

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 14 June 2013

Volume 86, No WA1

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 14 June 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Business Mission to China

Mr Gardiner asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) how many Ministers, junior Ministers, MLAs, officials and other people comprised the delegation for the business mission to China; (ii) the cost of their travel; (iii) the cost of their accommodation; and (iv) other costs associated with the mission.

(AQW 16734/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The information has been published on the OFMDFM website.

Executive Information Service

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the review of the Executive Information Service began; and when it is expected to be completed.

(AQW 18689/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The matter is being progressed.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr McGimpsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what representations they have made to the Minister for Social Development on behalf of victims to ensure that the Welfare Reform Bill does not disproportionately affect their entitlements.

(AQO 3559/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Following discussions between DSD and OFMDFM, we are pleased to confirm that there will be no change under Universal Credit to how payments made by the Victims and Survivors Service will be treated within the social security system. As is the current position, such payments will be disregarded as income for those in receipt of social security benefits; however, they will be considered as capital. This is exactly the same position as to how payments made by the Memorial Fund are currently treated. The statutory basis for this approach is contained within regulations 5 and 13 of The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments No.4) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

NI Memorial Fund: Applications

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how applicants to the NI Memorial Fund were informed that the fund would permanently close for applications on 7 January 2013.

(AQW 21419/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund (NIMF) wrote to recipients of the Fund on 14 December 2012, informing them that the Fund would close for applications on

Monday 7 January 2013. Recipients were also informed of the transition arrangement of the Fund into the new Victims Service.

The Fund issued separate letters to clients who had already applied for funding in the 2012/13 financial year and those who were still eligible to apply but had not yet submitted an application

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on funding allocations by the Victims and Survivors Service; and to list the successful applicants and the amounts awarded.
(AQW 22730/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This information is not yet available from the Victims and Survivors Service as processes are not yet complete.

Unanswered Question: AQW 14210/11-15

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why AQW 14210/11-15 remains unanswered eight months after it was asked; and to provide the answer to the question.
(AQW 23183/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: AQW 14210/11-15 was answered on 23 May 2013.

Strategic Support Fund

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the organisations in each council area that were awarded funding from the Strategic Support Fund in (i) 2012/13; and (ii) 2013/14; and the amount that each organisation received.

(AQW 23231/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A list of organisations awarded funding from the Strategic Support Fund (SSF) in 2012/13, broken down by council area together with amounts awarded, is detailed in the table below.

Council	Group	Funding
Antrim Borough Council	Antrim Youth Information & Counselling Centre	£33,559
Armagh City & District Council	Restorative Action Following on The Troubles	£141,209
	REACT	£91,833
Banbridge District Council	South Down Action for Healing Wounds	£13,893
Belfast City Council	Haven Victim Support Group	£70,278
	Victims and Survivors Trust (VAST)	£141,982
	Lenadoon Community Forum	£78,740
	New Life Counselling Service	£134,147
	Corpus Christi Services	£171,147
	Survivors of Trauma	£145,298
	Families Beyond Conflict	£66,171

Council	Group	Funding
	HELP NI	£14,075
	Wider Circle	£16,612
	Holy Trinity Centre	£79,665
	Springhill Community House	£103,662
	Centre for Health and Well Being	£34,009
Derry City Council	Derry Well Woman	£85,165
	C.A.L.M.S	£191,344
	Have Your Tomorrows (Hurt)	£43,916
	Aurora Counselling	£89,608
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	The Peace Factory	£127,318
Fermanagh District Council	Aisling Centre	£66,994
	Firinne	£152,315
Lisburn City Council	Colin Community Counselling Project	£58,521
Multiple Councils	Cunamh	£172,490
	West Tyrone Voice	£108,045
	Columba Celtic Heritage Support Services	£61,927
	Regimental Association of UDR	£50,416
	NI Music Therapy Trust	£75,891
	HURT	£85,320
	Contact	£23,714
	Forum For Action On Substance	£84,073
	NOVA	£120,293
	South East Fermanagh Foundation	£268,606
	Crossfire Trust	£117,472
	Ashton Community Trust	£422,311
	Ex Services Mental Welfare Society	£81,642
	The Ely Centre	£214,039
	Relatives for Justice	£512,878
	WAVE	£1,170,885
	South Armagh Rural Women's Network	£75,930

Council	Group	Funding
Newry & Mourne District Council	Mourne Action for Survivors of Terrorism	£81,036
Omagh District Council	Families Moving On	£123,888
	Tara Centre	£105,437
	Omagh Support and Self Help Group	£131,553
Strabane District Council	The Koram Centre	£126,640
Total		£6,365,950

Note: As at 21.05.2013, these figures are subject to change following completion of verification exercises/repayment of underspends

The SSF, previously administered by the Community Relations Council (CRC), closed on 31 March 2013 and has been replaced since 1 April 2013 by the Victims Support Programme (VSP), managed by the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS).

Interim Letters of Offer were issued to groups by the VSS during April 2013. The VSS is currently in the process of meeting with the groups to finalise work plans and budgets for the next two financial years. In addition, a number of groups are progressing through an appeals process and a number are undergoing a corporate governance review. When all these processes are complete the VSS will then be in a position to provide full details of successful applicants and amounts awarded.

Strategic Support Fund

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of staff (i) allocated; and (ii) appointed to each organisation that had staff funded by the Strategic Support Fund in 2012/13, broken down by council area.

(AQW 23233/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The number of staff allocated to each organisation funded by the Strategic Support Fund (SSF) in 2012/13 broken down by council area is detailed in the table below.

Information on actual staff appointed is not available. However, staff costs are checked during the verification process and funding is only provided based on staff actually in post.

NUMBER OF STAFF IN GROUPS FUNDED BY SSF 2012/13

Ref	Group	Council	No. of Staff	
			FT	PT
Antrim Borough Council	Antrim Youth Information & Counselling Centre	Antrim Borough Council	0	2
Armagh City & District Council	Restorative Action Following on The Troubles	Armagh City & District Council	1	2
	REACT	Armagh City & District Council	1	1

Ref	Group	Council	No. of Staff	
			FT	PT
Banbridge District Council	South Down Action for Healing Wounds	Banbridge District Council	0	0
Belfast City Council	Haven Victim Support Group	Belfast City Council	1	1
	Victims and Survivors Trust (VAST)	Belfast City Council	2	0
	Lenadoon Community Forum	Belfast City Council	1	3
	New Life Counselling Service	Belfast City Council	4	0
	Corpus Christi Services	Belfast City Council	2	6
	Survivors of Trauma	Belfast City Council	3	0
	Families Beyond Conflict	Belfast City Council	1	1
	HELP NI	Belfast City Council	0	0
	Wider Circle	Belfast City Council	0	0
	Holy Trinity Centre	Belfast City Council	2	2
	Springhill Community House	Belfast City Council	1	2
	Centre for Health and Well Being	Belfast City Council	1	1
Derry City Council	Derry Well Woman	Derry City Council	2	0
	C.A.L.M.S	Derry City Council	2	0
	Have Your Tomorrows (Hurt)	Derry City Council	0	2
	Aurora Counselling	Derry City Council	1	2
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	The Peace Factory	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	2	1
Fermanagh District Council	Aisling Centre	Fermanagh District Council	2	1

Ref	Group	Council	No. of Staff	
			FT	PT
	Firinne	Fermanagh District Council	2	0
Lisburn City Council	Colin Community Counselling Project	Lisburn City Council	1	2
Multiple Councils	Cunamh	Derry City, Strabane District, Magherafelt District, and Limavady Borough Councils	3	3
	West Tyrone Voice	Strabane District, Omagh District, Derry City, and Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Councils	2	0
	Columba Celtic Heritage Support Services	Derry City Council Area, Donegal County Council	2	0
	Regimental Association of UDR	Coleraine and Ballymoney Borough Councils	1	0
	NI Music Therapy Trust	Regional	2	0
	HURT	Craigavon Borough, Banbridge District, and Belfast City Councils	3	0
	Contact	Regional	0	2
	Forum For Action On Substance	Belfast City, North Down, and Ards Borough Councils	2	0
	NOVA	Craigavon Borough, Banbridge District, Armagh City & District, Dungannon & South Tyrone, and Newry & Mourne District Councils	4	1

Ref	Group	Council	No. of Staff	
			FT	PT
	South East Fermanagh Foundation	Fermanagh District, and Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Councils (Also working in partnership across Armagh, Newry and Mourne , Cookstown and Magherafelt)	2	2
	Crossfire Trust	Armagh City & District, Newry & Mourne District Councils	2	1
	Ashton Community Trust	Belfast City Council; Newtownabbey Borough Council; Lisburn City Council; Fermanagh District Council; Omagh District Council; Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	7	0
	Ex Services Mental Welfare Society	Regional	2	0
	The Ely Centre	Fermanagh District and Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Councils	5	0
	Relatives for Justice	Regional	10	0
	WAVE	Regional	25	10
	South Armagh Rural Women's Network	Armagh City & District and Newry & Mourne District Councils	1	1
Newry & Mourne District Council	Mourne Action for Survivors of Terrorism	Newry & Mourne District Council	0	2

Ref	Group	Council	No. of Staff	
			FT	PT
Omagh District Council	Families Moving On	Omagh District Council	1	1
	Tara Centre	Omagh District Council	1	3
	Omagh Support and Self Help Group	Omagh District Council	2	0
Strabane District Council	The Koram Centre	Strabane District Council	2	1
Total			111	56

Strategic Support Fund

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list each organisation who has staff funded by the Strategic Support Fund in 2013/14, broken down by council area; and the number of staff funded.

(AQW 23236/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This information is not yet available from the Victims and Survivors Service.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for a breakdown of the community background of staff employed in the Victims and Survivors Service.

(AQW 23257/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims and Survivors Service has advised us that they currently employ 32 members of staff, who identify themselves as being from the following community backgrounds: 16 Roman Catholic, 11 Protestant and 5 None.

QE5: Training Contracts

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how much QE5 obtained from the Community Relations Council and the Victims and Survivors Service for training contracts in the victims sector over the last ten years; (ii) whether this was paid from core victims funding; and (iii) if not, what was the source of the payment.

(AQW 23259/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) has advised us that it has paid QE5 £2,756 for the provision of training. This payment came from the VSS corporate operating budget.

The Community Relations Council (CRC) has paid £16,409.70 directly to QE5 for training in the last ten years. These payments came from the CRC's administrative costs.

WAVE: Staff

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for a breakdown of the community background of staff employed in the organisation WAVE.

(AQW 23261/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department has no requirement to collect or hold this information and is not in a position to provide the information requested.

Victims and Survivors Service: Staff

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for a breakdown of the cumulative community background of staff employed by groups funded by the Victims and Survivors Service.
(AQW 23263/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims and Survivors Service has advised us that it has no statutory obligation to collect or hold such information on the groups funded under the Victims Support Programme and is therefore unable to provide this information.

Racial Equality Strategy

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Racial Equality Strategy.
(AQO 4062/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our Department has always been and remains strongly committed to the mainstreaming and promotion of racial equality through both the Minority Ethnic Development Fund and the Racial Equality Strategy.

That Strategy has to be reflective of the actual needs of our minority ethnic people.

Officials have been liaising with the Racial Equality Panel and wider representatives of the sector to refocus and refine a strategy that is fresh, attainable and meaningful.

Following the last meeting of the Racial Equality Panel on 30 April, the draft Strategy is nearing completion and we intend to commence the public consultation exercise as soon as possible.

The cornerstone for the last Strategy was the six shared aims written in close collaboration with the sector.

The demographic and economic landscape has changed dramatically since the last Strategy and this has been factored into the draft document.

There is a clear necessity to get this Strategy right, robust and ready for realistic implementation and, through continued dialogue with the sector, we are confident we will have a Strategy that will deliver.

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre

Mr McGimpsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have had any correspondence with the Minister of Education about the proposed Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre.
(AQO 4063/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have had no correspondence with the Minister of Education about the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at Maze/Long Kesh.

Preliminary discussions were held with representatives from the education sector to help outline the Education, Research, Teaching and Learning work strand of the Centre and discussions will continue to help determine and shape this important area.

Stakeholder engagement will take place as the key projects at the site progress, including the development of the functions and services of the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre.

Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how much of the allocation to the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation (NICTT) in (a) 2010/11; and (b) 2011/12 was spent; (ii) whether NICTT applied for funding in 2012/13; (iii) whether funding was awarded; and (iv) whether it is known why NICTT ceased to operate.

(AQW 23405/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In 2010/11, our Department awarded a grant of £199,771 to the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation (NICTT). Following verification, it was assessed that the actual amount of spend for the period was £179,374.

In 2011/12, NICTT was successful in obtaining £271,675.50 in funding from the Strategic Support Fund, administered by the Community Relations Council (CRC) on behalf of OFMDFM. Due to the closure of the organisation on 31 December 2011, £211,305.76 of this funding was verified by CRC as actually spent.

NICTT did not apply for funding in 2012/13 and informed CRC that it closed due to a number of operational difficulties.

Strategic Support Fund: Underspending

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the underspend in the Strategic Support Fund in (i) 2010/11; (ii) 2011/12; and (iii) 2012/13.

(AQW 23446/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department has not recorded any underspends for the Strategic Support Fund (SSF) in 2010/11 or 2011/12.

The SSF ceased to operate on 31 March 2013 and responsibility for its administration transferred to the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) during November 2012. The VSS has advised us that the vouching and verification of 2012/13 SSF spend will not be finalised for a number of weeks.

Child Poverty Reduction Pilot Study

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Child Poverty Reduction Pilot Study.

(AQW 23500/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Child Poverty Reduction Pilot Study was put out to tender during summer 2012. Only one tender bid was received. Following assessment and discussions with the bidder, a clarified bid was received in late December.

Following careful consideration, a decision was taken not to proceed with this bid as it did not meet the minimum specification requirements as set out in the original tender.

Children and Young People Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when further action plans, emanating from the 10 year Strategy for Children and Young People, will be developed; and when work will begin on developing a further Children and Young People Strategy.

(AQW 23502/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Implementation of the current Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People is now being taken forward through the Delivering Social Change Framework. A key aim of the new Framework is to improve the outcomes for children and young people. The new Framework represents a move away from previous action plans towards a more focused and co-ordinated approach to maximise impact.

In support of this development, the Children and Young Persons Early Action document was published on 14 November 2012. This takes full account of the principles of the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People including its high level outcomes. It also identifies the key priorities for children and families over the remaining years of the Ten Year Strategy. The Early Action document identifies five priority work programmes focused on (i) early years and early intervention (2) actions to improve children's early literacy and numeracy skills; (3) support for services and interventions which protect and support young people through key life transitions; (iv) integrated service delivery (v) joined up planning and commissioning.

The document has been developed to assist key stakeholders in delivering further programmes and initiatives.

Any consideration of a successor to the Ten Year Strategy post 2016 would be informed by a range of factors. These would include, for example, an assessment of the progress achieved over the period of the existing strategy, the current context including the Delivering Social Change Framework, consultation with relevant stakeholders including children and young people and the outcomes and concluding observations of the Periodic Review of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will establish inquiries into allegations of abuse by people who fall outside the remit of the Historical Institutional Abuse inquiry, specifically victims of clerical child abuse and former residents or inmates of Magdalene Laundry type institutions.

(AQW 23792/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The recent reports regarding the Magdalene Laundry institutions in the Republic of Ireland have raised the question of how those who were resident in similar institutions here may address concerns. Anyone who experienced abuse as a child within such institutions will be covered by the remit of the current Inquiry.

However, we are conscious that there may be a group that would not be covered as they were over the age of 18 during their residency. We have appointed a senior civil servant to draw up a scoping report on the Magdalene Laundry type institutions here to see what further action could be taken.

The issue of clerical abuse is no less important or emotive than institutional abuse and we are mindful of the equally destructive impact it has had on many individuals.

Following the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse, it will be for the Executive to consider how to deal with abuse that does not fall within the Inquiry's terms of reference.

This Inquiry, however, was initiated in the 2009 Assembly debate about historical institutional abuse of children. The definition of an institution for the purposes of the Inquiry formed an important aspect of consultation with victims and other key stakeholders. Setting the parameters in this way does not in any way undermine the trauma that has undoubtedly been inflicted on many other individuals as a result of abuse in domestic and other settings. However, the categories to be covered by the Inquiry were selected because of the very particular vulnerable nature of this type of residential care.

Childcare Strategy

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Childcare Strategy.

(AQO 4180/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The development and delivery of a Childcare Strategy is a key Programme for Government commitment. The Executive is determined to deliver a Strategy that will make a real and lasting difference to the lives of parents and children.

Public consultation on the Childcare Strategy ended on 5 March. All of the comments received have been reviewed to inform the development of the Childcare Strategy, including its priorities for early action. This work is at an advanced stage and we expect to be able to make an announcement shortly.

St. Lucia Lands, Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on St. Lucia lands, Omagh.

(AQO 4182/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Part of St Lucia Barracks was gifted to our Department under the Hillsborough Agreement. The listed buildings and parade ground at St Lucia remain the property of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and that part of the site has not been transferred to the Executive for legal reasons; however a resolution to this issue is currently being pursued by MOD.

Officials have held discussions and continue to liaise with Omagh District Council and the Department for Social Development regional development office regarding future possibilities for the site.

The Minister of the Environment announced on 3 May that he was recommending planning approval for the new Shared Education Campus at the Lisanelly site, which is adjacent to St Lucia. Strategic planning for the St Lucia site will take account of the impact of the schools development.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Broadband Funding: East Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will consider targeting rural areas of East Londonderry in the recently announced tranche of broadband funding.

(AQW 23643/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): It is intended to target as many postcode areas as possible within the list of 6,500 rural broadband "not spots" based on multiple deprivation including some within your own area. Not all areas will be able to fully benefit from this round of targeting however as success is dependent upon the technical solutions available within the existing budget.

Farmers: Damaged Farm Sheds

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the financial implications for farmers whose farm sheds which were damaged by the heavy snow around Easter and were not covered by insurance.

(AQW 23657/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am very aware that some farmers have suffered damage to farm buildings as a result of the 22-24 March snow storm and I fully sympathise with all those who were affected by the snow storm.

Given that those worst affected by the snow storm were livestock farmers, my aim was to provide early hardship funding to help mitigate the losses sustained by livestock farmers as a result of the snow storm. The hardship funding made available by the Executive has been specifically to help deal with these livestock losses.

The first element of the hardship funding was the payment by my Department of collection and disposal costs. The second element, concerns the Hardship Payments Scheme, which seeks to help mitigate the cost to farmers of the livestock losses arising from the snow storm.

There are no financial support measures planned as part of the hardship funding for farmers whose buildings were damaged during the heavy snow.

The Farm Family Options – Business Mentoring Programme, funded under the Rural Development Programme, assists farmers and family members, with the support of an experienced agricultural business mentor, to consider their current position, address the main issues, opportunities, concerns and to develop a focused Action Plan for the future.

Rural Support operates a helpline which provides a listening ear and signposting service for farmers and rural dwellers. If farmers themselves or someone they know would benefit from speaking to a Rural Support volunteer they can call the helpline which is confidential.

22 Week Slurry Storage

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the protection in place for farmers who exceed 22 week slurry storage, given that the Environment Agency has suggested that they should cull healthy animals in order to comply with the EU Nitrates Directive.

(AQW 23659/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The EU Nitrates Directive is implemented through the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) Regulations (NI) 2010 which is joint legislation between the Department of the Environment and my Department. The Regulations set the minimum slurry storage capacity for livestock farms at 22 weeks and 26 weeks in the case of pig and poultry enterprises. These are the minimum capacities and farms in wetter areas or with heavier soils may require greater storage capacity to ensure they spread slurry only when soil and weather conditions are suitable.

The NI Environment Agency (NIEA) is responsible for inspection and enforcement of the NAP Regulations. NIEA has confirmed that it has never suggested that livestock should be culled to meet the various requirements of the Regulations.

If farmers find they have insufficient slurry storage capacity on farm they can employ a range of management options to help achieve compliance with the Regulations.

Options farmers may consider include selling surplus livestock, renting additional slurry storage tanks, exporting slurry, use of a slurry separator and housing animals on straw bedded accommodation.

DARD's Code of Good Agricultural Practice provides advice to farmers on best practice for managing slurry. This includes how to maximise the available slurry storage capacity on farm by separating clean water and reducing the amount of dirty water produced from the farmyard which is collected in slurry tanks.

Farmers' Health and Welfare

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures she has put in place to ensure that farmers' health and welfare are maintained following the severe weather at Easter and the current fodder crisis.

(AQW 23686/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The unprecedented weather has led to many issues for farmers in the north, including their health and welfare. I am committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all those living in rural communities.

My Department provides funding to the Rural Support Charity who play a very important role in rural communities. During the severe weather at Easter and since then through the recent fodder crisis, farmers and members of rural families have been directed to Rural Support who address issues such as emotional distress, physical and mental health.

My Department are collaborating with DHSSPS, the Public Health Agency and Health Trusts on the Farm Family Health check project. This project includes a signposting service to mental health services.

DARD has also recently launched a joint initiative with DCAL and DHSSPS along with the Public Health Agency and the three main sporting bodies, GAA, soccer and rugby, to provide help, advice and support to those in rural areas suffering from poor mental health. This initiative aims to assist those living in

rural areas in particular, where difficulty in accessing key services can have an adverse impact on the health of our communities and add to feelings of isolation.

In addition, the Farm Family Options Mentoring Programme funded by the Rural Development Programme, provides the opportunity for an experienced agricultural business mentor to discuss issues with a farm family such including their current situation, opportunities and concerns, and develop a focused Action Plan for the future. This can include signposting to other forms of support and assistance.

Going For Growth Strategy

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what commitment has she received from the Executive that the £400m required for the Going For Growth Strategy will be forthcoming.
(AQW 23692/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Agri-Food Strategy Board's strategic action plan Going for Growth was only very recently launched a few weeks ago at the Balmoral Show.

The DETI Minister and I are in the process of examining all of the recommendations carefully, before presenting proposed next steps to the Executive. Obviously, the Board's recommendations have significant funding implications for DARD and other Departments and we will need to engage with colleagues on the detail of these, including their affordability. We expect to make an announcement on implementation, once the Executive has agreed the way forward.

Land Parcel Identification System Maps

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the nature of the technical problem that caused errors in the Land Parcel Identification System maps.
(AQW 23693/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The maps produced this year for issue to farm businesses were constructed based on fields declared in the 2012 SAF together with other owned fields that DARD holds as being associated with the business. To present this view of fields in a map format required DARD IT systems to select declared and owned fields and associate these with a specific business. This is a complex task and for the majority of farm maps produced, this process worked successfully. However in one batch of maps the process failed resulting in not all fields being displayed on the map. The underlying data was not affected.

An automated script that produces the maps failed to complete successfully resulting in the missing fields on around 9% of maps.

Several businesses can have an interest in a field parcel for different schemes. To create the Single Farm Payment farm business map, it is necessary to pick out the field parcels associated with a business that declared specific field parcels as part of their SAF 2012 application. An automated script associates declared field parcels with businesses and builds a link. It also links owned field parcels with a business and based on these links builds a business map view that is then distilled into a PDF file, quality assured and then published through DARD online services before being sent on to a printer for hard copy map production.

The process is complicated in scenarios where the underlying field parcel information has changed since the time that the SAF declaration information was taken. For example, as part of the field boundary and ineligible feature improvement process, Land & Property Services (LPS) staff (using aerial imagery) split a field. The original declared field was not split i.e. it was based on a whole field parcel. The script must take this change into account when making the links. Likewise in scenarios where two fields are merged, the script must reconcile the fact that the original declaration was based on two fields but the amended field parcel view is that there is only one field.

Data was supplied to DARD for map production in three separate batches. Where businesses had field information that spanned across one or more of these batches the script made the links with the

relevant information in one batch but failed to continue and pick up the remaining information from the other batch(es). These incomplete links meant that field parcels did not display on the map.

The problem was fixed and maps were reproduced within approximately 2.5 weeks of the problem being identified. These were made available on-line for viewing and printing. Farmers affected by this issue were provided with an additional 2 weeks to make map updates in advance of their Single Application Form being pre-printed with any updates made.

This is a transitional year for the Single Farm Payment system and the development of these new maps has been a novel and complex operation not made any easier by the need to maintain a 'live' system while integrating the new mapping data.

African Horse Sickness

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the threat of African Horse Sickness entering through the Republic of Ireland, considering there are controls in place across the UK but none currently exist in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 23696/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: African Horse Sickness (AHS) is a notifiable disease both here and in the south of Ireland. The control measures for the disease are set out in EC Directive 92/35. It has never been detected on this island.

In the unlikely event of a suspect or confirmed case in the south of Ireland the powers to control the disease are currently contained in the Diseases of Animals Act 1966 (Notification and Control of Animal Diseases) Order 2008. DAFM officials have also confirmed that they are currently in the process of bringing forward a statutory instrument specifically for the control of AHS. This will contain similar provisions to those in the African Horse Sickness Regulations that are currently being finalised by officials in my Department. The production of our respective AHS Regulations is in line with the Fortress Ireland policy and I intend to raise this with Minister Coveney when the NSMC meets next month.

Current advice from my Veterinary Service officials indicates that the risk of African Horse Sickness incursion via legal routes of horses and horse products is very low. This risk is kept under review on an ongoing basis to take account of changes in climate and international horse movements.

