last 12 months.
(AQW 20167/11-15)

Mr Poots: The data is not currently held centrally.

However, the action plan accompanying the recently issued “Strategic Framework for the Delivery of Health & Social Care Catering Services” includes a plan to collect more accurate, more detailed management information on catering costs.

Epilepsy

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are in place to help people who have epilepsy.

(AQW 20177/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board that epilepsy services are provided locally in the five HSC Trusts, either through their local neurology service and/or via the outreach neurology service provided by the Belfast HSC Trust. More complex cases are referred to the regional neurology service for assessment and further management if required e.g. neurosurgery / neuroradiology. There is a pre-pregnancy clinic, in the Belfast HSC Trust, for women with epilepsy who are planning pregnancy.

The majority of children with epilepsy are cared for by paediatricians, in conjunction with general practitioners and the primary care team. As much care and support as possible is normally provided close to a child’s home and this will include services such as physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy if they are necessary. Children who require specialist care may be seen at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, where a paediatric neurology team is skilled in the management of more severe epilepsy. They may also be referred to other centres in the UK, such as Great Ormond Street Hospital for specialist expert assessment, advice or ongoing management, depending on their needs.

Children with Tooth Decay: North Down

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a breakdown of the numbers of children being treated for tooth decay in North Down, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20179/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not available.

People with Drug Addictions

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what strategies are being pursued to reduce the number of people with drug addictions.

(AQW 20196/11-15)

Mr Poots: In 2012, I launched the revised cross-departmental strategy to prevent and address the harm related to alcohol and drug, known as the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2. 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: education, prevention and early intervention; harm reduction; treatment and support; law and criminal justice; and monitoring, evaluation and research. It also contains a number of priority areas for action including: developing a regional commissioning framework for alcohol and drug services; tackling drug-related anti-social behaviour; targeting those at risk and vulnerable; reducing the availability of illicit drugs; and addressing local community issues.

A range of services is available across Northern Ireland that support the NSD Phase 2 and details of these can be found online at: <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/drug-and-alcohol-directories-services>.

People with Drug Addictions

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the number of people in North Down who have a drug addiction; and how many of these people are receiving treatment for drug addiction.

(AQW 20197/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of people in North Down who have a drug addiction; and are receiving treatment for drug addiction is not available within the Department.

The Northern Ireland Drug Addicts Index holds information on all those persons registered in concurrence with the Misuse of Drugs (Notification of and Supply to Addicts) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1973. It should be noted that addiction as measured by the Northern Ireland Drug Addicts Index does not mean that those people are being treated for their addiction. Information on the Northern Ireland Drug Addicts Index is not available at Constituency level, therefore the number of patients registered at Trust level is given. The latest information available relates to 2011 when there were 23 registered addicts in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area.

Information on individuals presenting to treatment services with problem drug use is collected on the Northern Ireland Drug Misuse Database (DMD). The DMD holds information on problem drug users presenting to treatment services for the first time, or for the first time in six months or more. 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. It is important to note that being in treatment for problem drug use does not necessarily constitute addiction. Information on the Northern Ireland Drug Misuse Database is not available at Constituency level, therefore the number of problem drug users presenting to treatment services at Trust level is given. The latest information available relates to 2011/12 when there were 430 problem drug users who presented to treatment services based within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area.

DHSSPS Information Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many staff are employed in his Department's Information Service; and what is the annual cost of this service.

(AQW 20214/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is shown in the table.

TABLE: DHSSPS INFORMATION OFFICE STAFFING AND COST

Information Officers	7
General Administrative Staff	3
Annual Cost (2011/12)	£352,692

Information Officers provide a professional communications service - including media, online and advertising services - with office support by general administration staff.

Residential and Nursing Care Sector

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assessment tools are utilised in determining the care needs of patients in the residential and nursing care sector; and how this is translated into deciding the appropriate level of financial support.

(AQW 20312/11-15)

Mr Poots: Assessment via care management is the way in which complex need and risks are managed by HSC Trusts in terms of longer term placement decisions.

The Northern Ireland Single Assessment Tool (NISAT), developed primarily in relation to assessing the needs of older people and now being used in some physical and sensory disability programmes, was designed to support the exercise of professional judgement in the care management process. The tool is structured in component parts and uses domains which can be completed according to the level of health and social care needs experienced, from non-complex to complex. Use of the tool is intended to promote consistency of access to high quality services across Northern Ireland.

A financial assessment should only commence after an assessment of the service user's health and social care needs has been completed. The Health and Personal Social Services (Assessment of Resources) Regulations (NI) 1993 set out the form of the financial assessment used to determine how much an individual is required to contribute toward the cost of social care provided in a residential care or nursing home.

Full information on the care management process, the provision of services including placement of service users in residential care or nursing homes, and guidance on charging for social care provided in the residential care and nursing home sector is available in Circular HSC (ECCU) 1/2010, issued by my Department in March 2010.

The circular can be accessed using the following link:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hsc-eccu-1-2010.pdf>

Meningitis B Vaccine, Bexsero

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the Meningitis immunisation Bexsero will be made available to families.

(AQW 20315/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vaccination policy in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK is guided by the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert advisory committee that advises the four UK Health Ministers on matters relating to the provision of vaccination and immunisation services. JCVI consider all the available medical and scientific evidence before recommending which vaccines should be offered.

The JCVI has begun an evaluation of the impact and cost-effectiveness of possible meningitis B vaccination strategies. This evaluation requires a complex analysis and final JCVI advice is not expected until later in the year. I will consider the JCVI recommendation when I have received it.

Private Clinics

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the procedures under which the Health Service refers patients to private clinics; and the cost of contracting these services to private clinics.

(AQW 20462/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board that the Health Service refers patients to the Independent Sector: either as an Extra Contractual Referral (ECR) where a clinician can demonstrate an exceptional clinical need to do so; or where it is not possible (for clinical reasons) to deliver a local service; or under the Elective Reform Initiative (Waiting List Initiatives) where there is a gap between the demand for a service and the capacity a HSC Trust can offer. Generally, the Board's preferred option is that HSC Trusts should offer additional "in house" (i.e. HSC based) activity but the Board will fund Independent Sector transfers at the Trust's request where additional in house capacity cannot be offered.

The HSC Board spends approximately £25m each year in transferring patients for treatment under the ECR process, of which around £6m p.a. would be spent with Independent Sector providers. Under the Elective Reform Initiative, funding for transfers to Independent Sector providers in 2011/12 was £52.6m.

Abortions within the Health Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what has been the outcome of the departmental monitoring of the recorded reasons for abortions within the Health Service; and what the monitoring results reveal.

(AQW 20607/11-15)

Mr Poots: Work on the development of an information system to provide additional detail on the grounds for termination of pregnancies carried out in Northern Ireland is continuing. It is my intention that any new system will collect robust and consistent information from independent providers in addition to health and social care organisations. Officials are currently addressing how this can best be achieved.

The Department continues to collect statistics on the number of terminations of pregnancy carried out in Health and Social Care facilities in Northern Ireland.

Department of Justice

Competency Framework

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what is the current status of the proposed Competency Framework for all management grades, custody officers and offender supervisors.

(AQW 19927/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is currently carrying out an exercise to determine the most appropriate competency framework to put in place for operational management grades, custody officers and offender supervisors.

The competency framework is currently under review and it is being developed alongside role descriptions.

Audio and Electrical Goods

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17217/11-15, to provide a breakdown of what is available under the term audio/electrical goods.

(AQW 19932/11-15)

Mr Ford: Audio/electrical goods which are available under the current contract are CD players, hair clippers, shavers, radios, desk lamps, DVD players, digital recorders, freeview boxes, TVs, hairdryers, straighteners, portable music systems, digital TV receivers, lamp bulbs, a kettle, a playstation, headphones and video players.

Each prison establishment will provide audio/electrical goods which reflect the diversity of their prisoner population.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Televisions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to televisions bought by the Prison Service, to detail (i) the date of the most recent order; (ii) how many televisions were purchased; (iii) the specifications of the televisions; and (iv) the total cost.

(AQW 19935/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service last placed an order for 30 19 inch LED flat screen televisions with its contracted supplier on 7 February 2013.

In line with Commercial in Confidence guidelines, I cannot divulge pricing as this would disadvantage the supplier in any future tendering process.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to allegations that a prison officer planted details about Governor Steve Rodford in a republican prisoner's cell at Maghaberry, whether the matter was reported to the PSNI for investigation.

(AQW 19968/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that the matter was reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland for investigation.

Injury on Duty Award Reviews

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many police forces in other parts of the UK automatically carry out Injury on Duty Award reviews at the age of 65.

(AQW 19991/11-15)

Mr Ford: This information is not readily available. There are 43 Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), formerly police authorities, in England and Wales and Police Authorities in Scotland. Regulations place a duty on them individually to decide when to carry out reviews of Injury on Duty awards at the age of 65.

Kenneth Douglas' Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice who made the decision that Kenneth Douglas was fit for release.

(AQW 20041/11-15)

Mr Ford: Decisions on the release of life sentence prisoners are taken by a multi disciplinary case conference typically including representatives from the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and an independent psychotherapist.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of times that the Northern Ireland Prison Service carried out compliance audits in respect of (i) the conduct and discipline of staff, with particular emphasis on adherence to the Code of Conduct and Discipline including scrutiny of the conduct/standard of investigations comprising allegations of gross misconduct; (ii) the scrutiny of the conduct of Adjudications by Governors; and (iii) the scrutiny of appeals determined by senior Northern Ireland Prison Service management.

(AQW 20042/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not carry out formal compliance audits of disciplinary procedures. However, where considered necessary, internal reviews have been carried out in respect of individual cases to ensure that the conduct and discipline policies are complying in all areas of applicable legislation, and that those conducting the adjudications and hearing the appeals do so in accordance with current agreed guidelines.

Newly Qualified Prison Officer

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice when a newly qualified prison officer can have direct contact with prisoners.

(AQW 20055/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prison Custody Officers will have direct contact with Prisoners during their initial training and upon taking up their posting at their permanent station.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what percentage of Northern Ireland Prison Service staff who successfully applied for the Voluntary Staff Exit Scheme, were members of the Prisoner Officers' Association.

(AQW 20067/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Officers' Association is an independent body and the Member may wish to write to it directly about this matter.

Assaults on Prison Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19302/11-15, whether he intends to revise his answer in light of the dismissal in November 2012 of a prison officer who was seriously assaulted by a prisoner and unable to return to work due to his injuries, and no post offering light duties was made available.

(AQW 20093/11-15)

Mr Ford: Due to the Data Protection Act 1998 it would not be appropriate to discuss an individual case.

Prisoners: Illegal Drugs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to the recent BBC Spotlight programme, to clarify on how many occasions in the last two years notices have been posted in prisons to alert prisoners to illegal drugs in operation and who makes the decision to display these notices.

(AQW 20095/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since 2011 the number of notices alerting prisoners to illegal drugs in operation which have been displayed in prison establishments is as follows:-

Magilligan Prison	5 notices
Maghaberry Prison	4 notices
Hydebank Wood	1 notice

The decision to issue these notices is taken by a member of staff at governor grade.

Supporting Prisoners at Risk

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline the reasons for the Supporting Prisoner at Risk process (i) not being viable for all vulnerable or at risk prisoners; and (ii) being operated using a system of potential risk grading.

(AQW 20096/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) The Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) process adopts a multi-disciplinary approach which is specific to the care and management of individual prisoners who have self-harmed, or been identified as being at risk of self-harm or suicide. SPAR is not a 'one size fits all' system as it assists prison staff in assessing the individual needs of vulnerable prisoners during periods of immediate crisis.
- (ii) At the SPAR multi-disciplinary case conferences, potential risk is assessed and appropriate interventions put in place to support the individualised care of the prisoner in distress.

Northern Ireland Police Officers Awaiting Settlement

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, following the success, in 2010, of an equal pay claim regarding a lead case by a part-time reserve police officer, who claimed less favourable treatment of

fixed term employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002, is there any distinction in how other officers awaiting settlement will have their cases funded.

(AQW 20103/11-15)

Mr Ford: Two individual cases were settled in 2010 on the merits of the individual circumstances in those cases. There are a number of other cases still awaiting listing in the Office of the Industrial Tribunal and it would be inappropriate to comment.

Legal Advice Costs

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how much his Department has spent on legal advice in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20130/11-15)

Mr Ford: Expenditure on legal advice for the DOJ, including its agencies but not its arm's length bodies, for 2010/11 and 2011/12 is provided in the table below. However, this excludes the NI Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) as legal advice costs cannot be separated from total legal costs.

DOJ Body	2010/11	2011/12
Core Department	£3,195	£181,272
NI Prison Service	£1,763	£43,894
Compensation Agency	£397,727	£272,448
Youth Justice Agency	£8,184	£11,959
Forensic Science NI	0	0
Total	£410,869	£509,573

Expenditure on legal advice for 2012/13 cannot be provided as the Department and its agencies no longer record these costs separately.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Meals

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total number and average cost of (i) breakfasts; (ii) lunches; and (iii) evening meals served in prisons over the last 12 months.

(AQW 20165/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total number of meals served in each establishment from 1 February 2012 to 31 January 2013 is detailed as below:

	Breakfast	Lunch	Evening Meal	Total Meals
Maghaberry	360,900	360,900	360,900	1,082,700
Hydebank	84,226	84,226	84,226	252,678
Magilligan	189,538	189,538	189,538	568,614
Totals	634,664	634,664	634,664	1,903,992

Each establishment has a daily budget of £2.71 to provide every prisoner with a breakfast, lunch and evening meal.

The average cost of breakfast is £0.51. Lunch and evening meal costs fluctuate daily but are a combined average of £2.20 daily.

Prisoner Ombudsman Remit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19334/11-15, when the remit of the Prisoner Ombudsman changed on such matters and where can the documentation be found.

(AQW 20180/11-15)

Mr Ford: Pursuant to my response to AQW 19334/11-15, the Prisoner Ombudsman's remit covering such matters has not changed.

Prison Service Suspension From Duty Policy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19388/11-15, (i) to provide a copy of the Prison Service Suspension From Duty Policy for the period in question; (ii) how often each suspension from duty should be reviewed; (iii) whether all suspensions are reported to the Minister, as required by legislation; and (iv) to outline the relevance of point (iv) in his answer.

(AQW 20186/11-15)

Mr Ford: Operational staff employed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) are suspended from duty in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Each case of suspension is reviewed on an individual basis as outlined in the Notification of Suspension Form; the applicable conditions of which are agreed between the Governor and the individual suspended from duty.

I am notified of all cases of suspensions imposed on operational grades by NIPS.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19230/11-15 and AQW 18652/11-15, (i) to detail the number of cases in which the Ombudsman provided information to the Director General or Deputy that resulted in suspensions from duty or disciplinary investigations; (ii) on receipt of such information, in how many cases the Prison Service conducted preliminary inquiries prior to directing disciplinary investigations; (iii) how many meetings concerning staff who would be subject to disciplinary procedures took place between the Ombudsman, the Director General or Deputy; (iv) in how many cases the Ombudsman requested CCTV footage for examination retrospective to the deaths; and (v) at what point prison staff were made aware that the Ombudsman was investigating CCTV footage.