In the event of an outbreak of any epizootic disease, such as African Horse Sickness, either here or in the south of Ireland, my officials and those in DAFM recognise that sustained cooperation is essential to the containment of the outbreak and to reduce further spread of disease.

Grazing in Blanket Bog Areas

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department monitors grazing in blanket bog areas to ensure that they are not overgrazed.

(AQW 23721/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not routinely monitor the grazing in blanket bog areas. However, during On-The-Spot Checks for area-based schemes such as Single Farm Payment (SFP), Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowance (LFACA) and Agri-Environment Scheme, DARD inspectors record any breaches of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC). Protecting grassland and semi-natural habitats from over grazing is one of the GAEC requirements, and a breach of this standard may result in a penalty being applied to the scheme payment.

NI Environmental Agency currently undertakes routine monitoring of blanket bog on designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)) on a six-yearly cycle. The work enables NIEA to assess whether the blanket bog vegetation is in favourable condition or not. Where the habitat is unfavourable, the information collected helps to identify those factors that may be responsible, such as overgrazing. NIEA will then work with site managers and DARD to address the causes of unfavourable condition so that action can be taken to enable the habitat to recover.

Unanswered Letter

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when will she answer the letter I sent on 26 April 2013.

(AQW 23772/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A response to your correspondence of 26 April 2013 was issued on 31 May 2013.

Central Investigation Service: Horse Passports

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of cases referred to the Central Investigation Service since 2008 that relate to allegations of irregularity or fraud involving horse passports; ii) how many of these received a full investigation; and (iii) how many of these resulted in a criminal sanction.

(AQW 23777/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Central Investigation Service received 6 complaints in relation to private sales between two parties concerning non-compliance with the Horse Passport Regulations. Of these 6 complaints, 3 were investigated, none of which resulted in criminal sanction.

Wind Turbine Applications

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 22423/11-15, of the 91 applicants who have accepted the letter of offer and have had funding made available to them, to detail how many have drawn down and used the funding to date.

(AQW 23891/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Of the 91 projects, 21 are completed and have received their funding in full (8 Feasibility, 11 installation and 2 as part of a larger project). Of the remaining 70 six have drawn down some funding against their projects (1 feasibility study, 4 installation and 1 as part of a larger project).

Forest Service: Native Tree Species

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if Forest Service plans to increase the number of native tree species that are planted.

(AQW 23991/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service provide grant aid and advice to help farmers and landowners create new native woodland under the Woodland Grant Scheme and the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme. This is guided by Forest Service's publication of the "Native Woodland Definition and Guidance" Booklet produced by the Native Woodland Group.

To increase the level of planting, including native woodland, Forest Service plans to operate a pilot Forestry Challenge Scheme this year for the creation of at least 100 hectares of new woodland in addition to woodland supported under the existing forestry grant schemes. The Scheme is subject to EU approval and will be aimed at encouraging farmers and landowners to establish new woodland on a landscape scale and applications will be assessed by judging which proposals contribute most to delivering the aims of the Forestry Challenge Scheme on a best value basis.

In Forest Service managed woodland, the most appropriate areas for re-establishing native trees are identified through forest management plans. For example, native trees can be re-established near rivers or on ancient woodland sites where they can make a significant contribution to biodiversity. Natural colonisation or regeneration of native species is the preferred establishment approach which conserves local genetic distinctiveness and diversity.

Livestock Sheds for Hill Farmers

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what consideration she has given to the provision of a grant scheme for livestock sheds for hill farmers, to help minimise the impact of severe weather, such as that around Easter 2013.

(AQW 24162/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am very aware that farmers have suffered damage to buildings as a result of the snow storm of 22-24 March and I fully sympathise with the difficulties they are experiencing.

The Executive agreed to hardship funding in recognition of the extraordinary livestock losses suffered by farmers arising from the snow storm. The first element of the funding was the payment by my Department of collection and disposal costs. The second element, the Hardship Payment Scheme, seeks to help mitigate the cost to farmers of those livestock losses arising from the snow storm.

The hardship funding being made available by the Executive is specifically to deal with livestock losses and there is no provision for compensation for structural damage caused to buildings as a result of the snow storm.

The development of the future Rural Development Programme, which will include a grant aid scheme for farm businesses, is underway and this will be subject to a public consultation later this year.

The Farm Family Options – Business Mentoring Programme, funded under the Rural Development Programme, assists farmers and family members, with the support of an experienced agricultural business mentor, to consider their current position, address the main issues, opportunities, concerns and to develop a focused Action Plan for the future.

Farm Quality Assurance Scheme

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what support mechanisms she has implemented to help farmers achieve farm quality assured produce.

(AQO 4282/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Farm quality assurance schemes for the various meat and non-meat categories within the food supply chain are administered and promoted by the agri-food industry.

The College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) supports good farming practices by developing people through education and training and the provision of technical and business development advice. A number of these training courses cover topics that would be considered best practice and would be commensurate with quality assurance schemes. These include the Animal Health Challenges, Cereals Challenge and courses such as Safe Use of Pesticides. In this way CAFRE helps farmers and growers to develop the required technical competences to comply with farm quality assurance standards.

However, it is the responsibility of the agri-food industry to develop farm quality assurance standards and to recruit farmers and growers into the farm quality assurance schemes.

Fodder Transport Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the objectives of the Fodder Transport Scheme were achieved.

(AQO 4283/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has been monitoring the fodder situation carefully. In response to discussions with the Industry on Thursday 16 May and my Department's assessment of the situation, I secured £1m to fund a Fodder Transport scheme in the north which started at midnight on 18 May 2013. The Scheme closed at midnight on 31 May 2013.

The objective of the scheme was to ensure that fodder was made available to farmers in the north who have found themselves short of fodder, as quickly as possible. The intervention was to subsidise the transportation costs for the importation of fodder into the north thus encouraging an adequate supply.

At the close of the scheme on 31 May 2013 in the region of 16,000 tonnes of fodder was imported into the north. While being delivered to all 6 counties over half was delivered to the west where the need was greatest.

I considerer that the objective of the scheme has been achieved as much needed fodder was imported into the north for farmers to feed their stock.

Fodder Shortages

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail what forward planning is being put in place to assist farmers in the medium to long term regarding fodder shortages in the coming winter.

(AQO 4284/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am very aware of the considerable difficulties facing farmers following prolonged periods of unfavourable weather. This has had a serious effect on our livestock industry and I recognise that it is likely to continue for some time to come. Indeed some of the effects may not be fully apparent until we reach the end of the summer and farmers start to house their animals for the winter period.

My Department has established a taskforce comprising representatives of the main farmers unions, feed suppliers, processor organisations and banks to work along with DARD to identify the issues facing the industry in the next twelve months. The taskforce will propose action that can be made by the industry and my Department to help mitigate any adverse effects of the fodder shortage as they develop.

The Taskforce has already met a number of times and has identified a range of issues. I anticipate that an action plan will be agreed this month and the Taskforce will be reconvened if necessary.

DARD Headquarters

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on producing the business case for the proposed move of her departmental headquarters to Ballykelly.

(AQO 4285/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The business case is currently going through the normal internal appraisal processes within my Department. It will then be submitted to DFP for scrutiny. I expect that process to be completed before the end of summer 2013.

Agriculture: Waterlogging

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the action she is taking to deal with the problem of waterlogging of agricultural land which has hindered crop production and is driving up food and fodder prices.

(AQO 4286/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I fully recognise the difficulties being experienced by farmers and growers following the poor weather conditions throughout 2012 and during the spring of 2013. Waterlogged soils are caused by soils becoming compacted along with underlying drainage problems and my Department is working proactively with the industry to help farmers address these problems.

As part of my Department's response, CAFRE will be holding two training events on 3 and 5 July 2013 at Greenmount and Enniskillen Campuses respectively. These events will provide farmers with the knowledge to address soil compaction and drainage issues. Additional training courses for farmers and growers will be delivered during 2013 depending on local need. Individual farmers can also receive support from their local CAFRE Development adviser on soil and sward improvement.

In addition my Department is funding a research project on soil compaction which is currently being undertaken by AFBI. This is to identify the extent of soil compaction within the north of Ireland and its influence on crop yields. Various improvement methods currently being used by the industry will be evaluated.

Farmers: Retain Hedgerows

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what encouragement her Department provides to farmers to retain hedgerows given, their importance to the Irish Hare.
(AQO 4273/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I welcome the opportunity to provide an update on the work that my Department carries out to encourage farmers to retain and positively manage hedgerows. These not only enhance the landscape but also provide valuable wildlife habitats for many species of animals and plants including the Irish hare.

Farmers who receive direct agricultural support payments, including Single Farm Payment (SFP) must retain field boundaries. Hedges are considered a landscape feature and are eligible for these payments provided they meet certain eligibility conditions.

Hedges must not be removed without prior permission from DARD and they must not be trimmed during the closed period for hedge-cutting. These actions are considered to be a breach of Cross-Compliance and could potentially result in the loss or reduction of the SFP and other direct payments. Removal of hedgerows may also be an offence under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations (NI) 2007.

My Department actively encourages the management, restoration and regeneration of hedgerows through the provision of funding to around 12,000 farmers in agri-environment schemes. In 2012 agri-environment farmers committed to undertake a total of 200 kilometres of hedgerow restoration through actions such as planting, laying and coppicing.

Woodland also provides the Irish hare with habitat. Although the Forestry Act 2010 gives woodland owners general powers under to protect their trees from damage by wild animals, that power does not extend to Irish hares. The Irish hare was granted special recognition as an indigenous species of this island. As a result the Irish hare must not be killed at any time to protect woodland trees.

My Department also provides advice on managing and preserving hedgerows for biodiversity through a number of channels including communication with Countryside Management Advisers, information in scheme booklets, provision of training events, press articles and on the DARD website.

DARD Direct: Strabane

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on any progress in locating the north west DARD Direct office in Strabane.
(AQO 4275/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Strabane is a location well placed to provide the full range of DARD Direct services to farmers in the surrounding area. Following my decision to locate the north west DARD Direct office in Strabane, my officials have been working with DFP to explore options in the town, which will best meet the DARD Direct specification. I am committed to ensuring that we get the DARD Direct services up and running there, as soon as we are able.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Third and Fourth Generation Synthetic Pitches: East Derry Area

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many third and fourth generation synthetic pitches are currently available for use in the East Derry area.

(AQW 20948/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Neither my Department nor Sport NI retains information on the number of third and fourth generation synthetic pitches currently available for use in the East Derry area.

I have, however, asked Sport NI to carry out an audit of all sports facilities across the north of Ireland, including synthetic pitches. When completed, this information will be made available on Sport NI's website.

Sport NI has confirmed, however, that over the last four years, it has provided funding towards the development of two third generation synthetic pitches in the East Derry area.

Funding Package for the Three Sporting Stadia

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there are any 'state aid' issues relating to her Department's funding package for the three sporting stadia; and what steps have been taken to address any issues.

(AQW 21230/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: As this matter is the subject of current legal proceedings it is not appropriate to comment at this stage.

Coista Na N-larchimi: Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether Coista Na N-larchimi has ever been offered funding by her Department and for what purpose.

(AQW 21378/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has not offered any funding to Coiste na n-larchimí.

Northern Ireland Screen: Funding

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding has been provided to Northern Ireland Screen, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 21429/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Northern Ireland Screen has received the following funding in each of the last 3 years from my Department:

Year	Funding £000's
10/11	1,376
11/12	1,779
12/13	1,977

SportNI Lottery Funding

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what proportion of SportNI Lottery funding has been granted to (i) statutory; (ii) voluntary or community; and (iii) private organisations, in each of the last five financial years.

(AQW 21664/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The table below outlines Lottery funding and the percentage proportions to statutory and voluntary or community sector organisations from

01 April 2007 – 31 March 2013. Sport NI did not fund any private sector organisations during this period.

Organisation Type	Financial Year					Grand Total
	2007-08	2008-09	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	
(i) Statutory		£483,017 (14%)	£2,353,287 (43%)	£2,923,549 (55%)	£3,008,098 (46%)	£8,767,951 (30%)
(ii) Voluntary or Community	£8,621,005 (100%)	£2,951,007 (86%)	£3,094,643 (57%)	£2,373,300 (45%)	£3,536,570 (54%)	£20,576,525 (70%)
Grand Total	£8,621,005	£3,434,024	£5,447,930	£5,296,849	£6,544,668	£29,344,476

Public Procurement Contracts for Supplies, Services and Construction

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the Programme for Government commitment to include social clauses in all public procurement contracts for supplies, services and construction, how many contracts her Department has entered into since this commitment; and what where the social clauses included in these contracts.

(AQW 21738/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since the Programme for Government commitment to include social clauses in all public procurement contracts for supplies, services and construction, the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure has entered into thirty five contracts of which ten contain social clauses. This demonstrates the work undertaken to date in:

- The application of the north's equality duties, including Section 75, to ensure that resources and opportunities are specifically ring-fenced and targeted at sectors facing greatest inequalities within areas of greatest objective need.
- Promoting the living wage scheme, and opportunities for sub-contractors, through the Stadium Programme;
- The introduction of a new departmental priority to promote equality and tackle social exclusion and poverty throughout all departmental business, once again utilising the purposive as well procedural equality duties to target public resources at need.

Through these ten contracts the Department is working to promote sustainable economic, social, equality and environmental returns primarily through the Stadium Programme and projects within Libraries NI and the wider DCAL work-stream.

Eel Fishing in Lough Erne

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 19966/11-15, to outline why a closure of eel fishing in Lough Erne presented compensation considerations different from those that would apply were the Lough Neagh Eel Fishery to close; and would her Department consider introducing a compensation scheme for Lough Neagh eel fishermen in the event of closure.

(AQW 21933/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A requirement upon the approval of the North West International Eel Management Plan under Council Regulation (EC) No 1100 / 2007 was the cessation of the commercial eel fishery on Lough Erne, as there was evidence that it did not meet the 40% escapement figure.

There was no provision for compensation in the NW Eel Management Plan or under Council Regulation (EC) No 1100 / 2007.

The potential threat of closure to the Lough Neagh eel fishery originates from proposals, which if accepted by the EU, would close all commercial eel fisheries across the EU. In the event of such circumstances I would consider it incumbent on the EU to include inter alia compensatory measures for those affected by a closure.

NI Sreen: Staff Contracts Outstanding

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if there are any outstanding staff contracts for NI Sreen and if so, when was she notified.

(AQW 22039/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Staff contracts are a matter between NI Screen as the employer and its staff.

2013 World Police and Fire Games

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the World Police and Fire Games.

(AQW 22252/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There has been significant progress in the preparation for the 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

As of 11 June 5,806 athletes have registered for the Games.

The response to the call for volunteers was excellent with over 5,200 fully completed applications. Notification of volunteers commenced on the 24th April and will continue through to June 2013. Furthermore, a number of flagship sponsors have been secured to support the Games and contract details are currently being agreed. The sponsorship target for the Games has been exceeded.

All of the sporting venues for the Games have been confirmed with venue organisers and were announced on 31 May 2012. The venue for the Games Opening Ceremony is The King's Hall Complex and it will take place on 1 August. The Closing Ceremony will take place at the Titanic Slipways on 10 August.

The World Police and Fire Games Schools Pack was launched in October 2012 which provides teachers with a comprehensive set of education resources to inform children and young people about the Games and get them involved in the event throughout 2013.

The Company has, and will continue to work with local councils to identify opportunities for them to organise or host events related to the Games. The Company's website provides details on other events taking place during the Games as well as information on local visitor attractions and places of interest, all aimed at showcasing what we have to offer in the north and maximising tourism benefits.

The Company has developed a Social Benefit Strategy and Legacy Plan to ensure the social inclusivity of the Games. As part of this, three charity partners have been appointed: The Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children, the SOS Bus and the Special Educational Needs Advisory Service will all benefit from an increased profile and fundraising opportunities during the Games.

New Theatre in Bangor

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what assistance her Department can provide to community groups wishing to establish a new theatre in Bangor.

(AQW 22462/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department through the Arts Council can provide funding to carry out feasibility studies into the establishment and sustainability of capital projects.

Fintona Library

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the current position of Fintona Library; and what assurances she can give on its long term viability.

(AQW 22829/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In January 2012 I provided Libraries NI with an extra £2.39m, some of this funding was to assist Libraries NI in meeting the additional costs associated with allowing seven libraries to remain open. These seven libraries, including Fintona Library, had been considered for closure following the Stage 2 Review of the Library Estate in the north of Ireland.

The operation of individual libraries and the management of the library estate are a matter for the Board of Libraries NI; however Libraries NI has informed me that its Board is working with the Fintona Community Forum, in partnership with the Fintona Library Educational Awareness Training Association (FLEAT), to develop proposals for the future of the library. It is anticipated that the Board will review the outcome of those discussions in October 2013.

A Report on the Socio-Economic Impact of the Traditional Protestant Parading Sector in Northern Ireland

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the positive points which came from 'A Report on the Socio-Economic Impact of the Traditional Protestant Parading Sector in Northern Ireland', funded by the Department for Social Development; and how her Department will use the findings in this report.

(AQW 23497/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department will take account of relevant research findings outlined in the DSD funded report.

Department of Education

Nursery Pupils in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 23147/11-15, how many pupils (i) applied for pre-school admission; (ii) were not offered a place at their first preference setting; (iii) were offered a place at a subsequent preference setting; and (iv) remain unplaced.

(AQW 23782/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): A total of 897 1st preference applications were received for settings in the North Down Council area during the 2013/14 pre-school admissions process. This included 10 late applications.

160 children were not offered a place in their 1st preference setting, of which 139 were offered a place in a setting listed as a subsequent preference. The parents of 18 children did not avail of the opportunity to state further preferences at the end of Stage 1 and 3 children whose parents submitted a late application during Stage 2 of the process remain unplaced.

All of the parents who fully participated in the process received an offer of a place for their child.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education (i) whether he was consulted on the educational issues relevant to his Department prior to the announcement by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on

the Together: Building a United Community Strategy; (ii) how any consultation took place; and (iii) when he was consulted.

(AQW 23815/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I was consulted on educational issues relevant to my Department prior to the announcement.

Additional Places for Schools

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education to list the schools that received additional places for the September 2013 intake; and the number of additional places each school received.

(AQW 23849/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A list of schools and the number of additional places granted by the Department for September 2013 is detailed below. The information reflects the position as at the 5 June.

School	Additional Places
Primary Schools	
Carr's Glen Primary School, Belfast	1
Scoil an Droichid, Belfast	3
Gaelscoil na Mona, Belfast	1
Forge Integrated Primary School, Belfast	11
Kesh Primary School	4
Ballougry Primary School	5
Edwards Primary School, Castledearg	6
Greenhaw Primary School, Derry	1
Maguiresbridge Primary School	1
Gaelscoil Neachtain, Dungiven	8
St Ninnidh's Primary School, Derrylin	7
St Mary's Primary School, Mullymesker	8
St Mary's Primary School, Killyclogher	2
Drumlisk Primary School	1
St Lawrence's Primary School, Fintona	4
St Columbkille's Primary School, Carrickmore	6
St Patrick's Primary School, Castledearg	3
St Dympna's Primary School, Dromore	4
Gaelscoil Na Gcrann, Omagh	6
Enniskillen Integrated Primary School	3
Oakgrove Integrated Primary School	2
Greenisland Primary School	2
Fourtowns Primary School	1
Culcrow Primary School, Aghadowey	5

School	Additional Places
Damhead Primary School, Coleraine	2
Creggan Primary School, Randalstown	2
Mount St Michael's Primary School, Randalstown	2
St Brigid's Primary School, Tirkane	3
St Trea's Primary School, Magherafelt	1
St John's Primary School, Swatragh	2
St Patrick's & St Joseph's Primary School, Garvagh	5
St Oliver Plunkett's PS, Toomebridge	3
St Brigid's Primary School, Magherafelt	12
St Macnissi's Primary School, Newtownabbey	2
St Columba's Primary School, Kilrea	2
St Patrick's Primary School, Glen, Maghera	2
St Brigid's Primary School, Ballymena	16
Gaelscoil Eanna, Glengormley	18
Grey Abbey Primary School	1
Glasswater Primary School	1
St Patrick's Primary School, Saul	1
St Francis Primary School, Drumaroad	2
St Mary's Primary School, Ardglass	1
St Brigid's Primary School, Downpatrick	1
St Colman's Primary School, Lisburn	5
St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle	7
Kircubbin Integrated Primary School	4
Oakwood Integrated Primary School, Dunmurry	1
Millennium Integrated Primary School, Saintfield	15
Drumlins Integrated Primary School, Ballynahinch	4
Rowandale Integrated Primary School, Moira	4
Clare Primary School, Tandragee	1
Waringstown Primary School	2
Bleary Primary School, Craigavon	1
Maralin Village Primary School	2
Aughnacloy Primary School	1
Augher Central Primary School	1
Markethill Primary School	1

School	Additional Places
Drumadonnell Primary School	15
Orchard County Primary School, Portadown	3
Killyman Primary School, Dungannon	3
St Patrick's Primary School, Crossmaglen	5
St Brigid's Primary School, Crossmaglen	5
St Patrick's Primary School, Magheralin	1
St Mary's Primary School Barr, Newry	4
St Patrick's Primary School, Mayobridge	4
St Mary's Primary School, Cabragh, Dungannon	2
St Patrick's Primary School, Hilltown, Newry	21
St Joseph's Primary School, Galbally, Dungannon	8
St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge	1
St Colman's Primary School, Annaclone	5
St Mary's Primary School, Mullaghbawn	1
St Mary's Primary School, Pomeroy	1
St Mary's Primary School, Aughnacloy	4
St Francis' Primary School, Aghderg	1
St Colman's Primary School, Saval, Newry	1
St John's Primary School, Middletown, Armagh	7
St Francis Primary School, Lurgan	7
St Joseph & St James Primary School, Poyntzpass	3
Seagoe Primary School, Portadown	7
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, Dungannon	2
Portadown Integrated Primary School,	14
Phoenix Integrated Primary School, Cookstown	5
Post-Primary Schools	
De La Salle College, Belfast	2
St Joseph's Boys' School, Derry	1
St Colm's High School, Draperstown	4
St Pius X High School, Magherafelt	2
Newtownhamilton High School	2
St Catherine's College, Armagh	24
St Colman's College, Newry	1

Parent's Applying for Primary School Places: Addresses

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what steps his Department has taken to ensure that parents applying for primary school places are using addresses at which they actually reside; and how many cases of parents using false addresses have been discovered over the last three years.

(AQW 23874/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is a school's responsibility as the admission authority to ensure that the information it takes into account when applying its admissions criteria to applications for places, is accurate. Where a school is oversubscribed and it has to apply its admissions criteria to determine admission, the Boards of Governors have a duty to verify 'qualifying information' contained within applications, if at the point of applying their admission criteria, there have a 'general knowledge or belief' of a problem of false information.

The Department provides guidance within DE Circular 2011/20 to schools on the duty to verify. The guidance is on the Department website at http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular_2011.20_-_guidance_on_a_school_s_duty_to_verify_information_contained_within_applications_for_admission__pre-school__primary__post-primary__pdf_1.27mb.pdf.

Where the Department receives any information about possible use of false addresses, this is passed on to the school to address.

The Department does not hold information on the number of false addresses discovered over the last three years.

Applications for Admission to Pre-School, Primary and Post-Primary School

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what verification of information contained within applications for admission to (i) pre-school; (ii) primary; and (iii) post-primary school took place in 2013; and to detail the percentage of applications checked in each Education and Library Board area, broken down by each type of school.

(AQW 23875/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In applications for admission to post-primary schools, Education and Library Boards (ELBs) verify claims of entitlement to free school meals. Other than this, responsibility for verification of the information contained within applications for admission to pre-school, primary and post-primary schools lies with the Board of Governors of the individual school or provider. Guidance about this is provided in the Department's Circular 2011/20 which can be viewed on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk. Neither the ELBs, nor the Department of Education carry out a check of the personal information provided in applications.

Applications for Admissions to Schools

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to ensure that the applications for admission to schools have been checked in time to ensure that the appeals procedure can be followed properly.

(AQW 23876/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The operation of the admissions processes is a matter for the Education and Library Boards and the schools, not the Department. Guidance is provided by the Department to all schools on their duty to verify information with the admission process to ensure the completion of the process within the relevant timescales which will allow for the appeals to be lodged by the due date. The guidance to schools on the duty to verify in the form of DE Circular 2011/20 is on the Department website at http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular_2011.20_-_guidance_on_a_school_s_duty_to_verify_information_contained_within_applications_for_admission__pre-school__primary__post-primary__pdf_1.27mb.pdf.

Education and Training Inspectorate: Complaints

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education (i) how many complaints the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has received over the last five school years; (ii) to outline the procedure for hearing the complaints; (iii) whether this procedure is independent of the ETI; and (iv) what were the outcomes of these complaints.