(AQW 20187/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) I refer the Member to the responses provided to AQW 18562/11-15 and part (v) of AQW 19230/11-15 and reiterate that the Prison Service has not suspended individuals on the basis of discussions between the Prisoner Ombudsman and the Director General or Deputy Director General, however suspensions and disciplinary proceedings have followed on receipt of reports from the Prisoner Ombudsman.
- (ii) In accordance with the current Code of Conduct and Discipline it is essential that preliminary inquiries are carried out to establish facts prior to directing any internal disciplinary investigations;
- (iii) Meetings are not convened with the Prisoner Ombudsman to discuss staff subject to disciplinary procedures;
- (iv) CCTV footage is an important source of independent evidence and it is normal practice for the Ombudsman to request this following a death in custody and/or in circumstances where this may assist in a complaint or serious incident investigation; and
- (v) The Northern Ireland Prison Service would be aware at the point at which such a request is made.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Televisions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18499/11-15, to detail the incidents where televisions have been damaged during prison riots over the last five years.

(AQW 20188/11-15)

Mr Ford: During the last five years there have been no incidents within the Prison Service recorded as a riot. Detailed information is not readily available regarding individual items damaged during any indiscipline and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

DOJ Information Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many staff are employed in his Department's Information Service; and what is the annual cost of this service.

(AQW 20216/11-15)

Mr Ford: There were twenty-one members of staff employed in the Department and its Agencies' Information Services as at January 2013, nine of whom are administrative staff who provide a media monitoring service for all of the Executive Departments and public bodies through Service Level Agreements. The full time equivalent staffing figure (FTE) is 19.6.

The annual salary cost of this service is £703,741.99 approximately.

The responsibilities of the twenty-one staff are as outlined below:

Number of staff	Responsibility
9	Information Officers on loan from the Executive Information Service.
9	Administrative staff who provide a media monitoring service for the Department of Justice, other NI Departments and public bodies through service level agreements.
3	General service grades who provide a press office function within the NI Courts and Tribunal Service.

Security and Cleaning Services in Prison

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the contractors, including contract costs, that provide security and/or cleaning services in each prison, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20268/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details a list of the contractors that have provided security and/or cleaning in each prison in each of the last five years. For security reasons the names of the contractors have been withheld:

Contractor	Activity	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
A	Maghaberry - Security to Restricted Construction Site	-	-	15,000	75,000	46,000
B	Maghaberry - Specialist Cleaning – Dirty Protest/ Cell Clean + Bloods	7,500	7,500	72,650	195,044	509,423
B	Magilligan – Cell Clean + Bloods	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500

Contractor	Activity	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
C	Working Out Unit Belfast – Security	-	-	-	68,100	65,295
C	Millisle - Security	-	-	-	35,151	61,581

Disposal of Surplus Court Estate Properties

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice how the available resources will be spent when disposal of surplus court estate properties has been completed.

(AQW 20310/11-15)

Mr Ford: The utilisation of any funds generated from the disposal of surplus court estate will be considered as part of my Department's Estate Strategy which is under development.

Chair of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail what consultation took place before advertising the vacancy for Chair of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation.

(AQW 20333/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no statutory requirement to consult in relation to this appointment, which is being conducted in accordance with CPANI guidance. DOJ officials did however receive correspondence in relation to the terms and conditions relating to the post of Chair from outgoing Trustees. The views expressed were taken into consideration before the current process began.

Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the current working practice, including the number of days worked and the location, of the Chairman of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation; and (ii) how an eight day per month contract reducing to four days per month will be of benefit to the work of the Foundation.

(AQW 20352/11-15)

Mr Ford: The post of Chairman is part-time as set out in the original terms of appointment. These state that the time commitment is dependent on the prevailing business needs of the Foundation. However it is acknowledged that Foundation business may entail approximately 2-3 days per month or as required.

As this is an unremunerated position my Department does not monitor the number of days worked over and above the minimum time commitment required, nor the location of where that work is carried out.

The anticipated time commitment of 8 days per month for the Chair takes account of the advancement and completion of the police museum, a significant undertaking for the Chair and fellow members of the Foundation's Board.

Foundation Trustees are fully engaged in the Foundation's business, a full-time project manager responsible for the day to day running of the police museum project is in place and dedicated administrative staff also provide valuable support.

This combined support is beneficial to the Foundation in the delivery of its functions and is an indication of the commitment that my Department is giving to maintaining and promoting the valuable work of the RUC GC Foundation.

Social Media Sites

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any powers, or plans, to regulate the use of social media sites.

(AQW 20477/11-15)

Mr Ford: Regulation of the internet is not an issue which falls within the responsibilities of our devolved Executive. Under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 it is specifically recorded as a reserved matter. Decisions on regulation are for central Government to make through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Prison Scanning Machines

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost to his Department of the trial tests on scanning machines for prisons.

(AQW 20478/11-15)

Mr Ford: The costs to date of the pilots of millimetre wave technology are as follows:

Magilligan Prison	Hydebank Wood
£14232	£22019

The costs included in these prices are for installation of the equipment, leases, enabling works and staff training.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Justice what is the limit on the number of meetings from which members of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships can be absent before they are no longer considered to be a member.

(AQO 3525/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no specified limit on the number of meetings from which PCSP members can be absent prior to removal specified either in legislation or in the Code of Practice for the exercise of functions by PCSPs.

The ability to deal with persistent non-attendance is provided for in the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the legislation governing the operation of PCSPs. Within this Act it states that the Policing Board, or local Council, with the approval of the Board, can remove a political or independent member if they are satisfied that the member is unable or unfit to discharge their functions as a member of the PCSP. Such action would be taken only after careful consideration of all the evidence.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust: Grafton Recruitment

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Justice what role Grafton Recruitment played in the events organised by the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust to promote rehiring opportunities for retired police officers in autumn 2008, October 2009 and March 2010.

(AQO 3523/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust organised information events on 25 September 2008 and 22 March 2010. Grafton Recruitment attended and presented at both these events which focussed on employment opportunities within the security sector. PRRT also held an Innovation and Business event on 14 October 2009 – Grafton Recruitment were not represented at this event. A number of recruitment organisations attended and presented at the events on these dates and were invited on the basis of their presence in the market place.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust: Grafton Recruitment

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Justice to confirm whether any members of the Board of Directors of the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust have also been members of the PSNI's Internal Audit Committee during the lifetime of Grafton Recruitment's contract for the provision of agency, consultancy and associate staff.

(AQO 3522/11-15)

Mr Ford: As stated in response to AQO 3515 during Oral Question Time today, the PSNI's Director of Human Resources is a member of the PRRT's Board of Directors. The Director of Human Resources is also a member of the PSNI's Audit and Risk Committee, and has been a member since its inaugural meeting on 25 March 2004.

Apply Bail Conditions to a Third Party

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to explain whether it is lawful for a District Judge to apply a bail condition to a third party, not charged before the court, requiring the person to hand over any communication device they possess, and if this has happened what action the Department intends to take. **(AQW 20568/11-15)**

Mr Ford: Bail decisions, including any conditions attached to them, are a matter for the independent judiciary acting within the law. There are well-established appeal and review mechanisms in relation to court decisions where the parties are not content. My Department has no role in relation to individual cases.

Prisons: Body Scanners

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Justice what contact the Prison Service had with the manufacturers regarding the scanner pilot at Magilligan Prison and Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre. **(AQO 3527/11-15)**

Mr Ford: It is important to state that the objective of this process of technological evaluation was to establish whether a viable solution was available that would serve to reduce the level of intrusion inherent within our existing procedures.

From the start I was clear that any solution must, as a minimum, perform at least as well as our current processes and that the security and safety of all within our prisons was and remains paramount.

Following an evaluation of the Millimetre Wave Scanners at Magilligan and Hydebank Wood the Prison Service found that in the operational environment there were limitations to the technology as there was a reliance on the compliance of the prisoner to be scanned and that our current full searching processes provided a higher level of security and therefore provided greater assurance.

It is important to remember that Millimetre Wave Body Scanners use technology that is primarily for the threat environment experienced by the aviation industry which is different to that present within our prisons and it is not in use in any prison in the United Kingdom. I remain very grateful to the manufacturers for their help and support throughout the pilot.

While I share the Prison Service's disappointment at the outcome of the pilot I am heartened by their determination to continue to seek a modern viable alternative to our existing practice of full searching.

To this end I have just received the Prison Service's Justification Application for seeking permission to pilot the use of transmission x-ray technology and after a short period of consideration I shall, as required by the legislation, register it with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)

Finally it is important to state that the requirement for full searching on entry to and exit from the Prison and in some other circumstances must remain until a satisfactory alternative can be found.

Minister of Justice: Meetings with the Home Secretary

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Justice how many times he has met with the Home Secretary since 1 January 2013. **(AQO 3528/11-15)**

Mr Ford: I have not met with Theresa May MP, the Home Secretary, since 1 January 2013. While I had planned to meet Mrs May at the Justice and Home Affairs Council Meeting in Dublin on 17-18 January, she was unable to attend this meeting. However, I did meet with Mark Harper MP, Minister of State for

Immigration who attended in Mrs May's absence and I had a discussion with the Home Secretary via a phone call on 23 January 2013.

I have also met with James Brokenshire MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Security on two occasions since 1 January 2013.

Ethnic Minorities: Criminal justice Inspection Report

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the last Criminal Justice Inspectorate report, especially those concerning ethnic minorities. **(AQO 3524/11-15)**

Mr Ford: Criminal Justice Inspection published its follow-up inspection of the management of hate crime by the criminal justice system in 2010. Of the 19 recommendations from the review, 12 had been fully achieved, 3 partly achieved and 4 had not been achieved at the time of the review.

The recommendations that had not been achieved related to three broad areas: the development of an Intermediary Service, the effectiveness of management information systems in tracking hate crime cases through the system and the development of a specific hate crime strategy.

I published a revised Community Safety Strategy in July 2012, which sets out key commitments to tackling hate crime. Action plans have been agreed on all aspects of the Strategy, including on hate crime, and have been agreed by the Justice Committee. A multi-agency delivery group has been established to take forward the hate crime action plan. This provides the strategic context for addressing all forms of hate crime.

My Department will shortly pilot Registered Intermediary Schemes to assist vulnerable victims, witnesses and defendants with significant communication difficulties to provide evidence. This will be taken forward as part of the new five year victims and witnesses strategy.

In relation to the recommendations on monitoring hate crime cases through the justice system, work was undertaken on foot of the follow-up inspection, with changes made to the IT systems of a number of agencies.

Further work was identified as a result of these changes, and work is near completion to provide accurate, timely and comprehensive information on hate crime cases, from arrest to conviction. These statistics will be monitored regularly by the Hate Crime Delivery Group and will enable the effectiveness of the legislation to be kept under review.

Department for Regional Development

Planned Major Road Schemes

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline, in order of priority, the planned major road schemes.

(AQW 20068/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Over this Budget period to 2015, investment in the Strategic Road Network is concentrated on the provision of dual carriageways on the A8 (Belfast – Larne), A2 (Shore Road, Greenisland) and A5 routes. Construction work commenced on the A8 in July 2012, and is anticipated to commence on the A2 in March 2013. Whilst preliminary works are being carried out on the A5, progression of the scheme is the subject of a legal challenge.

Beyond 2015, the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21 includes for construction of a number of high priority schemes on the M2, A6 and A26, as part of a £390 million package funded through alternative finance in the period 2015/16 to 2020/21. However, a commitment to fund the revenue consequences of this roads package will be required, and so the timing will depend upon future resource budget settlements. In the event of alternative finance not being available, the scheme

could be included, together with other priority schemes, in the bidding process for conventional capital funds, in the next Budget period.

Further schemes are contained within the Roads Service Preparation Pool and Forward Planning Schedule (<http://www.drdsn.gov.uk/index/roadimprovements.htm>), with those in the Preparation Pool generally attracting a higher priority. The availability of future funding will, however, influence the programming of these schemes.

Parkgate Quarry

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has been contacted by the Department of the Environment about assessing the suitability of surrounding roads before any decision is taken on the planning application for Parkgate Quarry.

(AQW 20087/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service, as a consultee through the planning process, has assessed the suitability of the haul routes and, having taken account of the improvements proposed by the applicant along this route, is satisfied the roads are capable of dealing with the traffic generated by the development.

Road Maintenance in the Limavady and Coleraine Borough Council Areas

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development how much was spent on road maintenance in Limavady and Coleraine Borough council areas, in each of the last two financial years.

(AQW 20104/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of expenditure incurred by my Department's Roads Service on road maintenance in the Limavady and Coleraine Borough Council areas, in each of the last two financial years, are set out in the table below:

Limavady Borough Council	2010/11 (£K)	2011/12 (£K)
Structural Maintenance	2,303	3,431
Routine Maintenance	558	618
Other Maintenance	629	408
Coleraine Borough Council	2010/11 (£K)	2011/12 (£K)
Structural Maintenance	2,373	3,617
Routine Maintenance	421	897
Other Maintenance	745	543

The term 'road maintenance' includes Structural, Routine and Other Maintenance activities, definitions of which are set out below.

- Structural Maintenance includes resurfacing, surface dressing, patching and structural drainage;
- Routine Maintenance includes grass cutting, weed control, verge maintenance and gully emptying etc; and
- Other Maintenance includes expenditure on highway structures, winter maintenance and traffic maintenance.

Legal Advice

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on legal advice in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20126/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The legal costs for my Department in each of the last three financial years are provided in the table below.

Year	Legal Costs (£000's)
2009/10	2,514
2010/11	2,757
2011/12	3,131

The figures provided exclude legal costs associated with the conveyance of land for road schemes which are capitalised into the total cost of the road scheme and therefore could only be determined at a disproportionate cost.

Blue Badge Holders

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development how parking provision for blue badge holders on non-publicly owned property is monitored, and how he ensures that the provision meets all statutory requirements.

(AQW 20144/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has no responsibility for the regulation or enforcement of parking on non-publicly owned land. The provision and specification of parking facilities is normally a requirement of a planning consent, with DOE Planning the authority responsible for such matters.

DRD Information Service Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many staff are employed in his Department's Information Service; and what is the annual cost of this service.

(AQW 20170/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The DRD Press Office employs five staff at a cost of £208,032.80 for the 2011/2012 financial year.

Snow Blower Vehicles

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development to which areas the newly purchased snow blower vehicles were deployed during the recent adverse winter weather.

(AQW 20175/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service last purchased snow blower vehicles in 2005. During the recent adverse winter weather, snow blowing vehicles were deployed in the following areas:

- The Mourne (C312 Slievenaman Road and B27 Moyad Road);
- Finnis, Banbridge (U4166 Dree Hill Road and U4211 Carrigagh Road);
- Larne (C70 Starbog Road, C66 Carnalbanagh Road, U4016 Mullaghsandel Road, U2121 Lough Road and U4014 Glenview Road);
- Ballymena (U2102 Douglas Road, U2102 Shilnavogy Road, U2168 Omerbane Road and U2169 Tullykittagh Road); and
- Feeney, Dungiven (U1188 Plantation Road, U1191 Barnes Road and U1181 Ballyrory Road).

From experience, Roads Service has found that snow blowers require at least 300mm depth of snow to operate efficiently.