(AQW 23883/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The number of complaints the Education and Training Inspectorate received in each of the last five school years are as follows:

School year	Complaint
2007/2008	9
2008/2009	2
2009/2010	7
2010/2011	5
2011/2012	2

- (ii) The procedure for complaints (revised in September 2012), is available to the public and can be accessed using the following link: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/Homepage/complaints-procedure.pdf>
- (iii) The ETI complaints procedure has two stages: stage 1, the formal complaint investigation; stage 2, an internal review of the way in which the complaint was investigated at stage 1. Both stages are carried out by an investigating officer who has had no previous involvement with the inspection. If the complainant remains dissatisfied they can refer their complaint to the Assembly Ombudsman.
- (iv) All of these complaints were followed up systematically, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Inspectorate's Complaints Procedures at that time. None of the complaints investigated was upheld.

Pupils Admitted to Grammar Schools on Appeal

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many pupils were admitted to a grammar school on appeal in each of the last three years, broken down by school.

(AQW 23903/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am advised by the Education and Library Boards that the number of pupils admitted to a grammar school on appeal in each of the last 3 years is set out in the tables below:

2010/11

Name of School	Admitted on Appeal
Wellington College, Belfast	1
RBAI	2
Victoria College	1
Aquinas GS	1
Mount Lourdes GS, Enniskillen	6
St Michael's GS, Enniskillen	1

Name of School	Admitted on Appeal
Christian Brothers GS, Omagh	1
Foyle & Londonderry College	1
Lumen Christi College	1
Ballyclare High School	3
Coleraine High School	1
Carrickfergus GS	1
Ballymena Academy	1
Dalriada GS	1
Larne GS	1
Bangor GS	1
Sullivan Upper GS	1
Wallace High School	2
Assumption GS, Ballynahinch	1
St Patrick's GS, Downpatrick	2
Our Lady's & St Patrick's College, Knock	1
Banbridge Academy	4
St Colman's College, Newry	2
St Joseph's GS Donaghmore	1
Royal School Armagh	2
St Patrick's GS, Armagh	4
St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon	1
Total	45

2011/12

Name of School	Admitted on Appeal
Bloomfield Collegiate, Belfast	1
RBAI	1
Belfast Royal Academy	1
St Dominic's High School	1
St Michael's GS, Enniskillen	1
Christian Brothers GS, Omagh	3
Lumen Christi College	1
Ballyclare High School	1
Larne GS	1

Name of School	Admitted on Appeal
St Mary's GS, Magherafelt	4
Down High School	1
Bangor GS	3
Assumption GS, Ballynahinch	2
St Patrick's GS, Downpatrick	2
Banbridge Academy	1
Abbey GS, Newry	4
St Joseph's GS Donaghmore	1
St Patrick's GS, Armagh	3
Total	32

2012/13

Name of School	Admitted on Appeal
Aquinas GS	2
Christian Brothers GS, Omagh	1
Loreto GS, Omagh	1
Lumen Christi College	1
Cambridge House GS, Ballymena	1
St Louis' GS, Ballymena	3
Ballymena Academy	1
Rainey Endowed GS	2
St Mary's GS, Magherafelt	2
Our Lady's & St Patrick's College, Knock	1
Banbridge Academy	5
St Louis' GS, Kilkeel	1
Abbey GS, Newry	1
St Colman's College, Newry	6
St Joseph's GS Donaghmore	2
Sacred Heart GS, Newry	3
Royal School Armagh	1
St Patrick's GS, Armagh	1
Total	35

Minimum Standard of Education Required to Work in a Pre-School

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education (i) what is the minimum standard of education required to work in a pre-school; (ii) how this level of training compares with international best practice; and (iii) what mechanisms are in place to ensure that all staff working in pre-schools are trained to an appropriate standard.

(AQW 23905/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) The leader of a voluntary or private pre-school setting should have at least a qualification at QCF level 3 or higher in Child Care Learning and Development (CCLD) or equivalent. Fifty percent of the rest of the staff (i.e. assistants) in voluntary and private preschool settings should have at least a QCF level 2 Diploma in CCLD or playwork.

(ii) The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) have advised that the level of training in the north of Ireland is currently lower than international best practice, where leaders are qualified to degree level (level 5). However, under the Minimum Standards for Day Care and Childminding for Children Under Age 12 published in July 2012 by the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, all new leaders in voluntary and private pre-school settings will be required by 2016 to have at least a qualification at of QCF level 5 in CCLD or equivalent.

(iii) The Health and Social Care Trust are responsible for compliance checks of their minimum standards in voluntary and private pre-school settings. ETI evaluate and report the quality of staffing, leadership and management during inspections.

GCSE Subject: Software Programming

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education whether his Department will consider the merits of introducing Software Programming as a GCSE subject and at an earlier stage in pupil education as part of the curriculum at primary school level.

(AQW 23911/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The revised curriculum has been designed to provide flexibility for schools to develop experiences that suit the needs of their pupils. Embedding mandatory, cross curricular skills and keeping prescribed content to a minimum, allows schools to choose the most appropriate approach to take to ensure that pupils are engaged and challenged, to reach their full potential.

Computer Science, which includes software programming, is a specialised field and the flexibility already in place within the revised curriculum, enables schools to teach Computer Science in any Key Stage, including at primary school level, if they feel it appropriate.

At Key Stage 4 (GCSE), the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) will be consulting with schools between September and October 2013 regarding existing and new specifications. One of the proposed qualifications going to consultation will be a GCSE in software systems development which would provide clear progression to a new A level in software systems development that is now available to schools for first teaching from September 2013. In addition, some Awarding Bodies already offer 'Computing' in addition to ICT.

Special Educational Needs Provision

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's key priorities and objectives for special educational needs provision for the period 2012-2015.

(AQW 23921/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's primary role in supporting all children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) is to provide a robust, inclusive policy framework to enable the individual needs of each child to be met.

This is reflected within Corporate Goal 2 of the Department of Education's Corporate Plan for Education 2012-2015 in which the Department aims to "close the performance gap and increase access and equality."

Within this goal there is one strategic objective relating specifically to special educational needs provision namely:-

"To finalise and implement a new approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN following the completion of the SEN Review."

Special Educational Needs Schools

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Strategic Planning and Policy Development Forum; and how this body has reviewed the requirements of special educational needs schools.

(AQW 23922/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Strategic Planning and Policy Development Forum (known as the Strategic Forum) has been in operation since February 2011 and has met on 10 occasions.

Over the course of that time, the Forum has developed significantly and currently plays an important role in building a consensus across the sector in areas of mutual interest, providing an early opportunity for the Department to engage with many of our key stakeholders on strategic issues.

Initially the Forum examined a range of strategic issues. Three areas were agreed and work streams were established to consider how the Forum could contribute to supporting: Area Based Planning, Raising Standards, and the Education Budget/Review of the Common Funding Scheme (CFS).

The work streams on Area Based Planning and Raising Standards completed their work in September and December 2012 respectively. The reports produced were considered by the Forum and papers submitted to me as advice for consideration.

The Forum has in place an agreement that no more than three work streams will run concurrently at any one time. In March 2013, given the continued work on the Education Budget/ CFS, the Forum identified two additional issues from the DE Corporate Plan 2012-2015 and new work streams were established on the School Workforce Review and Professional Development and Leadership. Members have nominated representatives from their organisations to participate on the new working groups and these groups have both held an initial meeting.

To date, the requirements of special educational needs schools have not been considered by the Forum. However the Forum will continue to establish work streams as appropriate to progress specific issues as agreed by its members.

Corporate Plan for Education 2012-2015

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on his Departmental objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan for Education 2012-2015.

(AQW 23923/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A review and update of the Corporate Plan for Education 2012-2015 is currently taking place. This will take account of my Department's progress on its business plan commitments and actions contained in its 2012-2013 business plan and involve finalisation of an updated business plan for 2013-14.

The Department has already committed to publishing an end year report on its progress in delivering the actions in its 2012-13 business plan and this will be published shortly.

Guidelines for Primary School Places

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether he will review the guidelines for primary school places to allow for flexibility where rural and urban boundaries exist, to ensure that children living in a rural area but close to an urban school are not discriminated against compared to children living in an urban area but further from the school.

(AQW 23924/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Board of Governors of a school as the admissions authority is responsible for setting the admissions criteria to determine the admission of applicants to the school. The Department has no role in the setting of the admission criteria, other than to provide guidance to schools on the admission process. This guidance is on the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk and is updated each year. Where a tiebreaker situation exists within any specific criteria, the Department advocates that the school uses age, random alphabetical letters or random selection to determine places, rather than distance which can disadvantage rural applicants.

I have no specific plans to review the guidance from a urban/rural perspective.

Employment of Fully Qualified Teachers

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Education, in light of his announcement in relation to the employment of fully qualified teachers, how the schools will be selected.

(AQW 23926/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I would refer the Member to my answer to AQW 23783/11-15, tabled by Peter Weir MLA and published in the Official Report on 7th June 2013.

Schools Placed In and Removed From Intervention

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the criteria by which a school is (i) placed into; and (ii) removed from, intervention.

(AQW 23938/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) In circumstances where a school inspection, undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), finds that, in the areas inspected, the overall quality of education provided is less than satisfactory, i.e. 'inadequate' or 'unsatisfactory', the school will be placed in formal intervention.
- (ii) The process for deciding whether a school should exit the FIP is initiated when a school is evaluated through a follow-up inspection, undertaken by the ETI, as providing a satisfactory or better overall quality of education. In this circumstance, the Department will decide whether the school should exit FIP

There are no set criteria for determining whether a school should exit the FIP rather each case is considered on its individual merits. The Department's decision will take account of the findings of the follow-up inspection report and any other specific issues pertaining to the school that could potentially impact on the school's ability to sustain the level of improvement made or its ability to operate effectively. A key factor in the Department's decision will be whether the pupils' best interests would be served by the school exiting the FIP

In making its decision the Department will seek the views of the local Education and Library Board and, in the case of schools in the Catholic maintained sector, the CCMS.

The Formal Intervention Process (FIP) was introduced with the launch of Every School a Good School - A Policy for School Improvement at 30 April 2009.

Further details on the FIP can be found in Annex C of this policy which is published on the Department's website and can be accessed via the following link http://www.deni.gov.uk/esags_policy_for_school_improvement_-_final_version_05-05-2009.pdf

Foley Primary School, Armagh

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education whether Foley Primary School, Armagh is a controlled primary school; and if so, whether it is meeting the obligations under Schedule 4 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 in respect of transferor representatives.

(AQW 23945/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Foley Primary School is a controlled primary school. The Southern Education & Library Board has confirmed that the Board of Governors of the school is constituted in accordance with Schedule 4 to the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and that it holds the nomination rights for the four transferor governors.

Sperrinview Special School: Annual Enrolment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 23623/11-15, and given the rise in annual enrolment at Sperrinview Special School, particularly in the 2012/13 year; (i) what support is being given to ensure that staff and the school can deliver to a high standard for pupils; (ii) what extensions are planned for the building facilities to accommodate increased enrolment; (iii) how many additional staff will be employed and in what capacity; and (iv) by how much will the annual budget increase.

(AQW 23973/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board has advised as follows:-

- (i) Sperrinview Special School, as with all special schools within the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB), is appropriately resourced, supported and maintained by the board. The school has full access to all board support and corporate services to ensure that it can deliver to a high standard for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). SELB also continues to provide professional support and training to enable the Board of Governors and Principal to meet their statutory duty in relation to the needs of the children and young people at the school.
- (ii) In 2010, approximately 375 square metres of accommodation was added to Sperrinview School providing 2 classrooms, stores, toilets and a life skills social area.

In 2012, a further 224 square metres of accommodation was built to provide a further 2 classrooms and associated stores.

- (iii) For the academic year 2012/13, SELB funded a high level of staffing resources to Sperrinview School to meet the SEN of all pupils. This included 14.6 teachers, including the Principal, plus 832.5 hours of classroom assistance to meet the needs of a projected enrolment of 103 pupils with the flexibility for placement of an additional 16 pupils (excluding Early Years Provision).

For the academic year 2013/14, the Board will fund staffing resources so that Sperrinview have access to 15.6 teachers including the Principal plus 897.5 hours of classroom assistance to meet the SEN of a projected enrolment of 96 pupils with the flexibility for placement of an additional 13 pupils (excluding Early Years Provision). This reflects an increase of 1 full time teacher and 65 hours classroom assistance.

These figures reflect the position as at 8th April 2013.

- (iv) Sperrinview School's delegated budget for 2013/14 has been based on the 2012/13 outturn, excluding ear-marked allocations. The budget for all special schools within SELB has been uplifted from the 2012/13 spend level by 7%. Schools will receive notification of the actual increase in their budget in due course.

The non-delegated budget for the Board's special schools, which includes the pressure for increased staffing costs, incremental staff wage progression and inflation, will increase by approximately 4%. Again, Sperrinview School will be informed of their actual budget in due course.

Any earmarked allocations will be in addition to the delegated monies allocated to Sperrinview School by the Board.

The on-going investment by the Board in both the extensions and increased staffing allocation reflects the Board's commitment to ensuring the school can improve pupil outcomes and deliver a high standard of education for all its pupils.

Education Bill: Academic Selection

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education which clauses in the Education Bill guarantee the continuity of academic selection.

(AQW 23978/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Clauses 3(4) and 34(10) confirm that the Education Bill will not change the existing law on admissions criteria for grant-aided schools. The existing law does not guarantee the continuity of academic selection, but makes its use a matter for decision by individual boards of governors.

Education Bill: Board of Governors

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education which clauses in the Education Bill include provisions that reserve matters on selection to the Boards of Governors.

(AQW 23983/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Clauses 3(4) and 34(10) confirm that the Education Bill will not change the existing law on admissions criteria for grant-aided schools. The existing law makes the use of academic selection a matter for decision by individual boards of governors.

Education Bill: Heads of Agreement

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether the Heads of Agreement is reflected accurately in the Education Bill.

(AQW 23984/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education Bill will deliver all of the policy commitments in the Heads of Agreement.

Unfilled Nursery, Primary and Post-Primary Places in Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus and Larne

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of unfilled places in (i) Newtownabbey; (ii) Carrickfergus; and (iii) Larne, broken down into (a) nursery, (b) primary and (c) post-primary sectors, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 24013/11-15)

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

UNFILLED PLACES IN NURSERY SCHOOLS AND NURSERY CLASSES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT AREAS 2008/09 – 2012/13

Local Government District	Year				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Carrickfergus	0	0	1	2	2
Larne	15	22	16	20	25
Newtownabbey	0	0	8	4	11

UNFILLED PLACES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS (RECEPTION – YEAR 7) LOCATED IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT AREAS 2008/09 – 2012/13

Local Government District	Year				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Carrickfergus	1090	952	975	870	861
Larne	1011	1031	1033	1045	982
Newtownabbey	2535	2668	2627	2598	2476

UNFILLED PLACES IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT AREAS 2008/09 – 2012/13

Local Government District	Year				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Carrickfergus	174	203	222	258	326
Larne	802	834	292	282	315
Newtownabbey	828	827	859	981	1073

Source: 2012 School Census / School Access Team Data

Note: Figures exclude pupils in receipt of a statement of special educational needs and pupils admitted to Year 1 (primary) / Year 8 (post-primary) on appeal and pupils in their first year at a post-primary school following their admission by the direction of the Exceptional Circumstances Body, as they are admitted over and above a school's approved enrolment number. Figures also exclude pupils admitted to a school by a temporary variation to a school's approved enrolment number.

Teacher Redundancies

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether this is the last year for the 90 week scheme regarding teacher redundancies; and what will replace the 90 week scheme.

(AQW 24041/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No decisions have been made as yet regarding teacher redundancies after 31 August 2013, or the level of compensation for the future.

Teacher Redundancies

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education when he will make decisions on teacher redundancies; and to outline his plans for the future.

(AQW 24042/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No decisions have been made as yet regarding teacher redundancies after 31 August 2013, or the level of compensation for the future.

Free School Meals: Eligible Pupils

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary school pupils who are eligible for free school meals, broken down by sector.

(AQW 24071/11-15)

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

PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS, BY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TYPE, 2012/13

Management type	% pupils entitled to Free school meals	
	Primary	Post-primary
Controlled	26.8	16.9
Catholic Maintained	33.3	32.2
Other Maintained	44.6	39.4
Controlled Integrated	31.2	24.0
Grant Maintained Integrated	25.1	25.6
Voluntary - Other managed	0.9	4.6
Voluntary - Catholic managed	n.a.	10.3
Total	29.9	19.0

Source: School census.

Foylevue Special School

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education what steps his Department is taking to ensure the retention of a nurse at Foylevue Special School in Derry.

(AQW 24072/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Western Education and Library Board has advised that it currently has funding earmarked for this post. The Western Health and Social Care Trust is actively seeking to recruit a nurse for Foylevue Special School to replace the present post-holder who has been appointed to a position elsewhere.

The school is fully aware of the situation and arrangements are in place for the current post-holder to remain at Foylevue until 30 June 2013.

Rural and Urban Primary Schools

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education how many pupils attend (i) rural; and (ii) urban primary schools in each Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 24152/11-15)

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

Pupils attending urban and rural primary schools, by Education and Library Board area, 2012/13

ELB	Rural	Urban	Total
Belfast	-	25,043	25,043
Western	12,642	16,614	29,256
North Eastern	15,011	22,689	37,700
South Eastern	9,811	25,890	35,701
Southern	19,918	20,416	40,334
Total	57,382	110,652	168,034

Source: School census

Note:

- 1 Figures include children in nursery, reception and Year 1 – 7 classes.
- 2 Figures relate to school location.
- 3 Classification of urban and rural areas is as set out in the report of the Inter-Departmental Group on Statistical Classification and delineation of Settlements (February 2005). <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp26.htm>

A school level breakdown of enrolments for urban and rural schools can be found by following the link below to our website.

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/education-statistics/32_statistics_and_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils_pg/32_statistics_and_research-schoolleveldata_pg/statistics_and_research-school_enrolment_1213-2.htm

Department for Employment and Learning

Initial Teacher Education Colleges: Graduate

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of graduates from Initial Teacher Education Colleges who have obtained employment in (i) Northern Ireland; (ii) Great Britain; (iii) Republic of Ireland; (iv) within the European Union; and (v) outside the European Union.

(AQW 23424/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): In 2010/11, 590 students graduated from Initial Teacher Training courses at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions. Of these, 495 responded to the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey which showed that 430 were in some type of employment, with 395 working in teaching positions according to their Social and Occupational Classification.

The breakdown by location of employment is shown in the table overleaf.

Of those employed as teaching professionals in Northern Ireland, 35 were in permanent or open-ended contracts.

Of the teaching professionals employed in locations other than Northern Ireland, 20 were in permanent or open-ended contracts.

Location of Employment	Teaching Professionals by Type of Employment				Not employed in Teaching	TOTAL in Employment
	Permanent or open-ended contract	Fixed-term contracts	Temporary Contract/ other	TOTAL Teaching Professionals		
(i) Northern Ireland	35	145	155	330	30	360
(ii) GB	20	15	0	35	0	35
(iii) Republic of Ireland	0	5	5	10	0	15
(iv) Other European Union	0	10	0	15	0	15
(v) Non-European Union	0	5	0	5	0	5
Total	55	180	160	395	35	430

Source: Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2010/11 (HESA)

Notes:

- 1) Figures in individual cells have been rounded to the nearest 5. Due to rounding the sum of rows or columns may not match the totals shown.
- 2) The latest available data on destinations are for 2010/11.

Government Funded Schemes

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for a breakdown of the top twenty five organisations in terms of (i) the number of people each organisation has employed; (ii) the number of people employed as part of a government funded scheme; and (iii) how much funding each has received in through the various schemes.

(AQW 23494/11-15)

Dr Farry:

Item (i)

I would advise that my Department does not hold information regarding the number of people employed in organisations.

Item (ii)

Annex A provides a brief background on the two relevant programmes offered by my Department.

Annex B provides information on the current number of apprentices in each of the twenty five organisations, in descending order of number employed.

Annex C provides information on the current number of young people employed through the Youth Employment Scheme employer subsidy.

Item (iii)

In relation to ApprenticeshipsNI, my Department contracts with 43 training suppliers across Northern Ireland for the delivery of the programme. All funding in this respect is payable directly to suppliers and cannot be attributed to individual employers.

Annex C provides information on Youth Employment Scheme subsidy payments to date and the full subsidy entitlement.

I trust that you will find this response helpful.

Annex A**ApprenticeshipsNI.**

ApprenticeshipsNI provides an opportunity for those already in or about to take up employment the opportunity to follow an apprenticeship in their chosen occupation. This programme is delivered by training suppliers who are contracted by my Department and who work in partnership with employers across Northern Ireland to deliver a wide variety of apprenticeships.

Funding is paid in respect of individuals participating in training and is dependant on their age and the apprenticeship framework that they are following. Participants aged between 16 and 24 years will attract full funding for the 'off the job' element of the training whilst those aged 25 and over will attract 50% of the amount provided they are following one of the specified frameworks within the defined priority economic sectors.

Under ApprenticeshipsNI employers are paid an incentive, through their partnering training supplier. This is paid on the successful completion of the individual's apprenticeship, can range from £250 - £1500, and is dependent on the apprenticeship being followed.

Youth Employment Scheme Northern Ireland

The focus of the Youth Employment Scheme is early intervention for young people aged 18 to 24 years. The aim of this intervention is to help this group gain work experience, develop additional skills and to achieve recognised relevant qualifications needed by those sectors that have the potential for future growth in the economy.

The Northern Ireland Executive has committed to investing £31 million in this scheme over the next 3 years and the aim is to deliver 13,100 work experience and training opportunities during this period. If successful the Youth Employment Offer will make a significant contribution to both reducing youth unemployment and rebuilding and rebalancing the economy in line with the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government Priorities.

This is a voluntary scheme for young people and it is offered through local Jobs and Benefits Offices operated by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) in Northern Ireland.

For 18 to 24 year old benefit claimants DEL has put the following additional measures in place from the point of claim:

- (A) skills audit;
- (B) work experience;
- (C) skills assessment;
- (D) Skills Development Programme; and
- (E) employment opportunities.

Employers that offer full time jobs to young people in the jobs growth sectors are able to avail of an enhanced employer subsidy of £5,000 a year as follows for each eligible client:

- £500 on the completion of the first 4 weeks of employment for each employee working an average of 30 hours per week or more (including time spent training);
- A further 12 payments of £375 for each subsequent 4 week period for each employee working an average of 30 hours per week or more (including time spent training).

A requirement of the subsidy is that employers provide training to allow the young people to develop their skills and gain relevant qualification while in employment. Up to an additional £750 for each employee receiving agreed formal training, leading towards a recognised certified qualification is payable.

Annex B

APPRENTICESHIPSNI

Employer	Current number of apprentices
Bombardier	177
First Source Solutions	130
Teleperformance	119
Wrightbus	107
Glen Caring	85
Rutledge	85
Wincanton	76
Coca Cola	71
LBM	59
Hastings Group / Europe Hotel	58
Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE)	57
M Care	52
FSHC	52
Primecare	46
Linwoods	45
Tayto	38
Dunbia	36
Santander	35
B & M Bargains	34
Galgorm Resort and Spa	33
North West Care	33
Homecare NI	33
KFC	31
Poundland	30
Subway	30

Note: Training Suppliers are required to record employer details however it must be emphasised that this information may be incomplete.

Annex C

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SCHEME (YES)

Employer	Number employed via YES Enhanced Employer Subsidy	Payment To Date	Full Subsidy Entitlement
Around a Pound	6	0	£34,500
Fix-A-Gym	5	0	£28,750
Chatterbox Publications	5	£4575	£28,750
Mullins Ice Cream Ltd	4	0	£23,000
Cubis	4	0	£23,000
Stauff UK LTD	4	0	£23,000
Urban Forest	4	0	£23,000
UTV Media PLC	4	0	£23,000
WASP Solutions	4	£6725	£23,000
Apple Blossom Bakery	3	0	£17,250
Cosy Stoves	3	0	£17,250
VAG Spares & Repairs	3	0	£17,250
City Hotel	3	£7475	£17,250
Exotic Aquatics	3	0	£17,250
Hamilton Gas Products	3	0	£17,250
1 Stop Data	3	£4475	£17,250
All Clear Environmental	3	0	£17,250
Refound 1	3	0	£17,250
ICMA	2	£2612.50	£11,500
Mc Cleary & Co	2	£1400	£11,500
FOIS LTD	2	0	£11,500
French Village Bakery	2	£1775	£11,500
Frying Squad	2	0	£11,500
HML (Homeloan Management LTD)	2	0	£11,500
Irish Inns	2	0	£11,500

Third Level Education Students with Severe Mobility Difficulties: Parking Spaces

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the policy in place that ensures the provision of guaranteed parking spaces for third level education students with severe mobility difficulties at Further Education Colleges.

(AQW 23568/11-15)

Dr Farry: There is no policy in place to guarantee parking spaces for third level education students with severe mobility difficulties at Further Education Colleges. The colleges provide car parking at their Main Campus premises and a number of these are designated for use by people with disabilities. These spaces are allocated on a first come first served basis and require the driver to display a blue badge permit.

Dignity at Work Cases

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many Dignity at Work cases have been lodged in his Department in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) core department; and (ii) non-departmental public body; and how many of these cases have been successfully resolved.