Unadopted Roads and Housing Developments

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the unadopted roads and housing developments in the Fermanagh District Council area; (ii) the amount of bond remaining on each development; (iii) the estimated cost to bring each development up to the level required for adoption; (iv) the name of each relevant developer; (v) whether the developer in each case is still trading; and (vi) what works are required within each development to bring it up to the required standard for adoption.

(AQW 20182/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As of March 2013, there are 113 unadopted housing developments, in the Fermanagh District Council Area, for which my Department's Roads Service currently has road bonds in place. However, several developments are being delivered through phased construction under separate bonds. Therefore, the total number of bonds held is greater than 113.

Details of the developer and developments for which bonds are in place are shown in the table below:

Developer	Name of Site
McGillin Bros Ltd	Killygullen, Lisnaskea
John Boyle	Trory, Enniskillen "Heatherglen"
Ms R Gallagher Grove Heights	Grove Lodge, Ardvarney Road, Enniskillen Art 3[4]c
Rural Housing Association Ltd	The Knocks, Lisnaskea
P Clarke and Sons	Drumbrughas North, Lisnaskea
Leonard McGrath	Drumkeen, Ederney Art 3[4]c S 1-9.
McGurran Construction	Bellanaleck Enniskillen "The Beeches"
Rural Housing Association	Florence Court Demesne
George Ferguson Rathfort Crescent	Commons and Rathmore Belleek
Rural Housing Association Ltd	Tullyholvin Lower Boho
Belleek Properties	Rathmore Belleek
Derrylin Enterprises	Derrylin
M Claney	Belcoo, East Belcoo
Designer Homes Ltd	Crevenish Road Kesh (Rosscah View)
Rural housing Association	Brownhill Irvinestown
Fider Homes	Hazelwood, Dromore Road, Irvinestown
McGurran Construction	Laurelvale Court, Rossole Road, Rossorry, Enniskillen.S 1-16
Fernagh Construction	Drumgarrow, Enniskillen
Mr John Duffy	Tonnagh Road, Derrygonnelly s 1-7
Mr Paul Hanna	Killynure Wood, Tempo Road, Enniskillen
Rural Housing Association	Commons, Belleek
Creighton Construction	Meadow Farm, Shankill Garvary, Enniskillen.s.1-55
Creighton Construction	Drumclay, Enniskillen,
Fider Homes Ltd Briars Hill	Brownhill Road, Irvinestown Sprucehill

Developer	Name of Site
Leonard McGrath	Rossory Church Road, Enniskillen
Carncourt Properties	Rossory Church Road, Enniskillen
Brian Rodgers	Killyvilly, Enniskillen (Clover Brae)
Creighton Construcion	Chanterhill, Enniskillen (Ashdale)
Tracey Brothers	Old Rossorry Road, Ennisillen
Creighton Construction	Meadowvale, Tamlaght
Mr R Ferguson	Lower Chanterhill Road, Drumclay Enniskillen
DRS Development Ltd	Brookeborough Road, Gortacharn, Lisnaskea
Winterson Homes	Kilnakelly Road, Derrylin
Fyth Construction	Arney Road, Bellanaleck – The Commons
Rural Housing Association	Cashel (Scribbagh), Garrison
McCaffery Development	Lismonaghan Kinawley, Enniskillen
Oliver Ferguson	Gorteen Road Garrison, Meadowvale
Deane PW	Silverhill Manor, Silverhill, Enniskillen
John Gilmore	Killywegh Glebe, Monea, Enniskillen
J Lumman	20m SW of 13-15 Sligo Road, Enniskillen
Mr P McShea	Monea, Enniskillen
Liam Smyth	Edenmore, Tempo
Creighton Construction	Lackaboy Road, Chanterhill, Ashbourne Manor
G Rasdale	East of Rock College, The Commons, Belleek
Anala Development	East of Parkhill, Tatinderry, Maguiresbridge
T McGrath	Factory Road, Enniskillen
M & P Properties	Shankill road, Monea, Enniskillen (Killyveagh Glebe)
Dean PW	Old Rossorry Road, Ennisillen
H Graham	Crevenish Road, Roscolban
Fisher Engineering	Drumkeen, Ballinamallard
Cassidy	Tonagh, Derrygonnelly
T Chambers & Sons	Drumgoon, Maguiresbridge
C & J Developments	Laragh, Ballycassidy, Enniskillen
T Chambers and Sons	Farransasculloge, Killynamph, Castlebalfour, Lisnaskea
H Keenan	Cashel Crossroads, Scribbagh Garrison
DRS Developments	Cushwash, McKnagh, Lisnaskea
S McCrory	Corry, Belleek
Eugene Jones.	Kinoughtragh, Teemore Cross, Derrylin

Developer	Name of Site
Arney Developments	Arney, Bellanaleck, Enniskillen
GP Williams	Belfast Road, Enniskillen
S Carron	Drumkeen, Ederny
Euro Construction Corp. Ltd	Gorteen Road, Garrison
M Clarke	Tamlaght, Enniskillen
NIHE	Layby opposite 40-44 Kilmacormick Road
Ulidia Housing Ltd	Land at Top of Abbey Dr & Adj. To Springvale Enniskillen.
Newquay Developments	110 Irvinestown Road Enniskillen
Mr J Culmore	Glebleven Road, Tonagh, Derrygonnelly
Dawn Developments	14 Station Road, Kesh
Mr J Leonard	Knockaraven Garrison
Winterson Homes	Drumgoon Maguiresbridge
Joe Hendron	Ardess Glebe, Kesh (34c only adopted)
Thompson Developments	Lisnagole Road, Lisnaskea
Leonard McGrath	Crevenish Road, Kesh
Clara Contracts	Main street, Derrylin
IS Projects	Doon Road, Derrygurdry, Derrylin
Rathbranagh (Croxford) Properties	Main Street, Derrylin
Thompson Developments Ltd	Brookeborough Road, Gortacharn, Lisnaskea
Anchorage Developments (Darren Chapman)	Aghagay, Newtownbutler
Tom Foster	Circular Road/Brook Street junction, Lisbellaw
Asda, Enniskillen	Derrychara Link/Erneside, Enniskillen
The Family Trust c/o John O'Brien	Coolacrim Derrylister, Enniskillen
Carrollmac Homes Ltd	South of Drubrghas Road/Maguiresbridge Road Lisnaskea
O'Kane and Devise	At Drumgarrow Adj to Aughaward Road, Enniskillen
Governors of Enniskillen PS	Enniskillen Integrated Primary School, Derrygore Rd
Tracy Brothers	SE of 37 Sligo Road, Enniskillen
DRS	Roseville House, Killygullen, Lisnaskea
Anchorage Developments	Lismalore and Aghalun, Brookborough
Tracey Brothers	30-32 Old Rossory Road, Enniskillen
McLoughlin Developments	Whiteisland Road, Belleek
Turkington Holdings Ltd	Tesco, Derrychara Road, Enniskillen
NIHE Article 9	HillviewRoad, Enniskillen

Developer	Name of Site
GP Williams	Tullynargan & Ardrough, Irvinestown Road
Bercham	Belleek
Bonner properties	Lands at Drumary 120m NW of St Pats Derrygonnelly
Mayne developments ltd	Land N&NE Mill Green, N&NW Fairview Park, Derrygonnelly
Oaklee housing association ltd	Old Tempo Road, Agharainy, Enniskillen
McGurran Construction	Scaffog, Derrylin Road, Enniskillen
GP Williams Ltd	Killyreagh, Tamlaght, Enniskillen
O'Kane & Devine Ltd	Arney Road, Bellanaleck
Fivemiletown CDA	Junction Tempo Road/Clabby Road, Clabby
Maine Developments	Garrison
Mayne Developments ltd	Castlederg Road, Cahore, Ederney,
Clara Contracts Ltd	East JCT Edencaw Road/Market Street, Drumkeen, Ederney
Careve Ltd	Killynure, Tempo Road, Enniskillen
Thomson Developments	Station Road, Brookborough
Keel Properties	Adj to Scottsborough House, Magheraveely
Brackenvale Developments Ltd	Adj to Birchgrove, Teemore
LP Smyth	Kilmacbrack Road, Donagh, Lisnaskea
Sean Devine Group	Teemore, Derrylin (TAS approval)
GP Williams Ltd	Ardvarney Road, Ederney
APEX Housing Association Ltd	Main Street, Lisbellaw
Rural Housing Association	West of Adrian Heights, Donagh, Lisnaskea
Clanmill Housing Association Ltd	Ballaghmore Backlands, Coleshill Road, Enniskillen

Detailed information relating to individual bonds is deemed commercially sensitive. However, I can confirm the total value of bonds currently held against private developments in Fermanagh is £9 million.