(AQW 23576/11-15)

Dr Farry: Part (I) The number of cases that have been lodged in the Department for Employment and Learning in each of the last five years is set out in Table 1. The number that have been resolved are set out in Table 2.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DIGNITY AT WORK CASES THAT HAVE BEEN LODGED

Year	Cases lodged
2008/09	1
2009/10	3
2010/11	6
2011/12	9
2012/13	9
Total	28

TABLE 2 NUMBER OF DIGNITY AT WORK CASES THAT HAVE BEEN RESOLVED

Year	Cases resolved
2008/09	1
2009/10	3
2010/11	6
2011/12	7
2012/13	5
Total	22

The details of the 6 cases which remain ongoing, including the year that the cases were lodged are set out in Table 3.

TABLE 3 DETAILS OF CASES WHICH ARE CURRENTLY ONGOING.

Year	Stage		
	Prelim Decision Stage	Investigation Stage	2nd Appeal
2011/12		1	1
2012/13	1	2	1
Total	1	3	2

Part (II) The Department's NDPBs are: Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the Labour Relations Agency (LRA), Ulster Supported Employment Limited (USEL), Stranmillis University College and Northern Ireland's Further Education (FE) Colleges.

3 of these NDPBs have had no Dignity at Work cases in this timeframe. These are USEL, CITB and the LRA.

Stranmillis University College and the FE Colleges have had Dignity at Work complaints lodged. The details of these are set out in tables 4 – 6 below.

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF DIGNITY AT WORK CASES THAT HAVE BEEN LODGED WITH STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE IN THE PAST 5 YEARS

Year	Cases lodged
2012/13	0
2011/12	0
2010/11	1
2009/10	2
2008/09	0
Total	3

All 3cases have been resolved

TABLE 5: NUMBER OF DIGNITY AT WORK CASES THAT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED PER FE COLLEGE

FE College	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC)	5	3	1	0	0
Northern Regional College (NRC)	2	3	5	3	2
North West Regional College (NWRC)	2	1	1	3	0
South Eastern Regional College (SERC)	2	2	5	3	4
Southern Regional College (SRC)	0	0	0	1	0
South West College (SWC)	1	1	0	0	0
Total	12	10	12	10	6

TABLE 6: NO. OF DIGNITY AT WORK CASES THAT HAVE BEEN RESOLVED

FE College	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC)	5	3	1	0	0
Northern Regional College (NRC)	2	3	5	3	2
North West Regional College (NWRC)	2	1	1	3	0
South Eastern Regional College (SERC)	2	2	5	3	2
Southern Regional College (SRC)	0	0	0	1	0
South West College (SWC)	1	1	0	0	0
Total	12	10	12	10	4

The 2 cases across all FE colleges which remain ongoing are in the South Eastern Regional College and were lodged in 2012/13.

Postgraduate Certificate in Education Course

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of graduates that (i) have qualified for; (ii) applied and were successful in obtaining; and (iii) applied and were unsuccessful in obtaining a Postgraduate Certificate in Education course, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 23675/11-15)

Dr Farry: Whilst my Department is responsible for the funding and administration of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), the Minister for Education is responsible for deciding the number of students who will be admitted to ITE courses, including the Postgraduate Certificate in Education course.

I should also point out that while the Department of Education sets the minimum entry requirements needed for entry to ITE courses, individual providers may seek qualifications over and above these, especially at a time when many ITE courses are oversubscribed.

My Department has provided information in respect of part (i) detailing the number of graduates who have obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, in each of the last five years. This information can be found at Annex A.

It was necessary to contact each of the Institutions in respect of parts (ii) and (iii) as this information is not held by my Department. Details of the responses received from each institution are attached at Annex B.

Annex A

Information in respect of (i) the number of graduates that have obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Education Course in each of the last five years

NUMBER OF PGCE QUALIFIERS FROM NI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS 2007/08 TO 2011/12

Year	Qualifiers
2007/08	360
2008/09	310

Year	Qualifiers
2009/10	315
2010/11	340
2011/12	345

Source: HESA

Notes:- Figures are rounded to the nearest 5

Annex B

Information received from each Higher Education Institution in relation to the number of graduates that (ii) applied and were successful in obtaining; and (iii) applied and were unsuccessful in obtaining a Postgraduate Certificate in Education course, in each of the last five years.

INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM STRANMILLIS COLLEGE

Year	Number of Places available	Number who applied	Number who were successful	Number who were unsuccessful
2012	15	157	15	142
2011	15	162	15	147
2010	15	207	15	192
2009	15	181	15	166
2008	15	161	15	146

INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Year	Total no. of applications (inc. lates)	No. of successful applications	No. of unsuccessful applications
2008/09	516	165*	351
2009/10	603	168**	435
2010/11	724	173	551
2011/12	659	175*	484
2012/13	560	138	422

* includes 1 international student

** includes 2 international students

INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Pgce Programmes 2008 -2013					
Programme	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Primary - applications	494	582	766	618	567
Primary - successful	39	42	38	39	28
Primary - unsuccessful	455	540	728	579	539
History - applications	80	99	141	110	136
History - successful	15	9	14	12	
History - unsuccessful	65	90	127	98	
Geography - applications	48	55	85	80	80
Geography - successful	12	10	13	12	
Geography - unsuccessful	36	45	72	68	
Eng, Med/Dra - applications	83	105	129	117	118
Eng,Med/Dra - successful	12	13	11	13	
Eng, Med/Dra Unsuccessful	71	92	118	104	
PE - applications	133	152	162	149	170
PE - successful	23	20	23	24	
PE - unsuccessful	110	132	139	125	
Tech & Design - applications	21	38	50	62	38
Tech & Design - successful	6	10	10	10	
Tech & Design - unsuccessful	15	28	40	52	
Art & design - applications	62	68	95	80	94
Art & Design - successful	12	10	11	11	
Art & design - unsuccessful	50	58	84	69	
Music - applications	34	23	37	37	35
Music - successful	11	10	11	11	
Music - unsuccessful	23	13	26	26	
Home Econs - applications	37	48	67	66	54
Home Econs - successful	15	12	12	11	
Home Econs - unsuccessful	22	36	55	55	

Information received from St Mary's College

In relation to (iii) the number of graduates applying for PGCE places we do not have a record of this. St Mary's graduates may apply to PGCE courses independently and to anywhere in the UK. This is not recorded in the student record system.

In relation to (ii) the number of graduates proceeding to PGCE courses, the figures obtained via the First Destination survey are as follows:

2008 Graduates	13
2009 Graduates	12
2010 Graduates	16
2011 Graduates	14
2012 Graduates	31

INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM OPEN UNIVERSITY

	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	Total
Successful	17	19	16	20	18	6	96
Active Applications (as at 04/06/13 could be registered)						7	7
Unsuccessful	26	25	25	12	13	1	102
Total	43	44	41	32	31	14	205

Boost Scheme in Rural Communities

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how her Department is promoting the Boost Scheme in rural communities.

(AQW 23730/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Boost Programme is a rural youth employability project which is managed by AdvantageNI and funded under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2007 – 2013. The project was offered funding over the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2014 of £234,841 from the European Social Fund and £146,775 from the Department for Employment and Learning.

The Department for Employment and Learning's Employment Service entered into an agreement with AdvantageNI that provides the Boost Programme with access to rural Jobs & Benefits Offices and Jobcentres in order to promote the Boost Programme as an addition to the range of mainstream support available to help young people find work.

Northern Regional College: Coleraine Campus

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what representations have been made from users and members of the public on the suitability and condition of the building at the Northern Regional College, Coleraine Campus, in the last three years.

(AQW 23863/11-15)

Dr Farry: No representations have been made from users or members of the public on the suitability and condition of the building at the Northern Regional College, Coleraine Campus, in the last three years.

Further Education Colleges: Apprenticeships

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the steps that his Department is taking to monitor and ensure that students completing apprenticeships through Further Education

Colleges, are provided with placements that will equip them with the skills needed to achieve the relevant qualification.

(AQW 23893/11-15)

Dr Farry: The ApprenticeshipsNI Programme is an employment based programme, open to those that have reached school leaving age, who are entering or are already in employment, and contracted to work a minimum of 21 hours per week.

As apprentices are employed there is no separate requirement for work placements.

Work placements form part of the Programme Led Apprenticeship Programme. An important aspect of this programme is that participants have the opportunity to work towards the relevant NVQ element of the apprenticeship framework through an employer placement which complements and builds on the occupational skills acquired in directed training and simulated working environment.

Programme Led Apprenticeships Operational Guidelines are explicit about what is expected of all Suppliers and participants in terms of programme content and procedures (including work placements).

The Department's Quality and Performance Branch monitors all contracted Training Suppliers, including Further Education Colleges, to ensure compliance with all of the Operational Guidelines requirements.

In cases where any non compliance has been identified the Training Supplier will be cautioned and Quality and Performance Branch will continue to monitor the Supplier on an ongoing basis to ensure that there is no repetition of the practices involved.

Continual failure by Suppliers to source placements to equip learners with the skills required could result in the Supplier losing this service from their contract.

Funded Postgraduate Places in Economically Relevant Subjects

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 23006/11-15, whether the amount of funding matches the increased number of postgraduate places and courses.
(AQW 23901/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am fully committed to doubling the number of postgraduate courses my Department funds to 1,000 places by 2020, as contained in the Higher Education Strategy.

On 6 December 2012, I announced that I have already secured additional new funding for 300 of these places through the Jobs and Economy Initiative and through the Higher Education Strategy. This funding will be used to increase the number of postgraduate places from 495 to 795 by 2015/16.

Guidelines for Programme Led Apprenticeships

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the guidelines for Programme Led Apprenticeships, in particular (i) 4.4 Interrupted Training; and (ii) 4.6 Sickness, in that they discriminate against people with sickness but allow for persons with custodial sentences or who are pregnant to continue their training at a later stage.

(AQW 24015/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Programme Led Apprenticeships Operational Guidelines are explicit about what is expected of all Suppliers and participants in terms of programme content and procedures.

An Interruption to Training is used to protect the balance of training time where a period of training is interrupted due to pregnancy, custodial sentence, or care order. This facility ensures that the participant can re-enter Programme-Led Apprenticeships, following an enforced interruption, and continue to receive the balance of training time remaining (even if they are over 18 years old).

Any sickness absence related to a participant's disability and evidenced by the participant's GP must be disregarded when aggregating a participant's sick record. However, participants should be withdrawn from training at the end of six weeks continuous absence to safe guard against reducing further the

balance of training due and affect the participant's ability to complete the relevant components of Programme-Led Apprenticeships.

In circumstances where a participant has been withdrawn from training because of extended sickness, they are also given the opportunity to return to training when they have recovered and continue to receive the balance of training time remaining (even if they are over 18 years old).

The Guidelines also state that suspected abuse of self-certification arrangements must be investigated and, if necessary, the disciplinary procedures as outlined in the guidance may be invoked.

I am satisfied that my Department aims to ensure fair and inclusive delivery of all its programmes including Programme Led Apprenticeships.

Programme Led Apprenticeships

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the policy used by training providers when people on Programme Led Apprenticeships have reached their allowance of fifteen days absence due to sickness but remain unwell and have an unfit for work certificate from their GP.

(AQW 24017/11-15)

Dr Farry: The policy as set out in the Programme-Led Apprenticeship Guidelines, as it relates to the above question, is as follows;

“Where a participant has been continuously absent for three weeks, the participant must be withdrawn from Programme-Led Apprenticeships. However, where a participant has been continuously absent for three weeks, a fourth week may be approved and EMA paid, provided it is clear that the participant will return to training the following week. Should the participant not return, the participant must be withdrawn from Programme-Led Apprenticeships.” Para. 4.6 (iv)and;

“In circumstances where a participant has been withdrawn from training because of extended sickness, the young person must be given the opportunity to return to training when they have recovered. The Supplier must complete PLA 8 and forward to the mailbox of their local Careers Office, prior to re-entry, in order for a Training Credit to be issued for the balance of time, even if over 18 years of age (i.e. the period from the participant's start date, less the period for which the participant has received payment of EMA prior to withdrawal).”. Para 4.6 (v)

The reason for withdrawal from training in the above circumstances is to protect the participant's balance of training.

All Training Suppliers are issued with copies of the Operational Guidelines and any subsequent memos which may be issued from time to time. I hope that the above information clarifies the position in relation to the question that you have raised.

Study of the Teacher Education Infrastructure in Northern Ireland

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 23551/11-15, whether the two companies that submitted proposals for the second tender had been approached by a member of staff from his Department to do so.

(AQW 24095/11-15)

Dr Farry: No member of staff from my Department approached any company in relation to the second tender for stage one of the Study of the Teacher Education Infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Indigenous Business

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she plans to work with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to develop indigenous business.

(AQW 22535/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Indigenous businesses in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland both face similar challenges relating to the increasing pace and intensity of global competition. In such an intense environment, every source of competitive advantage must be considered and exploited. To this end, officials from my Department and Invest Northern Ireland continue to meet with their Irish counterparts on a formal basis through North South Inter-Agency Group. The DETI Permanent Secretary, Invest NI Chief Executive and the Secretary General of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation attend these meetings, as do senior officials from InterTrade Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. Meeting agendas cover a wide range of economic development related issues ensuring that any opportunities for mutually beneficial activity and engagement are explored in full. One such example of where this approach has been very successful has been in the implementation of the Innovation Voucher Scheme on an all-island basis.

Investment Conference, Autumn 2013

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 22468/11-14, to detail (i) the date of each discussion; (ii) who was in attendance at each; (iii) the outcome of each discussion; and (iv) the date on which she first raised the matter of the investment conference planned for Autumn 2013.

(AQW 22752/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Discussions about a possible investment conference are continuing and an announcement will be made in due course. Until then there is nothing I can usefully add to my previous answer.

Businesses Operating as a Result of Foreign Direct Investment

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to provide a list of all businesses that are operating in as a result of Foreign Direct Investment in the last three years, and to plot these businesses on a regional map, colour coding each business according to its sector.

(AQW 23103/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During the period 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2013, Invest NI offered support to 235 externally-owned businesses to establish and/or further develop their business within Northern Ireland.

The names of 11 businesses have been withheld as they are exempt under Freedom of Information legislation (Section 22 [1]). Under this legislation Invest NI is exempt from disclosing information on projects planned to be publicly announced at some future date (whether determined or not) subject to a public interest test.

Therefore, the list in Table 1 comprises 224 businesses, which have been presented in alphabetical order.

**TABLE 1:
EXTERNALLY-OWNED BUSINESSES OFFERED SUPPORT BY INVEST NI (2010-11 TO 2012-13)**

Name

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ■ A B P Newry | ■ Aepona Limited |
| ■ ABF Grain Products Limited | ■ Alclarus Ltd |
| ■ Acorn Wood Mouldings Limited | ■ All Metal Services Limited |
| ■ ADS Group Limited | ■ Allen & Overy LLP |

-
- Allstate Northern Ireland Limited
 - Amt-Sybex (NI) Limited
 - Andor Technology Plc
 - Anglo Beef Processing
 - Aromet Group Limited
 - Assa Abloy Limited
 - Atlantic Marine Services
 - Audio Processing Technology Limited
 - Augentius Fund Administration LLP
 - Aura Healthcare Limited
 - AVX Limited
 - Awayonbiz Limited
 - AXA Insurance Limited
 - Axiom Global Limited
 - B & W Software Enterprises Limited
 - B/E Aerospace (UK) Limited
 - Barclays Bank PLC
 - Belfast City Airport Limited
 - Biancamed (UK) Limited
 - Brenntag UK Limited
 - Bridgedale Outdoor Limited
 - Broadsoft International, Inc.
 - Bulrush Horticulture Limited
 - Cambridge Silicon Radio Ltd
 - CampaignFlo Ltd
 - Canyon Europe Limited
 - Capita Managed IT Solutions Limited
 - Castle Hume Leisure Limited
 - Caterpillar (NI) Limited
 - CEI Collins Engineers Limited
 - Celerion GB Limited
 - Centro, Inc.
 - Century TV (NI) Ltd
 - Chesapeake Belfast Limited
 - Ciena Limited
 - CIS Oncology Limited
 - Citibank International PLC
 - CME Technology and Support Services Limited
 - Colorite Europe Limited
 - Comtek Network Systems (UK) Limited
 - Concentrix Technologies Limited
 - Controlled Electronic Management Systems Limited
 - Cooked Meat Solutions Ltd
 - Copeland Limited
 - Corus Service Centre Limited
 - Cowen International Limited
 - Crane Stockham Valve Limited
 - Creation Consumer Finance Limited
 - Crescent Diagnostics Ltd
 - Cross Refrigeration (N.I.) Limited
 - Crossbows Optical Limited
 - CVS Caremark NI IT Operations Center Ltd.
 - CyberSource Corporation
 - D&M Audiovisual Ltd
 - Dairy Produce Packers Limited
 - Datactics Limited
 - Deloitte LLP
 - Delwyn Enterprises Limited
 - Derryadd Pallets Ltd
 - DHL Global Forwarding (UK) Limited
 - Diageo Global Supply IBC Limited
 - DLLNI Limited
 - Dow Chemical Company Limited
 - Du Pont (U.K.) Industrial Limited
 - Edina Manufacturing Limited
 - Electro Automation (N.I.) Limited
 - EMC Information Systems International
 - Entropic Communications Inc.
 - Equiniti ICS Limited
 - European Space Propulsion Limited
 - Eurotrack Systems Limited
 - ExamTime Limited
 - Fabplus Limited
 - Fidessa PLC
 - Firstsource Solutions UK Limited
 - Food Investments Limited
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- Forsythe Pendleton Jones LTD.
 - Forth & Foyle (Erection Services) Limited
 - Fugro-BKS Limited
 - Fujitsu Telecommunications Europe Limited
 - Gaelectric Developments Limited
 - Gallaher Ltd
 - Glanbia Cheese Limited
 - Glen Electric Limited
 - Global Trust Certification (UK)
 - Golden Cow Dairies Limited
 - Good4UFood and Drink Co. Limited
 - Goudsmit Magnetics (UK) Ltd
 - Harland and Wolff Heavy Industries Limited
 - HCL BPO Services (NI) Limited
 - Heartsine Technologies Limited
 - Herbert Smith Freehills LLP
 - Heritage Administration Services Limited
 - Hilton UK Hotels Limited
 - Homeloan Management Limited
 - Howden UK Limited
 - Huhtamaki (Lurgan) Limited
 - Icemos Technology Limited
 - Impact Ireland (Metals N.I.) Limited
 - Inlifesize Ltd
 - Integrc UK Ltd
 - Interface Europe Ltd
 - International House Belfast Limited
 - International Synergies Limited
 - Intune Networks Limited
 - IP Watch T/A Keepatabonit Limited
 - Irish Manufacturing Services Limited
 - Jakaya Limited
 - Jam Media (Northern Ireland) Limited
 - Jordan Plastics Limited
 - JP Corry (NI) Limited
 - JSSC
 - Jurys Inns
 - Justis Publishing Limited
 - Kallsafe Limited
 - Kana Software Limited
 - Karro Food Limited
 - Kelsius Limited
 - Kerry Foods Enniskillen
 - KERRY GROUP PLC
 - Kestrel Thermo-Plastics Limited
 - Kilkeel Seafoods Limited
 - Kingspan Environmental Limited
 - Kingspan Renewables Limited
 - Kofax Northern Ireland Limited
 - L.E. Pritchitt & Company Limited
 - Lagan Technologies Limited
 - LBM Direct Marketing Limited
 - Lektronix (Ireland) Limited
 - Liberty Information Technology Limited
 - Lockton Companies LLP
 - M/A-COM Technology Solutions (UK) Limited
 - Mabbett & Associates Limited
 - Magdalene Limited
 - Masters Choice Limited
 - Mediasmiths International Limited
 - Mediclim Europe Ltd
 - Mercer Limited
 - Merchant Warehouse (NI) LTD
 - Mercury Engineering Ltd
 - Micro Focus Limited
 - MITIE Security Limited
 - Montupet (U.K.) Limited
 - Morson Projects Limited
 - Moy Park Limited
 - Mulmuf (Northern Ireland) Limited
 - N.L. Rubber Limited
 - Nacco Materials Handling Limited
 - NC. UK Services Limited
 - New Breed Logistics, Inc
 - Nicobrand Limited
 - Northstone (NI) Limited
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- Nutech Renewables Limited
- NYSE Technologies Development Ltd
- Obelisk Networks (UK) Limited
- Olenick Global Ltd
- One Stop Data Limited
- Openwave Systems Limited
- Oracle ATG
- Organic Fertilisers Ltd
- Oxford Consulting (N.I.) Limited
- Pace PLC
- Parity Digital Solutions Limited
- Pharmalink Consulting Operations Ltd
- Polaris Software Lab Limited
- Premier Foods Group Limited
- PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
- Project Zebra Limited
- Ready Egg Products Limited
- Realtime Associates Limited
- Reduction Plastics Ltd
- Regal Processors Limited
- Research for Good Inc
- RFD Beaufort Limited
- Rigney Dolphin Limited
- RIIS LLC
- RLA Group Limited
- RLC (UK) Limited
- ROC Recycling Solutions (N.I.) Limited
- Ross Boyd Limited
- Ryobi Aluminium Casting (UK) Limited
- Sandvik Construction Mobile Crushers and Screens Limited
- Sanheath Limited
- Schiedel Chimney Systems Ltd
- Schlumberger Oilfield UK Plc
- Schrader Electronics Limited
- Seagate Technology (Ireland)
- Seagoe Technologies Limited
- Short Brothers PLC
- Siansplan Limited
- SiSaf Ltd
- Sloane Helicopters (Sales) Limited
- Smurfit Kappa UK Ltd
- Softedge Systems (NI) Limited
- Springvale EPS Limited
- SQS Group Limited
- SSE Renewables
- Tayto Group Limited
- Tennants Textile Colours Limited
- Tern Television Productions Limited
- Tesab Engineering Limited
- Thales Air Defence Limited
- The Belleek Pottery, Limited
- The Old Bushmills Distillery Company Limited
- The Paul Hogarth Company Limited
- Thomond Underwriting Limited
- Thyssenkrupp Aerospace UK Ltd
- TMC Dairies (N.I.) Limited
- Vector Environmental Services Limited
- Venn Life Sciences UK Limited
- Version 1 Software Limited
- WANdisco International Ltd
- Webtech (N.I.) Limited
- Western Brand Poultry Products (NI) Ltd
- WFS Technologies Limited
- Zenith Hygiene Systems Limited

A map showing the locations of these businesses, colour-coded according to its sector, has been placed in the library.

Craigavon Borough Council

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 1338/11, (i) what monies have been recouped from Craigavon Borough Council; (ii) when the money was recouped; and (iii) the detail the reasons for any outstanding amount.

(AQW 23566/11-15)

Mrs Foster: At this stage no monies have been recouped from Craigavon Borough Council. The matter is not yet resolved but the Department and Craigavon Borough Council continue to work together to resolve the issue.

InvestNI: Economies of Agglomeration

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether InvestNI considers economies of agglomeration when seeking to attract foreign direct investment.

(AQW 23577/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is aware of the potential pull and benefits that can be generated by economies of agglomeration. Invest NI's overseas sales network initially sells Northern Ireland as an attractive FDI location by highlighting existing investors and sectoral clusters already operating in Northern Ireland.

As part of a potential investor's visit programme Invest NI aims to include meetings with existing international investors within the same sector across the locations the company is interested in. In doing so these visit programmes provide potential investors with an opportunity to hear first hand testimony of experiences of doing business in Northern Ireland, which reinforces the Northern Ireland proposition.

It is important to clarify that location decisions for inward investment visits must clearly showcase Northern Ireland's capability to meet the company's needs. Potential investors will focus on the availability of skilled labour, suitable property and infrastructure requirements, along with existing clusters of companies in their business sector. Areas that cannot demonstrate this are unlikely to be the focus of inward investment visits and further inward investment.

Tourism Priorities for Action: Foyle Cup

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she plans to include the Foyle Cup as one of the ten major events to be supported through Tourism Priorities for Action.

(AQW 23628/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has supported the Foyle Cup this year and in previous years through the National Tourism Events Fund with total assistance provided over the last 2 years of £30,000. The Northern Ireland Executive provided £40,000 in financial assistance for the 2011 event.

DETI is in the process of developing an Events Plan for 2014 – 2020 which will consider how best to support events in Northern Ireland and how to grow our events industry.

I understand that no support is currently being offered from either Sport NI or the Irish Football Association, even though the event provides the opportunity for young local players from Northern Ireland to play against international teams.

It is my view that Sport NI could adopt a more proactive approach in promoting and assisting sporting events such as the Foyle Cup.

Jobs Fund: Tourism Sector Jobs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she will ensure that there will be an increase in the number of tourism related jobs created via the Jobs Fund.

(AQW 23633/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Jobs Fund supports employment creation projects from across the business base and across many sectors and industries including tourism.

Invest NI will continue to assess all funding applications on a case by case basis and will structure its support to provide the optimal package that is most appropriate to the business' needs, which delivers maximum economic benefit for Northern Ireland and best value for money for the public purse. For tourism accommodation projects support may be best delivered through Invest NI's Tourism Development Scheme. Invest NI will ensure that the Jobs Fund is utilized to provide support where appropriate.

Jobs Fund: Tourism Sector Jobs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why more jobs have not been created in the tourism sector via the Jobs Fund.

(AQW 23634/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's remit includes the provision of financial support towards tourism accommodation projects which typically comprise the construction of new or expansion of existing accommodation facilities. Whilst there may be job creation associated with these projects, these tend to be capital intensive and Invest NI's Tourism Development Scheme is the most effective and therefore most frequently used scheme to support these projects.

The Jobs Fund has been specifically designed as a direct response to the global economic downturn in order to tackle our high unemployment by creating new jobs and helping to rebuild our local economy.

The Jobs Fund supports employment creation projects from across the business base and across many sectors and industries including tourism.

The Jobs Fund continues to be widely promoted and applications from all sectors, including those with a tourism focus will continue to be considered for support as and when these are received. Invest NI will continue to assess all applications on a case by case basis and will structure its support to provide the optimal package that is most appropriate to the business' needs and which delivers maximum economic benefit for Northern Ireland and best value for money for the public purse.

Dignity at Work Cases

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many Dignity at Work cases have been lodged in his Department in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) core department; and (ii) non-departmental public body; and how many of these cases have been resolved.

(AQW 23646/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

DIGNITY AT WORK CASES LODGED IN DETI & NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODY (NDPB) IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Department/ NDPB		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
DETI	No. of Cases Lodged			1	2	
HSENI (NDPB)	No. of Cases Lodged					1

Department/ NDPB		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
NITB (NDPB)	No. of Cases Lodged					1
InvestNI (NDPB)	No. of Cases Lodged	1		3	1	4
GCCNI (NDPB)	No. of Cases Lodged					

All cases have been resolved apart from one received in the 2012/13 year which is currently ongoing.

Businesses Meeting Energy Costs

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance her Department can provide to businesses to help meet their energy costs.

(AQW 23666/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI provides a range of support for businesses to assist with the management of energy costs and for the deployment of renewable energy to help reduce operating costs. This support includes technical advice, free energy efficiency audits, action plans and project management support to help businesses to implement the most cost effective cost saving opportunities.

Invest NI also provides funding for the Energy Efficiency Loan Fund in Northern Ireland which is managed and delivered by Carbon Trust. The Loan Fund offers interest-free loans from £3,000 - £400,000 to Northern Ireland businesses to help them install more energy efficient equipment.

Invest NI and Manufacturing NI have recently launched a guide to encourage companies to improve energy efficiency and consider adopting renewable energy technologies. 'Energy Independence' has been developed by Manufacturing NI and Carbon Trust with funding from Invest NI to provide advice and information on reducing the cost of energy consumption through on-site generation of electricity or heat from renewable sources.

Invest NI will consider providing Selective Financial Assistance to Large Energy Users that bring forward proposals for capital expenditure on equipment that will make a significant impact on energy efficiency.

In addition my Department incentivises Renewable electricity through the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) which provides a revenue stream for electricity generated over a 20 year period in the form of Renewables Obligation Certificates (ROCs). A wide range of technologies are supported through this incentive mechanism.

A Renewable Heat Incentive is also in place for non-domestic installations which provides a tariff payment based on the size and type of technology over a 20 year period. Technologies supported include solar thermal, biomass boilers and ground source heat pumps.

Giro d'Italia 2014

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline what discussions her Department has had to date with the organisers of the Giro d'Italia 2014 regarding the inclusion of the Mourne area in the route.

(AQW 23701/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the reply I gave to Priority AQW 23022/11-15.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has established a group to engage with local authorities. This group met for the first time on 11 April 2013 with a number of local authorities involved.

This local authority group will meet again once the route is decided and will have a key role in delivering on the range of opportunities that the event will provide locally.

Giro d'Italia 2014

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 23022/11-15, whether local authorities from the Mourne area participated in the group established by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to help them harness the potential benefits from the Giro d'Italia 2014.

(AQW 23702/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I can confirm that Down District Council and Newry & Mourne District Council participated.

Down District Council: Foreign Direct Investment Smartphone Application

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 22706/11-15, to detail (i) what engagement her Department has had to date with Down District Council in regard to the Foreign Direct Investment smartphone application; and (ii) whether Down District Council submitted a proposition for the Down area.

(AQW 23704/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is committed to helping Councils develop international investment propositions for their areas. With this in mind, Invest NI has consulted with Down District Council on being included in a joint Invest NI/Council initiative that will provide for development of a mobile application to promote Council areas in external markets. The proposed project is being considered for funding under the Local Economic Development measure of the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland.

Down District Council has advised that it wishes to be included in this joint initiative and Invest NI will advise Councils of the outcome of the funding decision which is due in the coming weeks.

The above proposal includes provision for funding towards the development of appropriate content for the mobile application. Councils may therefore develop an appropriate proposition for their area, input the information to the application and update as required.

Small Business Loan Fund Scheme

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many businesses have availed of the Small Business Loan Fund scheme since its launch.

(AQW 23708/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since the launch of the Small Business Loan Fund on the 11 February 2013, there have been 473 enquiries to the fund managers, 67 applications have been received and 9 loans have been approved as at 31st May 2013.

Bilingual Signage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what meetings the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has had with groups which are supportive of bilingual tourism signage and to outline what concerns were raised.

(AQW 23714/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The detailed information sought is not readily available and may only be obtained at disproportionate cost to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Bilingual Signage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the evidence that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has that bilingual signage would be subject to possible defacing as stated in its response to the Department for Regional Development consultation on road signage.

(AQW 23715/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board's comments were made in reference to content in the DRD Consultation documents regarding on-going difficulties with signage defacing where political sensitivities exist.

Strategic Energy Assessment

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the Strategic Energy Assessment that was completed when the 40 per cent of energy to come from renewable sources target was set.

(AQW 23729/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am not aware of the term Strategic Energy Assessment but I am assuming that the member is referring to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

When the 40% target for renewable electricity was set, SEAs of both the OffShore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan (ORESAP) and the Onshore Renewable Electricity Strategic Action Plan (OREAP) were underway. The ORESAP SEA was commissioned in 2008 and the OREAP SEA was commissioned in 2009. All documents associated with each SEA can be viewed at www.offshoreenergyni.co.uk and www.onshorerenewablesni.co.uk.

Bilingual Signage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline how the Northern Ireland Tourist Board sought evidence or commissioned research to establish the possible economic and tourism value of bilingual tourism signage.

(AQW 23755/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has not commissioned research to establish the possible economic and tourism value of bilingual tourism signage.

Place Names in Irish

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline how the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and her Department are encouraging the use of place names in Irish.

(AQW 23756/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is not the role of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board or the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to encourage the use of place names in Irish.

Tourism Signage Policy

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has screened its tourism signage policy for equality, and if not, when it plans to do so.

(AQW 23757/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Tourist Signing in Northern Ireland Policy (16 April 2004) was jointly agreed between Roads Service and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

The Policy was equality screened by Roads Service.

Bilingual Signage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline why a departmental direction was issued to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board on 13 September 2012 proposing that it does not formalise a policy on bilingual tourism signage.

(AQW 23758/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A Departmental direction was not issued to NITB on this matter.

InvestNI: Financial Support

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of businesses in North Down that have benefited from financial support from InvestNI, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 23786/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In North Down, Invest NI offered financial support to 37 businesses in 2010-11, 67 in 2011-12 and 73 in 2012-13. It should be noted that not all assisted businesses receive financial support. A further 12 businesses were offered support and guidance through Invest NI's various business development schemes during the 3 year period.

In addition, 112 local start up businesses in 2010-11, 80 in 2011-12 and 41 in 2012-13 were offered advice and guidance through business start support.

Tourism Signage Policy

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline what Ministerial direction was given to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board on 11 January 2011 in relation to tourism signage.
(AQW 23808/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A Ministerial Direction was not given to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board on this issue.

Consultation on Future Tourist Accommodation Demand

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 19984/11-15, to detail (i) when she expects the consultation on future tourist accommodation demand to commence; (ii) whether the consultation will be carried out by external consultants, and if so, if these been tendered; (iii) if the Oxford Economics research on Forecasting Tourism Accommodation Demand will form part of the consultation process; and (iv) why the results of this research would not be made available to other Departments to assist in the delivery of strategic priorities.
(AQW 23812/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI intends to carry out a consultation exercise later this year, which will gather views to help inform future accommodation policy.

It is anticipated that evidence from a wide range of sources, including research undertaken by Oxford Economics, will form the consultation process.

The Oxford Economics' research was commissioned for internal use only, with a view to contributing to the evidence base for the development of future accommodation policy which will, in turn, inform other relevant Departments and Bodies.

Wind Turbines: Third Party Claims

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether liability for third party claims caused by wind turbines will be against the landowner or the wind turbine operator .
(AQW 23822/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The issue of liability insurance is a matter between the landowner and the turbine operator, who, in some cases, will be one and the same. My Department has no role in this process. However, it is my understanding that it is common practice for the wind turbine operator to take responsibility for all aspects of insurance, including public liability.

Operation of Wind Turbines

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she will take to address health and safety issues associated with the operation of wind turbines including (i) ice throw;

(ii) turbine collapse; (iii) turbine fires; (iv) blade fragmentation; and (v) risks to hill walkers, farming personnel, livestock and birds.

(AQW 23825/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Ice throw, turbine collapse, turbine fires and blade fragmentation have all been known to occur on wind turbines used around the world and could potentially place hill walkers, farming personnel, livestock and birds at risk.

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (the body responsible for safety regulation in the wind turbine industry) believes that these risks are low for wind turbines sited in compliance with planning requirements and constructed, operated and maintained in accordance with British and European Standards and Industry guidance.

Consequently there are no plans for HSENI to take any actions over and above its general regulatory activity within the whole of the electrical supply industry.

Broadband Connection: Communities of Greencastle and Broughderg, County Tyrone

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department will deliver further progress in providing a broadband connection to the communities of Greencastle and Broughderg, County Tyrone, over the next twelve months.

(AQW 23912/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Broadband services are presently available to constituents in Broughderg and Greencastle and include options of a fixed-wireless broadband service of 10Mbps-100Mbps or a satellite broadband service of up to 20Mbps.

Looking forward, under DETI's Telecommunications Action Plan 2011-2015, a new Broadband Improvement Project has been initiated. This project aims to ensure that, by 2015, virtually all premises in Northern Ireland are able to avail of a broadband download speed of at least 2Mbps, and at least 90% of premises are provided with superfast broadband, with speeds in excess of 24Mbps.

The proposed intervention area is currently being assessed to comply with State Aid rules. A procurement process will commence shortly and it will be for the industry to respond with proposals on the roll out of services across Northern Ireland.

Online Retailing

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on action to commission market research on the short and long-term negative effects of on-line retailing on high street retailers.

(AQO 4251/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department is not undertaking any market research on the short and long-term negative effects of on-line retailing on high street retailers.

Department of the Environment

Minerals Applications and Minerals Enforcement Cases

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 14244/11-15 and AQW 20926/11-15, whether the review of minerals applications and Environmental Impact Assessment screening, carried out by Strategic Planning Division's Minerals Team and assisted by the Development Management Guidance Team, included reviews of recently approved minerals applications and minerals enforcement cases.

(AQW 22043/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): In my response to AQW 14244/11-15, I had indicated that there would be an immediate review of all current and recently approved minerals applications as well as a range of enforcement cases (minerals and unauthorised waste).

Southern Area Planning Office: Case Number R/2008/0164/CA

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment why no enforcement action was taken by the Southern Area Planning Office regarding case number R/2008/0164/CA.

(AQW 22334/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In July 2008, the Downpatrick Area Planning Office commenced an enforcement investigation into an alleged unauthorised building on lands at Drumlee Road, Kilcoo. The investigation was undertaken in response to complaints received at that time.

The investigation established that the building had been erected in 2 phases, the first in 2001 and the second (an extension) in 2004. I am advised by my officials that the first phase of the building became immune from enforcement action in 2005, 3 years before the Area Office received a complaint. The legal time frame for taking enforcement action in this case was 4 years – the 5 year period for the enforcement of planning control came into effect in December 2011.

As far as the extension is concerned, I am advised it became immune from enforcement action in 2008, before the findings of the enforcement investigation had been established. Enforcement action would not have been taken in respect of the extension, as its impact on public amenity – particularly in the context of the larger original building – was not considered to warrant such action.

Sprucefield Retail Development

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment when he will bring forward a paper to the Executive on the Retail Planning Policy related to the retail development status of Sprucefield.

(AQW 22532/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have lodged, in the Assembly Library, a copy of the full submission made by my Department to the now abandoned Planning Appeals Commission hearing on Sprucefield. This includes consideration of the Retail Strategy. It is an extensive, detailed document and it merits reading. The member may wish to study the papers which give a full picture of all the considerations which were relevant to this matter.

Members know, Executive business is confidential. However, in order to be helpful, I was asked by the Executive and provided information to the Executive in relation to retail policy advice provided to the now abandoned enquiry.

Sprucefield Retail Development

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment why he is yet to provide a substantive response to Lisburn City Council's correspondence relating to his statement of intention to the Planning Appeals Commission on the planning conditions associated with Sprucefield retail development.[R]

(AQW 22537/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have lodged a copy of the full submission by my Department to the now abandoned PAC hearing on Sprucefield (including advice on the retail element of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan) in the Assembly library. I believe it would inform discussion and fulfil the requirements of disclosure for others who made/were due to make submissions to the PAC hearing and who were also to publish their submissions. I remain convinced that the advice I provided was faithful to planning policy and the Regional Development Strategy (2035), informed by present economic and retail circumstances and the right approach for retail and all the town and city centres within 60 minutes driving distance of Sprucefield (including Lisburn City Centre).

I have also now written to the Council and their legal representatives. I believe the Council should consider the submission detailed above.

Employment for People with Special Needs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 21701/11-15, whether he will request that councils provide the exact figures for placements.

(AQW 22639/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department does not hold this information. As indicated in my response to AQW 22948/11-15, I am writing to all chief executives asking for information on council practices in this regard. I will respond substantively to this question as soon as it has been possible to collate the council responses.

Number of Registered Vehicles

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment to list the number of vehicles registered, broken down by the year of first registration.

(AQW 22949/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The latest licensed vehicles figures are detailed in Table 1 below.

VEHICLES LICENSED IN NORTHERN IRELAND AT 31 DECEMBER 2012, BY YEAR OF FIRST REGISTRATION

Year of First Registration	Vehicles Licensed
2012	95,343
2011	87,513
2010	88,409
2009	84,555
2008	86,381
2007	99,648
2006	87,347
2005	77,339
2004	69,991
2003	63,849
2002	56,302
2001	45,630
2000	33,986
1999	23,589
1998	15,535
1997	9,611
1996	6,032
1995	4,038
1994	2,686
1993	1,923
1992	1,250

Year of First Registration	Vehicles Licensed
1991	1,079
1990	1,043
1989	800
1988	731
1987	624
1986	664
1985	866
1984	747
1983	659
1982	559
Pre-1982	11,599
All Vehicles licensed at 31 December 2012	1,060,328

1 Excludes unlicensed vehicles and vehicles with a Statutory Off Road Notice in force.

This information was published as DOE Official Statistics on 23 May 2013, in the DVA Compendium of Key Statistics 2012/13. Figures were sourced from the DVA annual vehicle census at 31 December 2012.

Exempt Pre-1960 Historic Vehicles from MOT

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment what impact his decision to exempt pre-1960 historic vehicles from the MOT test will have on (i) insurance claims; and (ii) calls for the abolition of the MOT test for all vehicles.

(AQW 23154/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) My decision to exempt pre-1960 historic vehicles from the MOT test is unlikely to have any impact on insurance claims or insurance premiums.

The Association of British Insurers, in response to the Historic Vehicles MOT Review Consultation conducted by the Department for Transport in Britain, indicated that it would not expect an immediate impact on insurance premiums simply from a change in the MOT requirement of itself. Any change would depend, all other factors being equal, on whether insurers noticed any change in the claims experience of these vehicles. If this were noted, then ABI would expect to see premiums rise.

Historic car enthusiasts are well known for keeping their vehicles in excellent condition. Vehicles used on public roads are in any case required to comply with all relevant aspects of the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 and the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000, which include the requirement to maintain vehicles being used on the road in a roadworthy condition, with failure to do so being an offence. The periodic MOT test is an element, but only an element, in measures to ensure compliance by vehicle keepers with these statutory requirements.

I have provided access to owners of pre-1960 vehicles to an MOT test on a voluntary basis, should owners require this for any reason (which might include prior to a sale, for a cherished plate transfer, or for reasons connected with insurance requirements from particular insurers).

- (ii) European Directive 2009/40/EC on roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers included a provision permitting Member States to exclude from the scope of the Directive vehicles which are never, or hardly ever, used on public highways, including vehicles of historic interest which were manufactured before 1 January 1960 or which are temporarily withdrawn from circulation.

There are no plans to abolish the MOT test for other vehicles. The provisions for periodic testing of vehicles are set down in European Directives. As you will be aware from my answers to other Assembly Questions, the European Commission and European Parliament are minded to strengthen rather than relax test requirements, most recently through the proposed Roadworthiness Package, about which I and others (including the Assembly Environment Committee) have made strong representations where the proposals go beyond what I consider are required for road safety purposes.

Quarry and Aggregates Sites: Compliance Inspection Visits

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment to list the compliance inspection visits that the (i) Northern Ireland Environment Agency Water Management Unit; (ii) Planning Service; and (iii) Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate made to quarry and aggregates sites in (a) 2011; and (b) 2012.

(AQW 23159/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The issue of compliance visits and enforcement visits is intrinsically linked, therefore information on both aspects of the regulation of quarry and aggregate sites have been included below.

The Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate regulates emissions to air from quarries where crushing and screening of minerals is carried out. There are currently 143 such installations permitted under the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

In the compliance year 2011/12 a total of 264 mineral compliance assessments (inspections) were carried out and in the compliance year 2012/13 a total of 225 mineral compliance assessments (inspections) were carried out.

NIEA Water Management Unit (WMU) regulate such sites under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, it is an offence to discharge trade or sewage effluent to waterways or to water in underground strata without the consent of the DOE.

WMU administers a system of discharge consents which lay down conditions relating to the quality and quantity of effluent that may be discharged. Failure to comply with the conditions of a discharge consent is an offence under the Water Order and, if a discharge is non-compliant, appropriate action is taken by NIEA, depending on compliance history and/or the severity of the breach of consent and its effect on the environment.

Once a discharge consent has been issued, compliance assessment monitoring is normally carried out where the consent permits a maximum daily discharge of 5 cubic metres or more, or where the consent relates to significant site drainage discharges, such as those for the aggregate sector. This approach to sampling has been adopted to target resources in a cost effective way at those discharges which, because of their volume or composition, have the greatest pollution potential.

Compliance monitoring normally includes the routine collection of samples, or visual inspections, or both. All consent holders are obliged to ensure that the sample point for their discharge is maintained so that it is freely available and accessible to authorised officers of the Department at all times; and authorised officers of the Department are at all times allowed to readily and safely obtain a sample of the effluent, a measurement of the flow and images of the discharge or other data relative to the discharge.

These conditions are fundamental to the sampling and inspection programme as consent holders are not told in advance when sampling will take place.

Discharges from sites in the aggregate sector are monitored 4 times per year. There are currently 120 sites sampled in line with the conditions of their consent which equates to 480 compliance visits per year.

There are 124 deemed abstraction licences, for quarry sites, issued under the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

NIEA seeks to work co-operatively with industry to secure improved practice, but acknowledges that enforcement action will need to be taken in some cases to ensure compliance. Any enforcement action taken is in accordance with the NIEA Enforcement and Prosecution Policy for Environmental Protection. Under this policy, NIEA endeavours to be;

- consistent and impartial;
- proportionate in its actions; and
- transparent in its activities.

NIEA undertakes advisory visits where less significant breaches have occurred or where a site is in danger of non compliance. For more significant breaches a warning letter or formal notice can be issued. For persistent non compliance or for the most significant breaches an evidence file will be prepared with a view to taking a prosecution against the offender.

The Department of the Environment's (DOE) Planning Division, upon receiving a complaint regarding a breach of planning control opens a case to investigate. The site in each case is inspected to substantiate a breach. If a warning or other request is issued by the Department, the site may be inspected again for compliance with that request and in the event that a final warning is issued a further inspection may take place.

Should an Enforcement or other Notice be issued, several site inspections may take place to monitor compliance with that Notice. There are of course cases which dictate that more or less frequent inspections are carried out depending on the impacts of the breach and as such visits can in cases be carried out daily for up to 28 days.

As a minimum each case receives one inspection and an average of 3 visits may be expected for the majority of cases.

Given the large number of sites, regulated under a number of regulatory regimes, and the proactive and informal nature of advisory visits, the majority of which help the site stay or return to compliance, in addition to formal visits related to more robust enforcement action and sites visits in relation to reports of alleged pollution incidents, received through NIEA's pollution hotline, it would not be feasible to compile a composite list of all such visits. However detailed information on specific sites can be provided upon request.

Quarry and Aggregates Sites: Enforcement Visits

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment to list the enforcement visits that the (i) Northern Ireland Environment Agency Water Management Unit; (ii) Planning Service; and (iii) Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate made to quarry and aggregates sites in (a) 2011; and (b) 2012.
(AQW 23161/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The issue of compliance visits and enforcement visits is intrinsically linked, therefore information on both aspects of the regulation of quarry and aggregate sites have been included below.

The Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate regulates emissions to air from quarries where crushing and screening of minerals is carried out. There are currently 143 such installations permitted under the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

In the compliance year 2011/12 a total of 264 mineral compliance assessments (inspections) were carried out and in the compliance year 2012/13 a total of 225 mineral compliance assessments (inspections) were carried out.

NIEA Water Management Unit (WMU) regulate such sites under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, it is an offence to discharge trade or sewage effluent to waterways or to water in underground strata without the consent of the DOE.

WMU administers a system of discharge consents which lay down conditions relating to the quality and quantity of effluent that may be discharged. Failure to comply with the conditions of a discharge consent is an offence under the Water Order and, if a discharge is non-compliant, appropriate action is taken by NIEA, depending on compliance history and/or the severity of the breach of consent and its effect on the environment.

Once a discharge consent has been issued, compliance assessment monitoring is normally carried out where the consent permits a maximum daily discharge of 5 cubic metres or more, or where the consent relates to significant site drainage discharges, such as those for the aggregate sector. This approach to sampling has been adopted to target resources in a cost effective way at those discharges which, because of their volume or composition, have the greatest pollution potential.

Compliance monitoring normally includes the routine collection of samples, or visual inspections, or both. All consent holders are obliged to ensure that the sample point for their discharge is maintained so that it is freely available and accessible to authorised officers of the Department at all times; and authorised officers of the Department are at all times allowed to readily and safely obtain a sample of the effluent, a measurement of the flow and images of the discharge or other data relative to the discharge.

These conditions are fundamental to the sampling and inspection programme as consent holders are not told in advance when sampling will take place.

Discharges from sites in the aggregate sector are monitored 4 times per year. There are currently 120 sites sampled in line with the conditions of their consent which equates to 480 compliance visits per year.

There are 124 deemed abstraction licences, for quarry sites, issued under the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

NIEA seeks to work co-operatively with industry to secure improved practice, but acknowledges that enforcement action will need to be taken in some cases to ensure compliance. Any enforcement action taken is in accordance with the NIEA Enforcement and Prosecution Policy for Environmental Protection. Under this policy, NIEA endeavours to be;

- consistent and impartial;
- proportionate in its actions; and
- transparent in its activities.

NIEA undertakes advisory visits where less significant breaches have occurred or where a site is in danger of non compliance. For more significant breaches a warning letter or formal notice can be issued. For persistent non compliance or for the most significant breaches an evidence file will be prepared with a view to taking a prosecution against the offender.

The Department of the Environment's (DOE) Planning Division, upon receiving a complaint regarding a breach of planning control opens a case to investigate. The site in each case is inspected to substantiate a breach. If a warning or other request is issued by the Department, the site may be inspected again for compliance with that request and in the event that a final warning is issued a further inspection may take place.

Should an Enforcement or other Notice be issued, several site inspections may take place to monitor compliance with that Notice. There are of course cases which dictate that more or less frequent inspections are carried out depending on the impacts of the breach and as such visits can in cases be carried out daily for up to 28 days.

As a minimum each case receives one inspection and an average of 3 visits may be expected for the majority of cases.

Given the large number of sites, regulated under a number of regulatory regimes, and the proactive and informal nature of advisory visits, the majority of which help the site stay or return to compliance, in addition to formal visits related to more robust enforcement action and sites visits in relation to reports of alleged pollution incidents, received through NIEA's pollution hotline, it would not be feasible to compile a composite list of all such visits. However detailed information on specific sites can be provided upon request.

Reports of Unlicensed Vehicles

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment how many reports of unlicensed vehicles have been received by the Driver Vehicle Agency by (i) telephone; and (ii) its online reporting facility, in each of the last twelve months.

(AQW 23276/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) accepts reports of unlicensed vehicles from members of the public by post, telephone or online, however, the majority are received via the online reporting facility.

In the period 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2013, DVA received 1,033 reports from members of the public for Northern Ireland registered vehicles. Of these 1,033 reports, 410 vehicles were found to be currently licensed and no further action was required.

DVA records all such reports on the computer system as 'Public Detections' and cannot provide a further breakdown according to method of receipt.

The table below provides overall totals for each of the last twelve months.