The estimated cost of outstanding works on each development and details of the work required is not available. This level of detail is only collated when an Article 11 Notice is to be served on the developer providing notice that my Department intends to complete the work and draw on the bond surety.

Whilst Roads Service has some local knowledge relating to the likely trading status of individual developers, my Department must rely upon the receipt of a deed of appointment from a receiver to definitively establish that a developer is no longer trading.

Staff Travel Claims

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost to his Department of staff travel claims in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20193/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The cost to the Department for Regional Development of staff travel claims in each of the last three years is detailed as follows:

Year	Spend (£000's)
2009/10	2,354
2010/11	2,219
2011/12	2,172

Of the £6.75m spent during the three year period 97% (£6.55m) relates to vehicle mileage claims.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures have been put in place, and what forward planning is being conducted, to prevent the spread of Ash Dieback when cutting roadside hedgerows.

(AQW 20205/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As most roadside trees and hedges are on lands adjacent to public roads, it is the responsibility of property owners, or occupiers of those lands, to ensure that trees and hedges do not endanger or obstruct road users. Roads Service periodically places notices in the local press and farming journals reminding owners and occupiers of their responsibilities.

Roads Service does not usually cut hedges, unless it is absolutely essential for road safety purposes.

However, I have confirmed with my Ministerial colleague at the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Michelle O'Neill, that farmers in receipt of payments under Single Farm Payment and other land based schemes, such as LFA and Agri-environment schemes, must adhere to Cross-compliance and the requirements of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC). One of these requirements prohibits cutting of hedges during the period 1 March to 31 August.

Minister O'Neill also informs me that scientific evidence indicates that cutting ash plants and trees during the June to October period may increase the risk of Chalara infection. DARD advises all farmers and landowners to refrain from cutting hedges and ash trees during this period, when the risk of infection is highest, and delay the commencement of cutting, until November at the earliest, where possible.

Officials from the Plant Health and Horticulture Inspectorate within the Agri-food Inspection Branch of DARD has advised officials within Roads Service's Engineering Policy Branch of the mechanism for reporting Ash Die-back disease symptoms to DARD and of biosecurity requirements. Details of these procedures will be included within a Director of Engineering Memorandum (DEM) that will issue or be brought to the attention of relevant staff within Roads Service.

Planned Repair Work to Reservoirs

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any planned repair work to reservoirs.

(AQW 20227/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it plans to carry out repair work on education tower valves and pipe work at the following impounding reservoirs which will ensure that their safety is not compromised - Dorisland, Copeland, Lough Mourne, Lower South Woodburn, Middle South Woodburn, Upper South Woodburn, North Woodburn, Church Road, Portavoe, Lower Ballysallagh, Upper Ballysallagh, Lower Conlig, Upper Conlig, Killea, Knockbracken, Boomers and Fofanny. It is anticipated that this work will commence in April 2013 and be completed by December 2014.

In addition, NIW undertakes periodic inspections at its impounding reservoirs and carries out minor maintenance on an on-going basis.

Fuel Efficiency on Northern Ireland Railway's Class 3k and 4k Sets

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development whether fuel efficiency on Northern Ireland Railway's Class 3k and 4k sets is best maintained by leaving engines running for long periods when trains have reached their destinations before making the return trip.

(AQW 20328/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that all NI Railways trains (Class 3000 and Class 4000) are equipped with auto shut-down/stable mode which shuts all but one engine down after circa 20 minutes. One auxiliary engine remains running to preserve basic on-train heating, lighting and system supports. This is considered the most cost effective engine management system.

Cycle Lane on the A2 Bangor to Belfast Road

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any assessment has been made of the possibility of a cycle lane on the A2 Bangor to Belfast road between Ballyrobert and Holywood.

(AQW 20394/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service's proposals for transport in the Belfast Metropolitan Area are presented within the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP). The Plan aims to provide for and encourage a greater use of public transport, walking and cycling. Roads Service's primary focus is to therefore develop the cycling network, as envisaged within the Plan.

Whilst I can see the benefit and merit in providing the cycle facilities you have suggested, unfortunately, this route has not been identified within the BMTP. However, officials have added this proposal to their list of areas for future consideration.

Northern Ireland Water's Assets

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the value of depreciation of Northern Ireland Water's assets for each of the last three years; and (ii) the consequential cost to his Department.

(AQW 20397/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below shows (i) the value of depreciation of Northern Ireland Water's assets for each of the last three years, and (ii) the consequential cost to my Department for the same period.

	2009-10 £m	2010-11 £m	2011-12 £m
Depreciation – Northern Ireland Water's statutory accounts	62.1	47.8	55.6
Depreciation – public expenditure implications for DRD	61.5	42.7	50.3

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much funding does his Department provide to subsidise Northern Ireland Water.

(AQW 20432/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In 2012/13 the subsidy paid to NIW by DRD on behalf of customers will be £282 million. This means that consumers do not have to pay directly for water and sewerage services in line with the Executive's Programme for Government commitment not to introduce domestic charges.

Department for Social Development

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: House Security

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development what action the Northern Ireland Housing Executive is taking to enhance security of their houses in areas of high criminality; and how many housing units have been fitted with (i) strengthened doors; (ii) low level door locks; and (iii) reinforced windows, in each of the last four years.

(AQW 19793/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive does not make any difference from a specification view point for areas of high criminality. They advise that all new Door-Sets, inclusive of door and frame, which are installed in their properties through planned maintenance programmes are to a standard which includes the Police "Secured by Design" licence. Doors meeting this specification have been replaced on a condition basis over the last four years within External Cyclical Maintenance schemes and Kitchen Replacement schemes. However the actual number of doors replaced within these schemes has not been separately recorded and is not available. From 2012 to 2015, the Housing Executive will have installed 18,000 "Secured by Design" fire doors to their flats and maisonette stock as part of their fire door replacement programme.

In relation to ii) and iii) the Housing Executive maintenance records cannot supply the detail on locks or windows.

The Housing Executive liaises with PSNI and other agencies when specific issues are brought to light and where applicable have amended specifications to help address specific problems.

Community House for Drumtara in Ballee, Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development what action has been taken to fulfil the pledge by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to provide Drumtara in Ballee, Ballymena with a community house.

(AQW 19878/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that approval was granted by their Chief Executive's Business Committee on 26 November 2012 to award community letting at 168-171 Drumtara, Ballee, Ballymena, to Seven Towers Cultural Community and Educational Association (STCCEA).

As the four flats had been vacant for some time and in a poor state of repair, approval was granted for 'change to tenancy repairs' to bring the properties back from void status. A schedule of the necessary work has been prepared and it is estimated that these works could cost in the region of £76,000.

Before work can commence, this expenditure needs the approval of the Housing Executive's Chief Executive's Business Committee and it is hoped this will be considered at their meeting in March 2013.

60-69 Drumtara, Ballee, Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development what proposals the local community has put forward for the vacant site formerly 60-69 Drumtara, Ballee, Ballymena; and what position the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has taken on these proposals.