Month	Volume
May 2012	68
June 2012	99
July 2012	118
August 2012	120
September 2012	120
October 2012	73
November 2012	53
December 2012	43
January 2013	110
February 2013	66
March 2013	86
April 2013	77
Total	1,033

Hydro-Electric Scheme Applications

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of the Environment how many hydro-electric scheme applications have been (i) approved; and (ii) refused to date; and how many are in the planning system.

(AQW 23408/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department welcomes the contribution that renewable projects make to the reduction of carbon emissions and acknowledges the importance of processing these applications in a consistent and timely manner. As Minister I am fully supportive of renewable energy and believe firmly in the contribution that renewables make to the economy.

Table 1 below provides a breakdown by LGD of those applications granted or refused permission over the last 9 years.

TABLE 1 – DECISIONS ISSUED FOR HYDROELECTRIC SCHEMES BY LGD UP TO 31 MARCH 2013*

		2003/ 2004	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	Total
Antrim	Permission Granted	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ards	Permission Granted	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armagh	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballymena	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast	Permission Granted	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

		2003/ 2004	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	Total
Coleraine	Permission Granted	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	7
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cookstown	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Derry	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Down	Permission Granted	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dungannon And South Tyrone	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fermanagh	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

		2003/ 2004	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	Total
Larne	Permission Granted	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	4
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	4	7
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Magherafelt	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moyle	Permission Granted	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry And Mourne	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Permission Refused	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Newtownabbey	Permission Granted	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
	Permission Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	2003/ 2004	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	Total
Omagh	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strabane	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	3	4	1	6	5	9	17	47
	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2

*Please note up to 31st March 2013 is our latest published renewable energy information, which is published on the internet.

Across DOE Planning since 2003/04, 47 applications have been granted, 2 have been refused and 7 have been withdrawn. In addition, there are currently 35 applications for hydroelectric schemes currently pending with the Department. A breakdown by LGD is shown in Table 2 below;

TABLE 2 – APPLICATIONS PENDING AS AT 31ST MARCH 2013

	Total
Antrim	2
Ballymoney	2
Banbridge	2
Coleraine	1
Cookstown	1
Craigavon	1
Derry	5
Larne	1
Limavady	6
Magherafelt	3
Moyle	4
Newry And Mourne	1
Newtownabbey	1
Omagh	1
Strabane	4
Total	35

I will continue to monitor performance within each area office to ensure that applications are processed in a timely manner.

PPS 21: Change to CTY 10

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment whether, since the publication of PPS 21 in its current form, he has given instructions to Planning Service Divisional offices which change the application of CTY 10, so that in situations where the applicant land owner rents his land out, planning permission will only be granted under the tenant's farm business ID and not the land owner's.

(AQW 23412/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Policy CTY10 of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21 'Sustainable Development in Countryside' states that permission will be granted for a dwelling house on a farm where all of the following criteria are met: the farm business is currently active and has been established for at least 6 years; no dwellings or development opportunities out-with settlements limits have been sold off from the farm holding within 10 years from the date of the application; and the new building is visually linked or sited to cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm.

I can advise that I have not given any instruction to planning staff indicating that planning permission will only be granted under the tenant's farm business ID and not the land owner's.

An applicant who may lease out some or all of his land, but who is nonetheless responsible for maintaining it in good agricultural and environmental condition, can still benefit from a dwelling under CTY10, subject to being able to satisfy the other requirements of the policy.

A key issue to be considered under CTY10 is whether there is an active and established business for 6 years. Any subsequent planning permission would be tied to the business rather than the individual person and permission granted under this policy will only be forthcoming once every 10 years.

The Department is aware that there will be a range of different scenarios to consider under this policy in terms of full and part time farmers and those who let land in conacre. DOE Planning therefore take all relevant factors into account in order to arrive at a balanced decision based on the facts of each case.

Notwithstanding, you may be aware that PPS21 is subject to a rolling review into the operation of the policy in order to ensure both consistency and increased flexibility of decision-making in line with the content and substance of the existing policy and I intend to make a statement to the Assembly on the outcome of the review to date.

Ballymena Borough Council: Employees and Placements

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 22435/11-15 and given that Ballymena Borough Council has confirmed that it does employ and provide placements within these criteria, why it cannot provide a figure of their current employees and placements.

(AQW 23452/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Ballymena Borough Council has advised that two placements are currently filled.

The council further advises 12 members of staff would meet the recognised definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act.

I trust it will be reassuring to the Member to know I will be writing to all Chief Executives seeking an assurance that their council's employment policies comply fully with the relevant legislation.

Staff Who Have Become Disabled Whilst Employed

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, for each of the last five years, to detail the number of staff in each council that have become disabled whilst employed and have had reasonable adjustment made to assist their continued employment.

(AQW 23527/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Councils are independent employers and are thus bound by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) under which it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate on the grounds of disability. The DDA allows for reasonable adjustments by employers to ensure fair access for disabled people or to compensate for the disadvantage they experience as a result of their disability.

Councils are, in addition, bound by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which obliges councils to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without.

It is the responsibility and duty of councils to comply with all relevant legislation in regard to the employment of individuals and I will write to all council Chief Executives seeking the information you request and provide it to you when it has been collated.

Single Use Plastic Bag Levy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the monthly receipts from the single use bag levy.

(AQW 23533/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As the receipts from the Carrier Bag Levy are collected on a quarterly basis, the first payments from retailers to the Department are not due until July 2013.

The Department anticipates quarterly receipts of around £425,000 in 2013/14 and will publish the actual receipts when this information becomes available.

Single Use Plastic Bag Levy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to list the environmental projects or groups that have been designated for funding from receipts of the single use bag levy.

(AQW 23534/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I intend to use the net revenue generated from the Carrier Bag Levy to support communities, businesses, voluntary organisations, charities and schools in the delivery of local environmental programmes, particularly those that deliver social and economic benefits. These include:

- The creation of a new River Restoration Fund to allow local communities, angling groups and voluntary environmental organisations to run small projects which will improve local river water quality and ecological status and thereby contribute to implementing the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive;
- The creation of a new Sustainability Innovation Fund to support community groups, business and others who need financial support to implement initiatives which have the potential for innovation which can generate transformational environmental change;
- Increased grants from the Community Challenge Fund to deliver a range of practical, local environmental projects through a broad range of not-for-profit groups including; voluntary and community groups, schools, charities and environmental trusts;
- Increased grants from the Natural Heritage Fund to encourage the conservation and enhancement of key elements of the environment and its wildlife and provide facilities which help as wide a range of people as possible to enjoy and appreciate our natural heritage; and
- Increased grants available from the Rethink Waste Fund to promote waste prevention, reuse and recycling.

The first Carrier Bag Levy returns from retailers are due in July 2013. Once this information is received and collated, the Department will be able to establish a reliable estimate of the total net revenue for 2013/14 and allocate funding to programmes and projects on the basis of this estimate.

One Tier Taxi Licensing System

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment why the one tier taxi licensing system has restrictions on which taxis can use the Belfast taxi ranks, but permits any taxi to use a taxi rank outside Belfast.

(AQW 23540/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Single Tier Licensing will not introduce any new restrictions on the type of taxis which are able to sit at ranks in Belfast. Belfast Public Hire taxis (yellow plate) are the only vehicles which are currently permitted to stand at ranks in Belfast as they are the only vehicles which are tested as wheelchair accessible by the Driver and Vehicle Agency. This situation will not change after 1 September 2013.

There is currently no requirement for taxi vehicles licensed as public hire outside Belfast or private hire to be wheelchair accessible and any vehicle can use ranks outside Belfast. This is in line with the taxi reform programme which is implementing the Taxis Act 2008, which restricts the use of publicly-funded ranks in Belfast to wheelchair accessible vehicles, and will introduce the same restriction outside Belfast in 2016. This was determined to be necessary as part of ensuring a sufficient supply of wheelchair accessible vehicles within the taxi fleet. Work is currently underway to determine the specification for wheelchair accessible vehicles, and this will be subject to public consultation before being finalised.

Single Tier Taxi System: Single Coloured Taxi Plate

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment why a single coloured taxi plate, which would indicate that a level competitive framework exists for all taxis, will not be issued under the single tier taxi system.

(AQW 23541/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In September 2014, it is intended that all taxi plates will be attached to the taxi's roof sign. The minimum roof sign specification which will allow for this will be released later this year.

In the transition period prior to this, in order to minimise operator costs associated with the purchasing of new plates, there will be no need for taxis wishing to operate as 'Restricted Public Hire' and currently using a private hire (green) plate or a Public Hire outside Belfast (white) plate to apply to the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) for a change of plate. A new 'Restricted Public Hire' plate will be issued when the current licence plate expires. If a current green or white taxi plate is lost, accidentally defaced or destroyed, DVA will replace it with the same type of plate; only when the current licence and plate expires will a taxi be able to obtain a "Restricted Public Hire" licence and plate.

Private hire green plates will only be issued after 1 September 2013 to those operating contract services, such as limousines, wedding and funeral cars, and chauffeur services. These vehicles will not require a roof sign to obtain a PSV licence. Anyone wishing to remain as private hire and operate as a special occasion/contract vehicle without a roof sign will be able voluntarily to submit their external plates to DVA in exchange for a new private hire internal plate.

In the transition period, yellow plates will continue to be issued to those vehicles tested as wheelchair accessible and therefore able to sit at ranks in Belfast City Centre.

Single Tier Taxi System

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment why the proposals from his department on a single tier taxi system place the word 'restricted' on the majority of taxi plates that will be issued; and what consideration was given to any disadvantage that might ensue to taxi drivers.

(AQW 23542/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Single Tier Licensing will not introduce any new restrictions on non-wheelchair accessible public hire taxis. The only restriction which will apply is the current restriction from standing at ranks in Belfast City Centre. The current wording of "Public Hire Outside Belfast" has been amended to "Restricted Public Hire" reflecting the fact that single tier taxi licensing will now allow all public hire taxis to work in Belfast City Centre.

Dignity at Work Cases

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment how many Dignity at Work cases have been lodged in his Department in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) core department; and (ii) non-departmental public body; and how many of these cases have been successfully resolved.

(AQW 23556/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below outlines the number of formal Dignity at Work cases lodged in the Department since 2008. There are currently 8 live formal cases, 4 from late 2012 and 4 lodged this year.

Year	Open	Closed
2013	4	1
2012	4	5
2011	0	5
2010	0	6

Year	Open	Closed
2009	0	10
2008	0	11

Of the two non-departmental bodies, Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) and the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) only NILGOSC has had two Dignity at Work cases during the period, both of which were resolved.

Planning Application J/2011/0335/F

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the frustration of groups and individuals considering submitting consultation responses to wind farm applications in the West Tyrone, and in particular planning application J/2011/0335/F, who are finding it difficult to access and locate all the necessary information in order to make an informed consultation response, what measures can be taken by applicants and councils to defer any wind farm applications recommended for approval in instances where consultees have not been able to examine all the relevant documentation, so that potential consultation responders can secure reasonable and adequate time to review the relevant application and documentation.

(AQW 23560/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It is fully 20 months since planning application J/2011/0335/F was submitted to the Department for consideration. In that time all of the information submitted in support of the planning application has been available to view on the Department's Planning Portal website. Copies have also been available to view in the Area Planning Office in Omagh and in the Strategic Planning Division in Belfast. This application seeks to amend some of the details of a wind farm previously approved in August 2009.

In total, 50 letters of objection have been received. Some of those objections focus on the quality and quantity of information submitted with the planning application. As I understand the AQ, the issue is not access – but the information that is being accessed.

My officials have determined that sufficient information has been submitted to allow full consideration to be given to the proposal and all of that information has been publicly available. The Department has made available to interested parties the files relating to the original grant of approval for the wind farm dating from August 2009. These files, because of their age, would not have been available to view on the Department's website.

There are established procedures in place whereby a Council, when considering a planning application, may seek to defer the matter if they have particular concerns with the proposal or the recommendation from the Department. At this stage, I have not been advised what further information may be required in the view of those objecting but would welcome hearing.

Planning Applications for Single Wind Turbines

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of planning applications (i) received; and (ii) approved for (a) 0kW to 50kW; (b) 51kW to 100kW; (c) 101kW to 200kW; and (d) 201kW to 250kW output single wind turbines between 1 May 2010 and 1 May 2013.

(AQW 23593/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department welcomes the contribution that renewable projects make to the reduction of carbon emissions and acknowledges the importance of processing these applications in a consistent and timely manner. As Minister I am fully supportive of renewable energy and believe firmly in the contribution that renewables make to the economy.

The information provided in planning applications for wind turbines does not always include the output level of the proposed turbine. It is therefore not possible from the information held on the database to provide validated statistical information in relation to this request.

The table below details the number of Single Wind Turbines applications received, approved and decided since April 2010 until March 2013:

Received	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Received	628	665	606
Approved	117	269	495
Refused	28	61	75

Single Use Plastic Bag Levy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment which environmental projects or groups have received funding or grants from the single use plastic bag levy; and, if no awards have been made, when the first award will be made.

(AQW 23596/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Before I allocate funding from the Carrier Bag Levy to specific environmental programmes and projects, I wish to establish a fuller assessment of the likely quantum of revenue for 2013/14. This will be possible after retailers make their first quarterly returns to the Department in July 2013. Once a fuller assessment is established, I will identify those projects to benefit from the receipts generated by the Carrier Bag Levy and award funding accordingly.

I intend to use the net revenue generated from the Carrier Bag Levy to support communities, businesses, voluntary organisations, charities and schools in the delivery of local environmental programmes, particularly those that deliver social and economic benefits.

Illegal Taxis

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have been prosecuted for operating illegal taxis, in the last two years.

(AQW 23648/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The following table sets out the number of taxis inspected by DVA Enforcement Officers during the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2013 and details the number of prosecution cases instigated and fixed penalty notices issued to drivers at the roadside. The figures reported are the latest available DOE/DVA Official Statistics

Period	Number of Taxis Inspected	Number of Prosecutions	Number of Fixed Penalty Notices
2011/12	2,177	104	254
2012/13	1,865	88	280
Total	4,042	192	534

The figures that relate to prosecutions and fixed penalty notices are linked to a variety of taxi offences as there is no singular offence code to identify an illegal taxi.

International Appalachian Trail along the Ulster Way

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of the proposal for an International Appalachian Trail along the Ulster Way, particularly along the North Coast; (ii) what consultation has taken place with local landowners over the proposal; (iii) what were the results of

the consultation; (iv) what impact the Trail would have on the ownership, upkeep and name of the existing Ulster Way; (v) what are the financial implications of the Trail; and (vi) upon whom would these implications impact.

(AQW 23653/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I support the concept of the International Appalachian Trail (IAT) and I convened a meeting earlier this year with the European Vice President of the IAT steering group together with representatives from NITB and from the councils along the proposed route.

Following this meeting officials in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency wrote to each of the relevant councils seeking nominees to sit on a NI IAT Working Group and are awaiting a response. It is clearly important that the councils confirm support for the proposal as each would have a crucial role in ensuring that the standard of the IAT is appropriate to its international status. NIEA officials have advised that they are not aware of any consultation carried out by the councils.

There will be no impact on the ownership or the name of the Ulster Way as the route is simply being double branded where appropriate. District councils are responsible for landowners' agreements and the essential maintenance of the quality sections of the Ulster Way. NIEA, through the Natural Heritage Grant Programme, may provide financial support towards essential works and the development of further off-road sections of approved long distance routes, including the Ulster Way. It is quite possible that the international recognition of the IAT will bring welcome benefits to tourism and promote wellbeing as more people may be encouraged to walk the Ulster Way and the long distance walking routes that make up most of the IAT.

At this early stage it is not envisaged that the development of the IAT would have any financial implications for the councils as there are no signs or trail furniture planned. It would be for each council to decide if it wishes to place any new trail furniture on the route and to bear any resultant cost.

The European IAT steering group is not constituted in such a way that it could apply for funding for projects. It may, should this prove necessary, be possible for a particular council to apply for funding on behalf of this body and NIEA is exploring this option with councils.

Draft PPS 16: Adopted

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment when draft PPS 16 will be adopted.
(AQW 23670/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Draft PPS 16 was published for public consultation in November 2010. The public consultation period ended in March 2011 and the PPS was amended to take account of the public consultation responses.

The final version of PPS 16 was agreed by the Executive on 06/06/2013.

Tourist Accommodation

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment what evidence is required to identify and detail a positive need for a particular type of tourist accommodation in any area, as required by TOU 3 of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland.
(AQW 23671/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Policy TOU 3 of 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland' states that the Department will give favourable consideration to proposals for Hotels, Guesthouses and Self-catering accommodation in existing settlements and in appropriate rural locations. It will be necessary for applicants to identify and detail a positive need for a particular type of tourist accommodation in any area.

In assessing applications for rural tourist accommodation the need for the development is material in the determination of a planning application. A range of information may be requested by the Department in order to demonstrate a need for tourist accommodation. This will be dependent on

the nature, scale and location of the development proposal and may include one or a number of the following:-

- Expressions of support from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and other appropriate bodies such as local community groups or tourism based organisations;
- Expressions of support from local elected representatives;
- a 'Tourism Needs Statement' which would demonstrate that the development would be in the public interest in terms of inward investment and employment opportunity;
- where applicable, confirmation of grant-aid funding in order to facilitate the tourism accommodation;
- a feasibility study for consideration and assessment by the Economics Branch in the Department for Regional Development which provides this service to the Department.

When PPS 16 is published in final form, it will remove this much criticised needs test by replacing it with specific criteria tailored to different forms of tourism development. This will improve the transparency of policy and make it easier for developers to ensure their proposals accord with planning policy.

Implementation of TOU 3 of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland or Draft PPS 16

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to detail any discussions his officials have had with officials from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) on information held by DETI that would inform the implementation of TOU 3 of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland or draft PPS 16.

(AQW 23672/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My officials have fully engaged with DETI and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in the preparation and development of PPS 16. Through this engagement, PPS16 will remove the current needs based tests for the assessment of planning applications for tourist accommodation in the countryside currently as set out in Policy TOU3 in 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland'.

Single Use Plastic Bag Levy

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment for an estimate of the amount of income that will be received from the plastic bag levy, given the estimates that single use bag usage has dropped by 98 per cent.

(AQW 23682/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As I have stressed previously, the Carrier Bag Levy (which currently applies to single use carrier bags made from plastic, paper and other natural materials) is first and foremost an environmental measure intended to benefit our environment by dramatically reducing the number of single use carrier bags dispensed in Northern Ireland.

I have been very encouraged by the anecdotal evidence and estimates from retailers indicating substantial reductions in the number of single use carrier bags being dispensed. Although many retailers have informally reported significant reductions, including one as high as 98%, validated statistics will not be available until later this year. However, I am confident that the target of an 80% reduction overall is well within our reach.

As I have indicated previously, the amount of revenue generated by the levy will be heavily dependent upon the overall reduction in the number of single use carrier bags dispensed. Based on data from the Welsh carrier bag charge, the latest 2013/14 gross revenue forecast for the Northern Ireland Carrier Bag Levy is £1.7m.

The first Carrier Bag Levy returns from retailers are due in July 2013. Once this information is received and collated, the Department will be able to establish a reliable estimate of the total revenue for 2013/14.

Single Use Plastic Bag Levy

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment how he will fund the projects which were due to be funded through the plastic bag levy, given estimates that single use bag usage has dropped by 98 per cent. **(AQW 23683/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The Carrier Bag Levy currently applies to single use carrier bags made from plastic, paper and other natural materials. I intend to use the net revenue generated from the levy to support communities, businesses, voluntary organisations, charities and schools in the delivery of local environmental programmes, particularly those that deliver social and economic benefits. These include:

- The creation of a new River Restoration Fund to allow local communities, angling groups and voluntary environmental organisations to run small projects which will improve local river water quality and ecological status and thereby contribute to implementing the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive;
- The creation of a new Sustainability Innovation Fund to support community groups, business and others who need financial support to implement initiatives which have the potential for innovation which can generate transformational environmental change;
- Increased grants from the Community Challenge Fund to deliver a range of practical, local environmental projects through a broad range of not-for-profit groups including; voluntary and community groups, schools, charities and environmental trusts;
- Increased grants from the Natural Heritage Fund to encourage the conservation and enhancement of key elements of the environment and its wildlife and provide facilities which help as wide a range of people as possible to enjoy and appreciate our natural heritage; and
- Increased grants available from the Rethink Waste Fund to promote waste prevention, reuse and recycling.

As I have stressed, the Carrier Bag Levy is first and foremost an environmental measure intended to benefit our environment by dramatically reducing the number of single use carrier bags dispensed in Northern Ireland. I have been very encouraged by the anecdotal evidence and estimates from retailers indicating substantial reductions in the number of single use carrier bags being dispensed. Although many retailers have informally reported significant reductions, including one as high as 98%, validated statistics will not be available until later this year. However, I believe that the target of an 80% reduction overall may be within our reach.

Clearly, the amount of revenue generated by the levy will be heavily dependent upon the overall reduction in the number of single use carrier bags dispensed.

The first Carrier Bag Levy returns from retailers are due in July 2013. Once this information is received and collated, the Department will be able to establish a reliable estimate of the total net revenue for 2013/14 and I will be in a better position to assess funding allocations to programmes and projects on the basis of this estimate. Over the last 2 years, the DOE has demonstrated enhanced commitment to funding environmental projects such as the Challenge Fund. I will seek to identify ways to continue to do and enhance the funding streams, through and outside levy monies.

Land Slide at Portnabrock

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment what plans the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, or other arm's-length bodies, have to assist in finding a solution to the blockage caused to the Ulster Way by the land slide at Portnabrock.

(AQW 23691/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The path at Portnabrock, also known as Doonninish, is part of the Causeway Coast Way and the Ulster Way. Moyle District Council (MDC) has responsibility for any development and management of the route in this area.

The Natural Heritage Directorate of NIEA is aware of the access issues due to the rock falls at this location and has been working since January 2012 with MDC and Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) to identify a long-term solution.

A Strategic Path Review for the Causeway Coast Way was undertaken by ORNI to examine the sustainability of the route and develop recommendations for its future. NIEA provided grant aid of £6,000 (75% of costs) for the Review with match funding from MDC, Coleraine District Council and the National Trust. The Review was completed in November 2012 and one of the priority recommendations contained in the report was to 're-open access at Doonninish – remove rock fall and debris and negotiate a new access agreement for re-routing the path over the headland'.

Since then MDC and ORNI have each made approaches to the landowners to negotiate a new route close to the previous one however these were not successful and instead an alternative route for the path, which while not ideal may be suitable, was agreed. MDC felt that on the grounds of Health and Safety, the route would require an extensive geological inspection.

NIEA recognises the impact of the closure of this section of path and the need to find a sustainable solution. With this in mind, NIEA has recently offered financial support to MDC to enable it to undertake the geological studies and to identify and agree a sustainable long term route for this section of the Causeway Coast Way. Once this has been delivered, MDC should then progress to identify the costs involved in reinstating a route, for which further grant aid may be sought.

Population Trends for Birds

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the recent Royal Society for the Protection of Birds State of Nature Study which suggests that the numbers of Northern Ireland's threatened bird species are declining rapidly, what data his Department collects on population trends for birds.
(AQW 23722/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Information on bird population trends available to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency covers a wide range of species and originates from several sources. These include regular monitoring programmes and periodic species or habitat-specific surveys. Northern Ireland Environment Agency is a significant supporter of many of these survey programmes. Many of the surveys referred to have their equivalent in the Republic of Ireland allowing a better understanding of changes of bird populations at an all-Ireland level.

Our important wintering waterbird sites and populations are monitored annually through the UK wide Wetland Bird Surveys.

Breeding birds of the wider countryside are surveyed through the Breeding Bird Survey, again part of a UK wide programme.

Northern Ireland participates in the periodic bird atlases programmes covering Great Britain and Ireland which provide important data on distribution changes of both breeding and wintering species. The most recent atlas is scheduled for publication later this year.

Data on rarer breeding species is obtained through targeted surveys as part of the Scarce and Rare Breeding Bird Surveys.

Seabird monitoring is undertaken through national surveys at approximately 15 year intervals but is supplemented with additional surveys, some annually.

While the Department's NIEA undertake some of the above work, much of it is undertaken by a range of organisations many of which are supported by the Department. The contribution from the voluntary sector is of particular importance.

The close working relationship between NIEA and the other groups involved in this work is notable and ensures that a co-ordinated approach is taken to monitoring our bird populations.

Northern Ireland Priority Species List

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what protections are afforded to species on the Northern Ireland Priority Species List.

(AQW 23723/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The protection afforded to species on the Northern Ireland Priority Species List is varied.

Many Priority Species are directly protected under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. These priority species include birds, mammals, other vertebrates, some invertebrates and plants. The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 offered protection to additional species, strengthened the protection from disturbance (from intentional to reckless) and introduced custodial sentences for some offences.

Sites are designated as Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) through the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 to protect many of the rarer species. This site designation process includes management arrangements which afford greater opportunity to protect species

Northern Ireland Priority Species are also protected through a range of Government policies e.g. planning and agricultural policies and guidance. In addition, Government funding is also used to encourage the conservation of priority species such as through NIEA grant-aid and the targeting of agri-environment schemes.

Northern Ireland's Threatened Species: Declining in Numbers

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds State of Nature Report which suggests that many of Northern Ireland's threatened species, including yellowhammers and lapwings, are declining in number; and what steps his Department is taking to arrest this decline.

(AQW 23724/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is aware of the status of the threatened species mentioned in the recently published State of Nature Report.

Yellowhammer and Lapwing are just two of the 481 Northern Ireland priority species which have been identified by the Department as requiring conservation action.

Public bodies now have a duty under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act to further biodiversity.

The Department has published information on each of the Northern Ireland priority species and will further develop advice on the actions which each species requires to identify and arrest declining populations.

Departmental action for individual species varies and includes helping obtain better information on status, designated site protection and influencing more general habitat management.

In the case of Lapwing and Yellowhammer NIEA will continue to fund required monitoring and research to provide the Department with the information necessary to better understand population changes for these species and the factors affecting their status.

A number of Areas of Special Scientific Interest have been designated as sites for breeding Lapwing such as Maghaberry ASSI where this spring appears to be a record breaking season for this species.

It is recognised that most of the breeding Lapwing and Yellowhammer occur outside designated sites and are heavily influenced by agricultural policies especially. NIEA is currently liaising with Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that the forthcoming Rural Development Plan, and in

particularly measures such as agri-environment schemes, are targeted at benefiting threatened priority species such as Yellowhammer and Lapwing.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he is taking to protect (i) Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; (ii) Areas of Special Scientific Interest; and (iii) Special Areas of Conservation, from wind farm development.

(AQW 23726/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Policy Statement (PPS)18 'Renewable Energy' aims to facilitate the siting of renewable energy generating facilities in appropriate locations in the built and natural environment in order to achieve Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets.

The policy does not however rule out renewable energy development (including wind farms) within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs); Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI's) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

It is however a key objective of the policy to ensure that the environmental, landscape, visual and amenity impacts associated with renewable energy development are adequately addressed; and that adequate protection is afforded to the Region's built, natural and cultural heritage features.

The Best Practice Guidance (BPG) that accompanies PPS 18 makes clear that a cautious approach is necessary in relation to those landscapes which are of designated significant value, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and their wider settings. The BPG advises that here it may be difficult to accommodate wind turbines without detriment to the Region's cultural and natural heritage assets. The BPG also recognises that some areas are important for a variety of bird species protected under the EU and UK legislation (SPAs, SACs and ASSIs).

The Natural Heritage Directorate (NH) of NIEA provides advice to DOE Planning on wind farm developments which may impact upon the designation features of Areas of Special Scientific Interest or Special Areas of Conservation.

In addition, and here appropriate, NH also provides advice to DOE on wind farm developments which may impact upon Northern Ireland's landscapes, including AONB's. The advice provided by NH assists with the appropriate location, siting, layout and design of wind farm developments in landscape and visual terms.

Finally, where wind farm developments are located in a "sensitive area" including AONBs, ASSIs and SACs, an Environment Impact Assessment will be required if the development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Regulation of Taximeters

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of the Environment to outline his plans for the regulation of taximeters, including the calibration of new or faulty taximeters.

(AQW 23763/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A consultation on proposals for a maximum Taxi Fare and Taximeter requirements within Northern Ireland took place between 21 November 2011 and 17 February 2012. Supporters of the proposals such as IMTAC, Disability Action and the Consumer Council stated that taximeters are essential to ensure public confidence in the regulation of fares.

The enabling Regulations are presently planned to be introduced in September 2014 in order to allow the industry time to prepare for the costs associated with meter and receipt printer purchases. The Regulations are necessary are in order to:

- improve consumer protection by ensuring that customers cannot be overcharged;

- remove the ability to charge a wheelchair user more than a non-wheelchair user; and
- improve the level of service provided to fare paying customers, by requiring receipt printers for all taximeters.

Under the proposed Regulations, all taxis will have to be fitted with a sealed taximeter, calibrated to the maximum taxi tariff. The meter will be tested on a regular basis by companies approved by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) under a specific scheme introduced for this purpose. Given the importance of providing appropriate customer protection, drivers will not be allowed to taxi until and unless the taximeter is correctly calibrated. The Regulations will make it an offence for a taxi to operate if the taximeter is broken. All broken taximeters will have to be reported to DVA and the vehicle will not be able to be used for hire or reward until the taximeter has been repaired, calibrated, checked and sealed.

Councils: Performance Improvements

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the proposed new role of the Local Government Auditor in the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill to provide the external assurance that councils have complied with their duties on performance improvement, what baseline assessment will be used.

(AQW 23767/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The baseline for the Local Government Auditor's role will be the statutory duties that will be placed on councils through the Local Government Bill and the associated guidance issued by the Department together with a council's Annual Improvement Plan. This Plan will set out the council's improvement objectives for the incoming year and its assessment of its performance against objectives set for the preceding year.

Neighbour Notification Criteria: Erection of Wind Farms

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to change the neighbour notification criteria for the erection of wind farms, as applies to household extensions, to a model more based on business usage.

(AQW 23769/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Neighbour notification is undertaken by the Department as a matter of good practice and is not required by statute. Its purpose is to advise those who are most likely to be affected by a development proposal. As such it is established procedure to notify only the occupants of buildings that abut a planning application site and are within 90m of that site.

In addition to the scheme, planning applications are also advertised in a paper in circulation in the locality within which the application site is situated. All applications are also available to view on the PlanningNI website.

The Planning Bill, which is currently under the scrutiny of the Environment Committee, is an interim measure intended to give effect to certain reform provisions contained in the Planning Act 2011 which may be commenced by Department prior to the transfer of planning powers to the new district councils. These include new provisions for revised publicity measures to be brought forward by way of future subordinate legislation. Such legislation will itself be subject to public consultation and Assembly scrutiny.

Slieveard Wind Farm Planning Application

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment, given the major changes to the Slieveard Wind Farm planning application, whether the developer is required to organise a further series of public information events.

(AQW 23770/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department was notified by the developer at the pre-application stage of their intention to submit an application for a development of 9 wind turbines. The planning application subsequently submitted was for 7 turbines. I do not consider this change, a reduction by 2 in the number of turbines proposed, to be a major change in the proposal.

Planning legislation does not yet require an applicant to engage in public consultation prior to the submission of an application for major developments although many developers recognise the benefit of this approach and have voluntarily organised events. I encourage this approach. However, provisions in the forthcoming Planning Bill will ensure enhanced community involvement at pre application stage for certain major development proposals.

Ulster American Folk Park: Wind Farms

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he will take to address the situation where three wind farms, within a five mile radius, will be visible from the Ulster American Folk Park.

(AQW 23771/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The planning system exists to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. The public interest requires that all development is carried out in a way that would not cause harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Planning applications for wind farm developments, as with all other forms of development, will be determined on their individual planning merits. In determining those applications, my officials will have regard to the relevant policy provisions and all other material considerations.

Clearly the potential cumulative impact arising from a number of wind farm planning applications in the same locality will be a material consideration. The views from the Ulster American Folk Park and if and how they represent a material consideration is a matter for assessment by officials when they come to consider the merits of each proposal.

Planning Service: Qualified Planning Officers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many qualified planning officers work for the Planning Service in each planning division.

(AQW 23839/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning and Local Government Group employs the following number of professional Planning Staff in each of the locations detailed in the attached table.

Location	Number of Professional Planning Staff Employed
South Antrim Area Planning Office, Ballymena	29
Belfast Area Planning Office, Belfast (Bedford House)	44
Planning & Local Government Group Headquarters, Belfast (Millennium House)	67
Northern Area Planning Office, Coleraine	19
Southern Area Planning Office, Craigavon	53
Downpatrick Area Planning Office, Downpatrick	41
Western Area Planning Office, Enniskillen	8
Northern Area Planning Office, Londonderry	25
Western Area Planning Office, Omagh	34
Total	320

Backlog in Planning Applications

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to reduce the backlog in planning applications and the time taken to process planning applications.

(AQW 23840/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am fully aware of the need for a speedy planning process to support the economy and I have implemented a number of initiatives to improve performance and reduce the number of applications in the system over 12 months.

I have put in place an Improving Planning Application Processing Times Action Plan to help deliver faster, more predictable planning decisions. The Action Plan is in place for almost one year and has seen improved performance in all categories of applications. This upward trend in performance is reflected in the 2012/13 business year with Q3 statistics indicating that the targets for intermediate and minor categories of development have been exceeded. Management information also indicates that the Programme for Government target for 2013-13 of determining 60% of large scale investment applications and those with job creation potential to be given additional weight has also been exceeded.

A project management approach is used in processing all planning applications, however, additionally, as part of the Action Plan I have asked each of the area offices to actively focusing on the reduction of the number of applications in the system for over 12 months. Management information indicates that there has been a substantial reduction of 38.9% in older applications from April 2012 to April 2013, with just over 1500 applications remaining in the system over 12 months.

As demonstrated above the measures that I have introduced have shown a significant improvement in planning processing times and in reducing the backlog of planning applications in the system. However, I am not satisfied with the length of time it takes to process planning applications and have set increasingly challenging targets for all categories of applications every year up until the transfer of planning functions in April 2015. I will, therefore, continue to monitor performance.

Planning Applications in the North Down Council Area

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications in the North Down council area have been in the planning system for between (i) 12 months and two years; and (ii) two and three years.

(AQW 23842/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As of 30 April 2013, 10 planning applications in the North Down Council area have been in the planning system for between 12 months and two years. As of the same date, 2 applications have been in the system for between 2 and 3 years.

This figure has been taken from the most recent statistical information available to me.

Driving Licences: Organ Donation

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment to on how many applications for driving licences the question regarding organ donation was answered positively, in each year since it was first used on the application.

(AQW 23899/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Although the Driver and Vehicle Agency facilitates those applying for driving licences registering their willingness to donate organs, since this data is not required for the processing of driving licence applications, under data processing rules, no record of this data is retained by the Agency. The details of applicants making a declaration in favour of organ donation is transmitted directly to the NHS Organ Donation and Transplantation Directorate.

Recent Gorse Fire on Rathlin Island

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of the Environment, following the recent gorse fire on Rathlin Island, whether an environmental impact assessment has been carried out, given that the fire occurred at the height of the bird nesting season.

(AQW 23967/11-15)

Mr Attwood: An official from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) will in June visit Rathlin Island to undertake an environmental assessment of the fire that recently occurred there, part of which took place within the Rathlin Island Coast Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). The impact and severity of the fire on the ASSI and its declaration features, which include maritime cliff and slopes and nesting seabirds and raptors, will be assessed at that time. I saw the area affected myself when visiting the island for the recent Maritime Festival.

In a wider context NIEA is supporting a variety of initiatives to address the wildfire issue. In relation to the impact of wildfires on natural heritage interests NIEA is funding, through the Natural Heritage Research Partnership, a project entitled 'Quantifying the extent and impact of wildfires'. This research project will include consideration of impacts of wildfires on plants, invertebrates and birds and is due for completion by the end of 2015.

Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Environmental Protection Agency/Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources/Northern Ireland Environment Agency study into the long term impacts of unconventional gas exploration and extraction.

(AQO 4222/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department is co-funding this research programme and officials from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency form part of the Steering Committee that is tasked with developing the terms of reference and for managing the outputs from the programme.

The steering committee developed a proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) for an extensive and comprehensive programme of research. The ToR was the subject of a public consultation exercise in both the North and South of Ireland. The consultation period ended on the 8 March 2013 and approximately 1400 consultation responses were received.

The steering committee is now in the process of completing a review of all the submissions received and is now assessing them against the draft ToR, with a view to making the appropriate changes to the final document where appropriate.

Once this process is complete the steering committee will make available details of all valid submissions and where possible indicate how submissions have influenced the final document.

Once the ToR has been finalised it will form the basis of a tender document inviting suitably qualified companies and academic institutions to bid for individual projects or a number of projects within the scope of the research programme.

The steering committee met on 29 May 2013. A final copy of the ToR will be placed on the NIEA website in due course and all consultees will be informed of the next steps in the process through a reply to their submissions.

Planning Application for a Wind Farm

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department gives to the protection of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty when considering a planning application for a wind farm in that area.

(AQO 4223/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Policy RE1 of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 'Renewable Energy' does not distinguish between areas designated for their significant landscape value, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and other undesignated landscapes.

Nonetheless, the policy requires that all renewable energy development, regardless of whether it is proposed in a designated area or not, should not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on visual amenity or landscape character of that area.

To assist the Department in the consideration of wind energy applications, PPS 18 is accompanied by Best Practice Guidance (BPG) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Wind energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes'. The SPG provides broad, strategic guidance in relation to the visual and landscape impacts of wind energy development for 130 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) across Northern Ireland.

Within each LCA the key landscape and visual characteristics are identified. In relation to the scenic quality of an area, the LCA will identify whether any part is subject to designation as an AONB. An assessment is also made as to the overall sensitivity of the landscape to wind energy development. The SPG advice is taken into account by the Department as strategic guidance in processing planning applications for wind energy development across the whole of Northern Ireland.

Planning Application Q/2011/0220/0 Update

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on planning application Q/2011/0220/0.

(AQO 4224/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The planning application for a two storey dwelling and garage at 58 Moyallen Road Portadown is currently under consideration and an opinion will be presented to Banbridge District Council prior to a decision issuing.

Heritage Plan for Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will initiate a heritage plan for Carrickfergus.

(AQO 4225/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I consider that the local council is well placed to initiate a heritage plan, particularly as we move closer to enhanced powers being provided to Councils in less than 2 years time, under the Review of Public Administration.

The Department would be a keen partner in a heritage/Conservation Plan, and would provide input in relation to the historic assets within its control, ie Carrickfergus Castle and the Gasworks. The Department would also provide advice and input in relation to other historic monuments, listed buildings and the Conservation Area within Carrickfergus, should the Council take forward such a plan. Much of this could fit within the context of the Innovation Trial at the Castle which NIEA is currently seeking to advance with Carrickfergus Borough Council.

Houses in Multiple Occupation Cap: Laganbank District Electoral Area, South Belfast

Mr Maskey asked the Minister of the Environment how many streets have exceeded the Houses in Multiple Occupation cap in the Laganbank District Electoral Area, South Belfast.

(AQO 4226/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015 was published by my Department in December 2008.

The Plan identifies 22 areas in Belfast City Council area where HMOs are concentrated. These areas are designated as HMO Policy Areas. Of these 22, there are 20 in which the number of HMOs exceeds 30% of all the dwelling units. These are detailed in Appendix 3 of the Subject Plan.

Laganbank Electoral Area contains 670 streets. Of these 670 streets, 130 streets fall within the HMO Policy Areas in which the 30% occupancy rates have been exceeded.

No further HMO development will be permitted within those HMO Policy Areas until such times as the proportion of HMOs falls below 30% of all dwelling units in a Policy Area.

In relation to the remaining 540 streets where the 10% policy cap applies, my Department is carrying out further analysis when available, I shall advise of its conclusions.

Single Use Carrier Bag Levy

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact of the single use carrier bag levy.

(AQO 4227/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department will receive the first online returns from retailers in July; this will provide the first formal indication of the reduction in carrier bag consumption.

However current indications point to a sharp drop in demand for single use carrier bags. Some retailers have already reported reductions in bag consumption of between 75% and 98%. This suggests that the target of at least an 80% reduction in carrier bag consumption is well within our reach.

The Department's customer relations' managers have visited a large number of retail premises, both before and after the commencement of charging on 8 April. Feedback suggests that retailers are broadly positive about the introduction of the levy, and that customer acceptance is high.

Departmental staff will continue to work with the retailers to ensure that compliance is achieved. I firmly believe that the levy has been widely embraced because citizens and businesses want to make positive contributions to addressing the issue of waste.

Review of Public Administration: Senior Officers

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the process he will use to appoint senior officers to the new councils under the review of public administration.

(AQO 4228/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Discussions regarding the underlying principles and timings for competitions for senior staff are being taken forward within the implementation structures which I have established for local government reform.

In relation to the new Chief Executive positions, I believe that these posts will be critical to the success of the new councils. The new councils will be larger geographically, will have additional functions and responsibilities and therefore greater accountability. There is a need for clear leadership in the local government reform process, both in the run up to 2015 and in the years beyond, not only at a political level but also operationally. Clearly much will be asked of those appointed, and they will need to have the experience, leadership qualities and skills required to transform local government.

I believe that these posts would best be filled through full and open competition, clearly I am carefully considering the issues and legal advice before soon making a final determination.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Servants and Employees of Departmental Arm's-Length Bodies or Quangos

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many (i) civil servants; and (ii) employees of departmental arm's-length bodies or quangos are paid through a limited company or a method other than PAYE.

(AQW 22987/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Ten of the thirteen NICS departments have confirmed that there are no civil servants or employees of arm's-length bodies (ALBs) or quangos paid through limited companies or a method other than PAYE.

The Department of Justice has responded that there are currently no such arrangements in respect of civil servants in DOJ, its Agencies or ALBs but that one employee of an ALB is paid through a limited company.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has advised that no civil servants employed by DHSSPS are paid through private companies and that the NI Fire and Rescue Service does not have staff that are paid salaries through private companies. Staff employed in Health and Social Care on a temporary basis, through agencies, are the only staff who would be paid by private companies. The Health and Social Care Trusts do not have the information requested readily available and this could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

There are no civil servants in the Department for Employment and Learning whose salaries are paid through a limited company or a method other than PAYE. DEL is responsible for the Further Education sector in Northern Ireland and there is one member of staff in that sector who is currently paid outside PAYE.

Wind Turbines: Local Jobs Created

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many new local jobs have been created through the development of wind turbines, in the last three years.

(AQW 23774/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The UK Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007 used in surveys that provide estimates of employee jobs classifies businesses by the type of economic activity in which they are engaged. Development of wind turbines is grouped with similar businesses in the Production of Electricity Industry classification and therefore it is not possible to determine how many employee jobs there are in this specific aspect of the industry.

Private Sector Jobs in the North Down Constituency

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many private sector jobs have been created in the North Down constituency in each of the last four years.

(AQW 23781/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is not possible to provide information on the total number of private sector jobs created in North Down as requested. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency collects information on the number of jobs at a particular point in time and therefore can only provide the net change between two points in time.

The table overleaf provides the most recent information available on the net change in all private sector employee jobs in the Parliamentary Constituency of North Down as measured by the biennial Census of Employment. The net decrease takes into account both job gains and losses during the period. Estimates for 2012 will be available in September 2013.

TABLE 1: NORTHERN IRELAND EMPLOYEE JOBS IN NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY (BIENNIAL)

Year	Number of Private Sector Employee Jobs	Employee Job Net Change
2007	17,281	
2009	16,967	-314
2011	16,186	-781

Source: NI Census of Employment, September 2007 – 2011

Procurements or Contracts: Legal Challenges

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of procurements or contracts that were held up by legal challenges, in each of the last three years; (ii) the value of those procurements or contracts; and (iii) where applicable, the number of jobs affected.

(AQW 23871/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information provided in response to (i) and (ii) relates to construction works, supplies and services procurements carried out by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) on behalf of Departments.

CPD DOES NOT HOLD INFORMATION IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF JOBS AFFECTED.

Financial Year	Number of procurements/ contracts	Value of procurements/ contracts (£ million)
2010 - 2011	3	4.6
2011 - 2012	6	187.1
2012 - 2013	1	3.0

Social Media

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the legislation that seeks to protect people's reputations on social media and for his assessment of how successfully it is being enforced.

(AQW 23931/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Much of the law on defamation is judge-made. However, the Defamation Act (Northern Ireland) 1955 and the Defamation Act 1996 deal with a number of issues, including offers to make amends, limitation periods, the summary disposal of claims and certain defences.

On the libel side the focus previously was on the written or printed word. However, as recent cases have shown, the current law can be successfully applied to more modern forms of communication, including the internet and Twitter and, accordingly, I believe it offers suitable protections.

With the abolition of criminal defamation, defamation is now solely a civil matter and the issue of enforcement does not, therefore, arise. Rather it is for the individual citizen to initiate proceedings in his or her own name.

Civil Servants

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of civil servants in each year since 2007, broken down by grade.

(AQW 23988/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information requested is set out in the attached tables. Figures provided are permanent headcount as at 1 January each year, except 2009, which is at 1 April, and include

analogous grades. While Department of Justice was set up on 12 April 2010, information on the number of uniformed Prison Officers is only available from 2012.

GRADE BREAKDOWN OF NICS STAFF FOR 2007 - 2013

	Headcount	Percent
2013		
G5+	224	.8
SP	249	0.9
G7	1202	4.3
DP	2478	8.9
S0	3284	11.7
EOI	3537	12.6
EOII	4447	15.8
AO	7862	28.1
AA	2061	7.4
Industrial	1051	3.8
Uniformed Prison	1581	5.7
Total	27976	100
2012		
G5+	246	.9
SP	235	0.8
G7	1153	4.1
DP	2362	8.4
S0	3256	11.6
EOI	3530	12.6
EOII	4295	15.3
AO	7992	28.5
AA	2115	7.6
Industrial	1066	3.8
Uniformed Prison	1744	6.2
Total	27994	100
2011		
G5+	250	.9
SP	258	1.0
G7	1207	4.5
DP	2404	8.9

	Headcount	Percent
SO	3462	12.8
EOI	3715	13.8
EOII	4318	16.0
AO	8094	30.0
AA	2199	8.1
Industrial	1111	4.1
Total	27018	100
2010		
G5+	241	.9
SP	399	1.5
G7	1100	4.1
DP	2447	9.1
SO	3354	12.5
EOI	3664	13.6
EOII	4219	15.7
AO	7868	29.2
AA	2466	9.2
Industrial	1176	4.4
Total	26934	100.0
2009		
G5+	236	.9
SP	385	1.4
G7	1034	3.9
DP	2397	8.9
SO	3268	12.2
EOI	3530	13.2
EOII	4258	15.9
AO	7886	29.4
AA	2643	9.9
Industrial	1184	4.4
Total	26821	100.0

	Headcount	Percent
2008		
G5+	246	.9
SP	394	1.4
G7	1058	3.8
DP	2304	8.3
S0	3021	10.8
EOI	3765	13.5
EOII	4282	15.4
AO	8043	28.9
AA	3378	12.1
Industrial	1383	5.0
Total	27874	100.0
2007		
G5+	263	.9
SP	407	1.3
G7	1053	3.5
DP	2266	7.5
S0	3229	10.7
EOI	4077	13.5
EOII	4163	13.8
AO	8488	28.0
AA	3995	13.2
Industrial	2328	7.7
Total	30269	100.0

* these columns may not add up due to roundings

Warm Homes Schemes: Minimum Depth of Roofspace Insulation

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, given the change in recent years of the minimum depth of roofspace insulation under various Warm Homes schemes, whether consideration is being given to a review of the current requirement.

(AQW 24059/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Building Regulations set minimum standards to be met when undertaking relevant work.

Thermal standards are contained in Part F (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations. As part of an overhaul of all the regulations, Part F was reviewed during 2011 and uplifts in standards were reflected in the new Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.

The legislation and accompanying guidance documentation are available on the DFP website at <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/buildings-energy-efficiency-buildings/building-regulations.htm>

A further review of Part F is planned during 2014 and will take into account the outcomes of research and consultation currently under way in England.

The application of a specific standard to roofspace insulation under Warm Homes schemes is a matter for the Department of Social Development to address.

Public Sector: Prompt Payment

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what he is doing to improve prompt payment by the public sector.

(AQO 4253/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department is responsible for issuing guidance and seeking assurance that guidance issued is being implemented. In regards to prompt payment, guidance was issued in 2008 and reissued in 2010 to reinforce the importance of prompt payment. My department also issued further guidance in March 2013, to draw attention to the new legislation on prompt payment and asked that all appropriate steps are taken to approve and release invoices for payment without unnecessary delay. I also wrote to Ministerial colleagues asking them to ensure that appropriate steps were being taken in their departments, agencies and arms-length bodies to action the guidance issued.

Departments, Agencies and NDPBs are now required to provide information in their accounts to disclose their performance both in terms of paying invoices within 30 days and 10 days.

I have also been focusing on late payments to subcontractors in the construction industry, who are badly impacted by poor payment practices. On 8 October 2012, I stated that 'where a contractor fails to deliver on a government contract, whether it relates to meeting the specification or to the treatment of the supply chain, they will be prevented from tendering for future government contracts'. In addition, from January 2013 we have introduced Project Bank Accounts for government construction contracts with an estimated value of £1million where there is a significant subcontracting element.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether tax and national insurance contributions are deducted at source for all Special Advisers, who are paid from public funds, based on their salary level.

(AQO 4257/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I can confirm that tax and National Insurance contributions are deducted at source for all Special Advisers, who are paid from public funds, based on their salary level.

Banks: Lending

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on his engagement with Her Majesty's Treasury on bank lending.

(AQO 4258/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I most recently met with the Economic Secretary to the Treasury on 4th June along with the Enterprise Minister and the Secretary of State to discuss the problems facing our bank sector and where I pressed him for action on a number of important issues.

These included the ineffectiveness of national banking initiatives in Northern Ireland, my concerns about the Ulster Bank and in particular that the scale of its impairments are constraining its ability to serve the needs of its customers and our economy, regional lending data, and about HMT's liaison with the Irish Government on banking matters.