(AQW 19879/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the Seven Towers Cultural Community and Educational Association (STCCEA) requested the use of 60-69 Drumtara, Ballee, Ballymena, as an allotment project in March 2012. The site in question was former Housing Executive dwellings which had been demolished and the Housing Executive had obtained planning approval for replacement dwellings on it.

The STCCEA looked at alternative sites but none were feasible and they asked for their original request to be reconsidered. This is currently being progressed through the Housing Executive's approval system. They estimate that if approval is granted - under their Housing Executive's Growing Spaces Project - the allotment could be operational in a few months.

Boiler Replacement Scheme Applications

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the number of boiler replacement scheme applications that have been (i) registered; (ii) processed; and (iii) successful since the launch of the new scheme in 2012, broken down by constituency area.

(AQW 19897/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

Council Area	Application Forms Issued	Approvals Authorised	Notification of completion of Works Received
Antrim	618	141	54
Ards	574	100	20
Armagh	1,373	235	49
Ballymena	1,096	282	133
Ballymoney	464	106	38
Banbridge	825	151	28
Belfast	2,436	667	261
Carrickfergus	296	43	16
Castlereagh	595	112	32
Coleraine	858	173	69
Cookstown	826	146	35
Craigavon	1,410	231	55
Derry	1,799	329	63
Down	663	100	21
Dungannon & South Tyrone	1,183	233	40
Fermanagh	951	164	17
Larne	443	91	30
Limavady	701	92	22
Lisburn	985	195	58
Magherafelt	900	175	30
Moyle	238	62	17
Newry & Mourne	2,408	495	90
Newtownabbey	839	171	63
North Down	550	104	30
Omagh	1,052	232	48
Strabane	577	78	15
Total	24,660	4,908	1,334

The information requested is not available by parliamentary constituency area and the attached table details the number of boiler replacements by District Council area. The totals for Northern Ireland are:

- 24,660 applications forms issued;
- 9,992 completed applications forms have been received;
- 4,908 approvals issued;
- 1,348 boiler replacements completed.

Boiler Replacement by District Council Area

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

Public Car Parks

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current policy on use of public car parks for staging events.

(AQW 19933/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not have a policy on the use of public car parks for staging events. In circumstances where my Department owns a car park, it is managed by the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service on my Department's behalf.

Derelict Housing

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what assesment he has made of (i) the number of homes remaining derelict at Ballysally, Coleraine; and (ii) the ability of a Housing Association to bring these properties into use during the 2013/2014 financial year.

(AQW 20017/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are currently a total of 19 vacant properties in the Ballysally estate in Coleraine which are owned by SHAC Housing Association. Oaklee Housing Association, in conjunction with SHAC, currently has plans to refurbish 10 houses (4 of which are vacant) in the first half of 2013/14.

I am however committed to ensuring that all of these vacant properties are refurbished as a matter of priority. I have therefore instructed my officials to meet with Oaklee Housing Association to instruct them that all these vacant properties should be refurbished as a matter of priority.

Housing Rights Service

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding his Department has allocated to the Housing Rights Service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20071/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the amount of funding which has been allocated to the Housing Rights Service in each of the last five years.

	Year				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
DSD Funding	760,878	782,852	822,878	841,936	895,500

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

Housing Rights Service

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development how many cases the Housing Rights Service has dealt with in each of the last five years; and why the people involved contacted the Service.

(AQW 20072/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the number of clients which Housing Rights Service has dealt with since 2008.

	Year				
	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Number of cases handled	4831	5158	6426	8262	4966*

*Figures are at 31/12/12

Housing Rights Service receives funding from the Department to provide advice to clients in respect of finding accommodation, housing debt, renting privately, repairs and homelessness. From 2009 this has included mortgage debt advice.

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

Mortgage Repayments

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department will take to assist people who are struggling with mortgage repayments; and when the action will be taken.

(AQW 20083/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department funds a Mortgage Debt Advice Service to help those experiencing difficulty making mortgage payments avoid the distressing prospect of court action and possible repossession. This free advice service, operated by the Housing Rights Service, has received funding until March 2015. The service operates during office working hours and now includes an online advisor and evening opening hours to 8.00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and can be contacted directly on 0300 323 0310.

My Department also provides help through Support for Mortgage Interest to people receiving certain social security benefits.

Housing Executive: Double Glazing

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQO 3363/11-15, for a breakdown of the £5.5m savings.

(AQW 20183/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to a breakdown of the £5.5m savings, this information is not currently available as the Housing Executive's tender price assumptions are commercial and confidential and cannot be shared with third parties as this may adversely affect the tender process.

Housing Executive

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether Housing Executive tenants will retain their statutory right to choose whether their estate is transferred to another social landlord, such as a housing association, when the Housing Executive undergoes its proposed reform.

(AQW 20225/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I want to stress from the outset that I view this as the start of a process of discussion and deliberation during which my Department will engage and consult widely with key

stakeholders to develop the detail behind these high level proposals and to ensure there is consensus and agreement. I can confirm that, in accordance with Article 88C of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, as inserted by Article 92 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 and amended by Article 128 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, Housing Executive tenants will be consulted on any proposed transfers of housing stock to other landlords.

My aim in reforming housing delivery structures is to provide a sustainable model for housing that ensures we can continue to deliver well maintained housing stock for tenants, improve the focus on strategy and ensure value for money for taxpayers.

Under Occupancy Rate Revenue

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how much revenue is expected to be raised by the proposed under occupancy rate in the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 20274/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The introduction of the size criteria for new and existing working-age claimants living in the social rented sector will replicate that which already exists for Housing Benefit claimants living in the private rented sector thereby bringing the two sectors more into line with each other.

The measure is designed to contain Housing Benefit expenditure which has seen a dramatic rise from £312m in 2003/04 to £455m in 2009/10, rather than raise revenue.

Initial estimates, based on rent levels for 2012/13, show savings of approximately £13.9m in relation to Housing Executive tenancies, and a further £6m from Housing Association tenancies.

Bedroom Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what communication his Department has had with the Department of Work and Pensions regarding the bedroom tax, given that Ian Duncan Smith has instructed his officials to look again at how the bedroom tax will impact on disabled people.

(AQW 20276/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have had a number of very productive meetings with Lord Freud in relation to all aspects of Welfare Reform and more recently, specifically in relation to the under occupation restriction.

I can confirm there is no change to the current policy situation and the introduction of the under-occupation restriction will proceed as planned, in Great Britain, in April 2013.

The Department for Work and Pensions is commissioning an independent evaluation of the under-occupation deduction. An initial draft will be available in 2014 and a final draft in 2015.

Properties Fit for New Tenants

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what is the target time for a Housing Executive property to be made fit for purpose for a new tenant once the previous tenant has moved out.

(AQW 20281/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that the turnaround or target time for re-letting a property that becomes vacant is based upon the cost of the Changes of Tenancy works. The relevant timescales in relation to the turnaround times are as follows: -

Value of works required to complete Change of Tenancy	Turnaround time (days)
£0.00 - £500	5 working days
£500 - £2,000	10 working days
£2,000 - £5,000	20 working days

Value of works required to complete Change of Tenancy	Turnaround time (days)
£5,000 - £8,750	30 working days
£8,750 - £50,000	40 working days
£50,000 +	60 working days

The Housing Executive has advised that in the main the value of work needed at change of tenancy falls below the £2,000 level and is therefore completed within 10 working days.

Hostels

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in North Down live in hostels. (AQW 20285/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the table below details the number of households placed in temporary accommodation by the Housing Executive in response to their homelessness duties in their Bangor District Office area at 12 February 2013.

Household type	NIHE Hostel	Voluntary Sector Hostel	Total
Singles	2	8	10
Families	4	2	6
Total	6	10	16

It is important to note that there are placements in other self referral hostels in Bangor of which the Housing Executive would not be aware.

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

Bedroom Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to provide details on the dimensions and specifics of what constitutes a bedroom that will be subject to the bedroom tax. (AQW 20395/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There is no statutory definition of what constitutes a bedroom in social security legislation as dimensions and questions of suitability of a room for use as a bedroom are irrelevant for Housing Benefit purposes. This is due to the fact that tenancy agreements and rent levels generally reflect the number of bedrooms in the property and may take into account their size. It is in the tenant's best interest to decide at the point of accepting the tenancy whether the accommodation is of a suitable size for their needs.

Under-Occupancy

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development whether foster carers with a spare room will be subject to the under-occupancy penalty; and whether he will consider proposing an exemption for foster carers to the under-occupancy rule. (AQW 20460/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It may be helpful if I explain that the introduction of the size criteria for working age claimants under-occupying in the social rented sector will bring this sector into line with the approach

already in place in the private rented sector, where the rate of Housing Benefit is related to the size of dwelling the claimant needs.

As with claims in the private rented sector, a room for a foster child will not be included when calculating how many bedrooms a family unit requires. Therefore, a household that has an extra room for a current or potential foster child will be treated as under-occupying and there are no plans to introduce a specific exemption for this particular group.

Rather than creating blanket exemptions for broad categories, support will be made available in Northern Ireland by way of Discretionary Housing Payments. This is a more appropriate way of dealing with vulnerable claimants as these Payments offer flexibility based on local decisions helping to ensure that scarce resources can be targeted as needed. So as not to discourage foster carers, and in recognition that there may be cases where it would make sense to provide additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments could help to meet housing costs between placements.

The Discretionary Housing Payments budget in Northern Ireland has been increased substantially and this increase includes additional funding of £1.005m in each of the years from 2013/14 to 2016/17, specifically targeted at people who live in significantly adapted accommodation (due to someone in the household having a disability) and foster carers (including those between placements) who find themselves with a reduction in their Housing Benefit due to under-occupation.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 8 March 2013

(AQO 3351/11-15)

In agreeing the policy decisions contained in the 18 July announcement, we gave a strong mandate for action across a range of significant strategic issues.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(AQW 19994/11-15)

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

School	Estimated Construction Start	Current Status
Victoria Park Primary School	Mid May 2013	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. Waiting for final EA to be submitted to Department.
Eglinton Primary School	June 2014	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. EA has been submitted to the Department and currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.

School	Estimated Construction Start	Current Status
Foyle College / Ebrington Primary School	Autumn 2013	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. Waiting for Stage D approval to finalise EA.
Enniskillen Model	August 2014	Stage C and costs due July 2013. EA has been submitted to the Department and currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Dromore Central	Sept 2013	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. Waiting for final EA to be submitted to Department.
St Clares Primary School Newry & St Colman's Abbey Primary School Newry	September 2013	Stage D approval. PQQ templates with Project Manager. PQQ expected March 2013. Department waiting for additional information to finalise EA.
St Mary's Primary School Banbridge	August 2013	Stage C approval. Revised Stage D requested by DE. EA is currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Tannaghmore Primary School Lurgan	June 2013	Stage D approval. EA has been submitted to Finance Director for submission to DFP
St Teresa's Primary School Lurgan	May 2013	Stage D approval. EA is currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Colaiste Feirste	November 2013	Stage C approval. Revised stage D requested by DE. Awaiting approval of Stage D before EA can be finalised.
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	August 2013	Stage C approval. Design work continuing. EA is currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Belmont House Special School -Derry	June 2014	Consultants to be appointed. Economic Appraisal awaited.
Rossmar Special School Limavady	May 2014	Consultants to be appointed. Economic Appraisal awaited.

School	Estimated Construction Start	Current Status
Castletower Ballymena	2015	Consultants to be appointed. Department waiting for final EA to be submitted.
St Joseph's Convent Primary School, Newry	September 2013	Stage D approval PQQ Complete EA is currently with Departmental Professional Advisors for review.
Arvalee Special School, Omagh	TBC	Appointment of Consultants to undertake Design and EA approved.
St Gerard's Resource Centre, Belfast	June 2013	Options Analysis on future use of old Balmoral High School awaiting approval with Departmental Professional Advisers.

(AQW 19883/11-15)

Under the terms of the Petroleum (Production) Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 my Department grants licences to search and bore for and get petroleum in Northern Ireland. The petroleum legislation makes no distinction between the different types of petroleum (oil or gas) or the geological formations (e.g. shale or sandstone) in which the petroleum may be found.

The extraction of oil or gas is subject to my Department's approval of a development plan submitted by the Licensee. Such a plan would only follow an extensive programme of exploration and appraisal and it would also be subject to a number of other consents including planning permission.

No such plans have been submitted to my Department in respect of shale oil extraction.

(AQW 17638/11-15)

There is no requirement to formally notify any internal departmental body within the Department of Justice to Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI). CJINI may inspect all criminal justice bodies, with the exception of the judiciary, to ensure that they are delivering the best possible service to all sections of the community. CJINI may also inspect other agencies where they impact upon the Criminal Justice system. The following organisations fall under CJINI's remit pursuant to section 46 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002:

- The Police Service of Northern Ireland
- The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland
- The Youth Justice Agency for Northern Ireland
- The Northern Ireland Prison Service
- The Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- Forensic Science Northern Ireland
- The Police Ombudsman's Office for Northern Ireland
- The State Pathologist's Department for Northern Ireland
- The Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service
- The Parole Commissioners
- The Legal Services Commission
- The Northern Ireland Social Security Agency
- The Compensation Agency
- The Health and Social Care Board & Trusts
- The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division
- The The The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
- The Royal Mail Group
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- Larne Harbour Ltd

-
- Belfast International Airport Ltd
 - The Northern Ireland Tourist Board
 - Community Restorative Justice Schemes
 - Probation and Bail Hostels.

(AQW 17639/11-15)

There is no requirement to formally notify any internal departmental body within the Department of Justice to Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI). CJINI may inspect all criminal justice bodies, with the exception of the judiciary, to ensure that they are delivering the best possible service to all sections of the community. CJINI may also inspect other agencies where they impact upon the Criminal Justice system. The following organisations fall under CJINI's remit pursuant to section 46 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002:

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- Belfast International Airport Ltd
- The Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- Community Restorative Justice Schemes
- Probation and Bail Hostels.

(AQW 17659/11-15)

There is no requirement to formally notify any internal departmental body within the Department of Justice to Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI). CJINI may inspect all criminal justice bodies, with the exception of the judiciary, to ensure that they are delivering the best possible service to all sections of the community. CJINI may also inspect other agencies where they impact upon the Criminal Justice system. The following organisations fall under CJINI's remit pursuant to section 46 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002:

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- The Royal Mail Group
 - Belfast Harbour Commissioners
 - Larne Harbour Ltd
 - Belfast International Airport Ltd
 - The Northern Ireland Tourist Board
 - Community Restorative Justice Schemes
 - Probation and Bail Hostels.

(AQW 19885/11-15)

Since the Boiler Replacement Scheme was launched in September 2012:

- 28,223 queries have been received;
- 9,992 completed applications forms have been received;
- 4,908 approvals have been issued;
- 1,348 boiler replacements have been completed;
- 1,051 oil to oil replacements have been completed;
- 297 conversions to gas have been completed.

The number of boiler completions at any time depends on the response times of the applicants. Over the Christmas period and in to January 2013 it is to be expected that there will less installations. From February 2013 onwards it is reasonable to expect that the number of installations will increase as at present. The number of completions to date is consistent with a reasonable response time from applicants coupled with the time of year.

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



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