The Economic Secretary indicated that the Treasury would respond on our Ulster Bank concerns following the publication of the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards report, that they would continue to examine the performance of national initiatives locally, and would appreciate our views on this. He will also support our efforts to obtain better regional lending data from the banks.

We agreed to meet regularly to discuss these issues.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Patient Care Service: Non-Emergency Ambulance Service

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much was spent by the Patient Care Service on the provision of the Non-Emergency Ambulance Service in the last financial year; (ii) how much of this was spent transporting people to hospital appointments; and (iii) how many clients were transported during this period.

(AQW 23454/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):

- (i) The total cost of non-emergency Patient Care Service Transport in 2012/13 was £8.8m.
- (ii) This total amount was spent in the transportation of patients to hospital appointments.
- (iii) In 2012/13, 200,205 patient journeys took place from a non-emergency perspective bringing patients to and from Hospitals or other Health and Social Care environments

Causeway Hospital: Options Appraisal

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the detailed options appraisal on the Causeway Hospital has begun; and if so, who is carrying out the appraisal and when it began.

(AQW 23514/11-15)

Mr Poots: The options appraisal for the future management arrangements for the Causeway Hospital is being taken forward by my Department with inputs from the Health and Social Care Board, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, the Western Health and Social Care Trust and others, as required. The work is commencing now and will take into the account the forthcoming report from the Turnaround and Support Team as appropriate.

Infertility Counselling Services

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the rationale for infertility counselling services not being provided at any locations outside Greater Belfast.

(AQW 23549/11-15)

Mr Poots: The decision on where services are most appropriately delivered to meet the needs of any population is taken by the Health and Social Care Board in its role as Commissioner of health services. Currently infertility counselling, which is provided by the Fertility Counselling Service (NI), is an integral part of fertility treatment, which is only provided at the Regional Fertility Centre in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; as such, counselling is provided at a Belfast location.

Dignity at Work Cases

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Dignity at Work cases have been lodged in his Department in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) core department; and (ii) non-departmental public body; and how many of these cases have been successfully resolved.

(AQW 23559/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Civil Service Dignity at Work policy sets out the procedures for dealing with internal complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. Table A below details formal complaints lodged, and investigated, under these provisions within this Department and the subsequent outcome.

Table B details any complaints of this nature made under the respective policies in the Department's Arms Length Bodies. Please assume a nil return for any such bodies not listed.

TABLE A

DHSSPS		
Year (financial)	Number Raised	Outcome
2008/09	1	Not Upheld
2009/10	0	-
2010/11	0	-
2011/12	2*	1 On Hold
		1 Ongoing
2012/13	0	
Total	3	

* One additional complaint lodged in 2011/12 was subsequently deemed not to be related to "Dignity at Work" and was redirected to an alternative procedure. It is therefore not included in the figures above.

TABLE B

Arms Length Bodies		
Year (financial)	Number Raised	Outcome
NI Fire and Rescue Service		
2008/2009	1	Not Upheld - 1
2009/2010	0	
2010/2011	6	Upheld-2 Upheld in part-1 Not upheld-1 Ongoing-2
2011/2012	4	Upheld- 2 Upheld in part- 2
2012/2013	3	Upheld-1 Upheld in part-1 Withdrawn-1
Total	14	

Arms Length Bodies		
Year (financial)	Number Raised	Outcome
Business Services Organisation		
2008/2009	0	
2009/2010	0	
2010/2011	0	
2011/2012	0	
2012/2013	1	Upheld - 1
Total	1	
Public Health Agency		
2008/2009	0	
2009/2010	0	
2010/2011	0	
2011/2012	0	
2012/2013	3	Not upheld- 1 Resolved informally-2
Total	3	

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust		
2008/2009	N/A	Information Not Available
2009/2010	N/A	Information Not Available
2010/2011	6	Ongoing – 1 Mediation – 1 Not Upheld -4
2011/2012	18	Upheld – 1 Not Upheld – 10 Ongoing – 5 Mediation - 2
2012/2013	5	Ongoing – 4 Withdrawn - 1
Total	29	
Northern Health and Social Care Trust		
2008/2009	5	Not Upheld - 5
2009/2010	9	Not Upheld – 9
2010/2011	2	Not Upheld – 2

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust		
2011/2012	3	Not Upheld – 2 Ongoing – 1
2012/2013	3	Ongoing - 3
Total	22	

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust		
2008/2009	6	Upheld – 1 Not Upheld - 5
2009/2010	6	Not Upheld - 6
2010/2011	6	Not Upheld -6
2011/2012	12	Not Upheld - 12
2012/2013	5	Upheld – 1 Not Upheld - 4
Total	35	

Southern Health and Social Care Trust		
2008/2009	6	Upheld – 1 Not Upheld - 5
2009/2010	6	Not Upheld - 6
2010/2011	1	Upheld - 1
2011/2012	1	Not Upheld - 1
2012/2013	1	Upheld - 1
Total	15	

Western Health and Social Care Trust		
2008/2009	3	Not Upheld - 3
2009/2010	4	Not Upheld – 4
2010/2011	3	Not Upheld - 2 Upheld - 1
2011/2012	1	Not Upheld - 1
2012/2013	4	Not Upheld - 4
Total	15	

Ambulance Trust		
2008/2009	4	Upheld in part – 1 Not Upheld - 3
2009/2010	5	Not Upheld - 5

Southern Health and Social Care Trust		
2010/2011	4	Upheld in part – 1 Not Upheld – 2 Ongoing - 1
2011/2012	6	Not upheld – 3 Ongoing - 3
2012/2013	5	Not Upheld – 2 Ongoing - 3
Total	24	

NI Blood Transfusion Agency		
2008/2009	0	
2009/2010	0	
2010/2011	0	
2011/2012	1	Not Upheld - 1
2012/2013	0	
Total	1	

Residential Care Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22622/11-15, what are the admission figures for each home when respite care and intermediate bed admissions are excluded; and what is the current occupancy by permanent residents in each home. **(AQW 23585/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The information requested is not held centrally therefore it was requested from each of the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. The responses are provided in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: PERMANENT OCCUPANCY AND ADMISSIONS TO STATUTORY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

Residential Home	No. of permanent admissions					Current Permanent Occupancy
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Belfast HSC Trust						
Chestnut Grove	35	0	0	0	0	14
Shankill House	32	0	0	0	0	6
Grovetree House	21	0	0	0	0	0
Pine Lodge	34	0	0	0	0	22
The Belfast HSC Trust were unable to provide information on 11 other residential homes in the time frame requested.						

Residential Home	No. of permanent admissions					Current Permanent Occupancy
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Northern HSC Trust						
Roddens	6	2	3	3	0	17
Rathmoyle	9	6	7	3	0	19
Pinewood	0	0	0	0	0	11
Rosedale	12	13	5	2	0	19
Greenisland	12	14	9	8	0	15
Clonmore	15	11	8	7	0	18
Lisgarel	7	4	13	2	0	21
Westlands	5	2	5	4	0	16
Joymount	19	5	11	10	0	18
Ellis Court Respite Unit does not have any permanent admissions.						
The Northern HSC Trust were unable to provide information on 3 other residential homes in the time frame requested.						
South Eastern HSC Trust						
Ardview House	8	5	4	3	6	12
Drumlough House	15	9	7	3	7	23
Laurelhill House	13	10	8	15	9	27
Mount Alexander House	8	14	10	8	10	34
Newcroft Lodge	18	12	12	8	8	21
Northfield House	0	1	2	1	0	7
Ravara House*	2	2	0	2	0	-
Struell Lodge	1	1	0	4	1	6
* Ravara House closed in March 2013.						
South Eastern HSC Trust also has 1 respite unit (Hillhall Home) and 1 short stay treatment centre (House 10 Enterprise Court) which do not have permanent admissions.						
Southern HSC Trust						
Roxborough House	7	2	8	7	5	18
Crozier	4	1	3	8	6	17

Residential Home	No. of permanent admissions					Current Permanent Occupancy
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Skeagh	4	0	8	8	6	12*
Cloughreagh House	4	2	2	5	4	18
Slieve Roe House	5	2	1	2	1	10
* Figure at 27 March 2013 when Skeagh House temporarily closed.						
Western HSC Trust						
Thackeray Place	10	6	5	11	5	26
Rectory Field	14	9	12	10	10	15
William Street	3	2	5	1	1	17
Greenfield	1	1	0	1	1	19
Seymour Gardens	5	5	3	8	9	21
Ralph's Close	-	-	16	1	0	16
Creamery House	1	0	0	1	0	10
Mantlin Court	-	-	-	-	1	16
Western HSC Trust also has 2 respite units (Respite Cottage and Beltany House) which do not have permanent admissions.						

Closure of Residential Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22618/11-15, to publish the precise information he received on 24 April 2013 on the Northern Health and Social Care Trust's "detailed proposals" for the closure of residential homes.

(AQW 23586/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department received an email from the NHSCT on 24 April 2013 which included a business case for their proposal, an EQIA, a briefing paper, their consultation document and the response pro forma, that would come before its Board on Thursday 25th April. I am content to place a copy in the Assembly library.

As I have previously advised the member, it was not clear to me, or to the Department, at the point of receiving the proposals from the Northern HSC Trust on 24 April 2013 that most mainstream elderly statutory homes were likely to be under consultation for closure. This was only apparent as other Trusts shared proposals in the days immediately following, which built up the wider picture.

On 3rd May 2013, I called a halt to the Trust consultation proposal process. I have asked the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to lead on a new, regionalised process of consultation, which will place at its core the principle of sensitivity to the needs and wishes of older people.

Closure of Residential Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22618/11-15, why he did not intervene to prevent the proposal to close all residential homes in the Northern Health and Social Care trust area once he obtained the Trust's "detailed proposals" on 24 April 2013.

(AQW 23587/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department received an email from the NHSCT on 24 April 2013 which included a business case for their proposal, an EQIA, a briefing paper, their consultation document and the response pro forma, that would come before its Board on Thursday 25th April. I am content to place a copy in the Assembly library.

As I have previously advised the member, it was not clear to me, or to the Department, at the point of receiving the proposals from the Northern HSC Trust on 24 April 2013 that most mainstream elderly statutory homes were likely to be under consultation for closure. This was only apparent as other Trusts shared proposals in the days immediately following, which built up the wider picture.

On 3rd May 2013, I called a halt to the Trust consultation proposal process. I have asked the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to lead on a new, regionalised process of consultation, which will place at its core the principle of sensitivity to the needs and wishes of older people.

Paediatric Cardiac Surgeries

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22720/11-15, to detail the cost for each procedure listed in Annex A.

(AQW 23629/11-15)

Mr Poots: The paediatric cardiac surgery procedures referred to in AQW 22720/11-15 were undertaken in 2012/2013 and final costs are not yet available.

Lifeline 24/7 Crisis Response Helpline

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of calls received by the Lifeline 24/7 crisis response helpline, in each month of the last three years.

(AQW 23632/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below shows the total number of calls received by the Lifeline 24/7 crisis response helpline, in each month of the last three financial years. This is a combined total (broken down by month) of Lifeline calls answered plus Lifeline calls missed. Taken together, these are classified as 'Lifeline Call Demand'.

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Total Calls 2010/11	6626	8230	7654	7109	6870	8359	8708	7629	6836	8141	8396	7204	91762
Total Calls 2011/12	6625	8456	8314	8708	7893	7638	9042	8083	8657	9685	8092	9596	100789
Total Calls 2012/13	8902	7573	7956	7665	7846	7336	7837	7910	7480	8318	7820	8879	95522

Waiting Times for Biologic Drugs

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the waiting times for biologic drugs will be brought into line with the rest of the UK where patients, in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines, receive these treatments immediately.

(AQW 23642/11-15)

Mr Poots: In England and Wales NHS bodies are expected to have implemented NICE guidance within three months.

The Commissioning Plan Direction has set a target for 2013/14 in respect of biologic therapies that no patient should wait longer than 3 months to commence NICE approved therapies for rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis; and, no patient should wait longer than 9 months to commence NICE approved specialist treatments for psoriasis, reducing to 3 months by September 2013.

Chief Executive of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22617 11/15, who made the appointment to the post; and what involvement he had in the appointment.

(AQW 23665/11-15)

Mr Poots: There had been discussions between my Department, the HSCB and the PHA for some time about the need to devote resources to enhance the strategic leadership in e-Health and external collaboration.

Given that Mr Donaghy had agreed to step aside as Chief Executive of the Northern HSC Trust, this new post offered suitable alternative employment to which he could move. His appointment to this post was agreed with the HSCB and while I was not involved in the appointment, I was aware that it was being made.

People Diagnosed with Alzheimers or Dementia

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether it is Departmental policy that people who are diagnosed with Alzheimers or Dementia are routinely referred to a Social Worker after diagnosis.

(AQW 23684/11-15)

Mr Poots: As you will be aware I published a Dementia Strategy for Northern Ireland in November 2011. One of the key themes identified within the strategy is Promoting Early Assessment and Diagnosis.

The immediate needs of people who have recently received a diagnosis will vary considerably, depending on the stage of their dementia and other individual needs. People may require care and support from a wide range of health and social care services. Their carers may also require support. A multi-disciplinary approach is therefore required in assessing need (including carer's needs), drawing up and reviewing a care plan and appointing a key worker.

For those in the early stages, initial requirements may be solely for information and advice, with a contact point should they wish to ask further questions later or to seek help as their condition deteriorates.

Under the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), GPs are encouraged to maintain a register of people in their practice who are diagnosed as having dementia. QOF also provides for 15 monthly reviews of people on the dementia registers to ensure their needs are being appropriately met.

Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposals to introduce standardised packaging of tobacco products.

(AQW 23700/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am supportive of any effective measures which would help to reduce the influence of tobacco advertising on children and young people, and which would help prevent them from smoking.

In view of this, I agreed to Northern Ireland being included in the UK wide consultation exercise on standardised packaging for tobacco products which was led by the Department of Health (London). The consultation summary report has not yet been cleared by Department of Health Ministers and an indication of the direction which England proposes to take on standardised packaging has yet to be announced. It is my view that any move towards the introduction of standardised tobacco packaging would best be taken on a UK wide basis. I have, therefore, written to the Secretary of State for Health in England to encourage him to come to an early decision on this matter.

Resuscitation Strategy

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the proposed new Resuscitation Strategy will include training for resuscitation following anaphylaxis.

(AQW 23731/11-15)

Mr Poots: The primary focus of the resuscitation strategy is on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). While CPR may be necessary for helping someone with severe anaphylaxis until medical help is available other forms of treatment may be more appropriate.

Gender Identity Clinic Staff

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) full time staff; and (ii) vacancies, within the Gender Identity clinic; and how long the clinic has been operating without a full complement of staff.

(AQW 23732/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- i) Staff in post (as at 4th June) at the Gender Identity Clinic in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust are shown in the table below.

Grade	Headcount	WTE	Weekly clinic hours
Consultant Psychiatrist	1	0.5	19 hours
Band 7 Nurse	2	2.0	36.5 hours each

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

- ii) The Belfast HSC Trust is currently advertising for a locum Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychosexual Gender Identity Medicine. In addition they will be internally transferring an additional experienced Band 7 nurse to the service as of 10th June.
- iii) The Belfast HSC Trust has advised that the two Band 7 Nurse Practitioners may also provide services for individuals with complex psychosexual needs as well as Gender Identity Services.

Gender Identity Clinic

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the current waiting time for new patient assessment and treatment at the Gender Identity clinic.

(AQW 23733/11-15)

Mr Poots: New patient assessment and treatment at a Gender Identity clinic is only carried out in Belfast HSC Trust.

Belfast HSC Trust has advised that, as of week commencing 3rd June 2013, there are currently 14 individuals awaiting treatment at the Gender Identity clinic and the current waiting time to receive treatment is 6-8 months.

On the 10th June 2013, a new Practitioner will commence assessments which should address this issue.

Transgender People

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action is being taken to ensure that transgender people have timely access to support and treatment during their transition.
(AQW 23734/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has now provided additional investment to enable the further development of Regional Psychosexual and Gender Identity Service provided by Belfast Trust. Whilst acknowledging it will take some time to fill new posts, the Trust is now accepting new referrals and on the 10th June a new Practitioner will commence assessments. The Health and Social Care Board and the Belfast Trust accepts that until all new posts are filled, patients may have to wait longer than the current access standard of 13 weeks, however, waiting times for this service should substantially improve by the end of this year.

Health Service Dental Care

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what reforms have been considered that would retain the commitment payment for dentists providing Health Service dental care.

(AQW 23742/11-15)

Mr Poots: In order to address the pressures on the General Dental Services budget, my Department consulted upon a number of proposed changes to the provision of General Dental Services, including the cessation of commitment payments. A number of the responses included alternative suggestions for addressing the budget pressures and potentially retaining the commitment payment.

All responses to the consultation have been considered carefully. I will shortly be in a position to decide which changes will be taken forward. A summary of the consultation responses will be published alongside the final details of which changes will be introduced.

Health Service Dental Care

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the rationale for removing commitment payments to dentists providing Health Service dental care, given that they have opened up access and ensured a high level of dental patient registration.

(AQW 23743/11-15)

Mr Poots: In order to address the pressures on the General Dental Services budget, my Department developed a number of proposals to change the treatments available to patients and allowances paid to dentists. As commitment to the Health Service and access to dentistry have significantly improved over the past 3 years, my Department re-examined the requirement for continuing to pay out commitment payments. As the conditions which led to the introduction of the allowance are no longer extant, it has been proposed that this allowance would no longer be paid from April 2013.

When considering these proposals, my Department was conscious of the importance of the Practice Allowance in supporting the ongoing running costs of Health Service dental practices. In order to protect the Practice Allowance for the most committed Health Service practices the focus for savings proposals was therefore on the commitment payment.

Health Service Dental Care

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what mechanisms are being put in place to reward dentists who register Health Service patients following the removal of the commitment payment.

(AQW 23744/11-15)

Mr Poots: Dentists who register children or adults as Health Service patients receive monthly capitation and continuing care payments. These payments are increased by up to 50% if the patient lives in an electoral ward that is recognised as having a higher incidence of dental need. Practices who demonstrate their commitment to the Health Service, through registration levels, are eligible to apply for the practice allowance which is an award of up to 11% of the gross Health Service turnover for the practice. The annual practice allowance budget is around £8m. In addition, dentists receive fees for all Health Service treatments provided to their registered patients.

Dental Operating Costs

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority requirements have increased the average operating costs for dentists, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 23745/11-15)

Mr Poots: The requirement for dental practices providing private dental treatment in Northern Ireland to register with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority was introduced in April 2011. There would have been no costs to dentists prior to this. The cost of initial registration is £952 per practice and the charge in subsequent years is £46 per dental chair.

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority inspections are primarily concerned with the provision of private dental care and treatment and the Department does not hold information on the costs associated with the provision of private dental services.

Waiting Times for Biologic Drugs

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has had any contact with the Health and Social Care Board to ensure that Commissioning Plans include a target to reduce the waiting times for Biologic drugs to zero.

(AQW 23762/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am committed to using health service resources effectively and providing the best possible access to specialist medicines that we can within the funding available.

The current Commissioning Plan Direction therefore sets the focus for the Health and Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency in the commissioning of health and social care services during the year 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014. The Commissioning Plan Direction has set a target for 2013/14 in respect of biologic therapies that no patient should wait longer than 3 months to commence National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) approved therapies for rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis; and no patient should wait longer than 9 months to commence NICE approved specialist treatments for psoriasis, reducing to 3 months by September 2013.

The Limited Circumstances For A Lawful Termination Of Pregnancy In Northern Ireland

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the extensive work programme undertaken to produce the draft guidance on The Limited Circumstances For A Lawful Termination Of Pregnancy In Northern Ireland; and who was involved in this programme.

(AQW 23793/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department's Termination of Pregnancy Working Group has undertaken a significant body of work to produce guidance for health professionals in line with the law in Northern Ireland. The group consists of medical, nursing, legal and policy expertise.

The guidance document currently issued for consultation is the result of the careful consideration of medical, nursing and legal views, as well as those of other interested groups, emerging from the various consultations that the Department has run stretching back to the Court of Appeal order in October 2004. The Court of Appeal Order instructed that the Department should inquire into the adequacy of termination of pregnancy services in Northern Ireland (including aftercare) and following appropriate inquiry and consultation, issue guidance if it was required.

Following the Order, a Departmental Group commissioned a workshop and survey to gather the views of health professionals in the field. The Group determined that there was a need for guidance, and a draft was prepared and consulted upon in 2007. This work included a series of bilateral meetings with a range of stakeholder groups. The Northern Ireland Assembly debated the guidance and passed a resolution that opposed its introduction on 22 October 2007. The then Minister asked the Chief Medical Officer to convene a Termination of Pregnancy Working Group to consider the views raised. Following a number of meetings the working group produced revised guidance which it released for public consultation in July 2008.

Following reflection on the views raised in the consultation, revised draft guidance was produced and provided to the Health Committee on 17 October 2008 for an evidence session with Departmental officials. Clearance to issue the guidance was received from the Northern Ireland Executive on 5 March 2009 and the guidance was published on 13 March 2009.

The March 2009 document was challenged in court by the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) and in November 2009 Lord Justice Girvan gave his judgement to the Judicial Review. He found in favour of the Department in five of the seven grounds and that two parts "failed to give fully clear and accurate guidance". However, he held that the statement of the law on termination of pregnancy contained in the guidance was correct. He ordered the Department to reconsider the sections in the document on counselling and conscientious objection. While these sections were being redrafted, interim guidance was issued. The interim guidance was threatened by further legal challenge by SPUC.

The Department withdrew the interim guidance and published a revised version of draft guidance on 27 July 2010. Consideration was given to consultation responses received. The Department provided draft guidance and a summary of consultation responses to the Health Committee in February 2011. The guidance was submitted to the Executive for approval, but not considered before the Assembly was dissolved in March 2011.

Since my appointment as Health Minister, I have given careful consideration to the development and publication of guidance that satisfies the requirements of the law and provides advice to health professionals. I have discussed the matter with officials to ensure the current draft is robust, and have sought clarification and assurance on a number of issues. I am content that the current draft guidance, The Limited Circumstances for a Lawful Termination of Pregnancy in Northern Ireland, meets the requirements emerging from the 2004 Court of Appeal order.

The current document is out for public consultation until 29 July and will receive further consideration in light of responses received during the consultation process. It will then be provided to the Executive for their approval.

The Limited Circumstances For A Lawful Termination Of Pregnancy In Northern Ireland

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to identify the range of stakeholder groups that were engaged in the formal consultation exercises and informal discussions

to produce the draft guidance on The Limited Circumstances For A Lawful Termination Of Pregnancy In Northern Ireland.

(AQW 23794/11-15)

Mr Poots: Development of the draft guidance document began following the Court of Appeal Order in 2004. Since then, the Department has held a number of public consultation exercises on various versions of the guidance.

Responses to previous consultation have been received from a range of stakeholders including Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecology, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Psychiatrists, British Medical Association, Health and Social Care Boards and Trusts, the Public Health Agency as well as individual Doctors. Responses have also been received from a range of groups including Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland, Family Planning Association, Society for Protection of Unborn Children, Precious Life, Life NI, Doctors for Life, Northern Catholic Bishops, Women's Resource and Development Agency, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Alliance for Choice. This list is not exhaustive.

Meetings that have taken place include discussions with doctors from a range of specialties, a workshop to assess health professionals views and meetings with stakeholder groups. The Department met with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to discuss elements of the current draft to ensure those elements are fit for purpose.

Views expressed by the above organisations and groups were considered during the development of the current draft which is out for public consultation until 29 July. The Department has encouraged stakeholder groups to make their views known.

Slievemore Unit, Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the next steps on the future of the Slievemore Unit, Derry.

(AQW 23796/11-15)

Mr Poots: Slievemore Unit did not close on 31 May 2013. Discussions have been ongoing between the Department, RQIA and Trust officials in an attempt to explore all avenues possible in order to find a resolution which will allow matters to move forward. I also met with Elaine Way, CEO WHSCT, on Monday 3 June to discuss this matter. I emphasised that the safety and care for the six remaining residents continues to be my first concern. .

I have recently written to the Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland to ask her to mediate between organisations and families with the aim of giving all parties sufficient opportunity for meaningful engagement.

Costs of Appointments with GPs

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average cost to the Health Service of an appointment with a GP.

(AQW 23817/11-15)

Mr Poots: The average cost of an appointment with a GP was £28 in 2011/12 which is the latest year available.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average cost of attendance at an (i) Accident and Emergency Department; and (ii) an Accident and Emergency Department, broken down by the different categories used for recording attendance.

(AQW 23818/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The average cost of attendance at an Accident & Emergency Department in 2011/12 (latest information available) was £126.
- (ii) The cost of attendance at an A&E Department broken down by the different categories used for recording attendance are not collected centrally and can therefore only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Cost of an Out-Patient appointment

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the average cost of an out-patient appointment with a Consultant; and (ii) the average cost of an out-patient attendance with a Consultant, broken down by medical speciality.

(AQW 23819/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The average cost of an Outpatient attendance is estimated to be £160.
- (ii) The average cost of an Outpatient attendance with a Consultant, broken down by medical speciality is set out in the table below;

Specialty	Total Costs Per Attendance £
100 General Surgery	162
101 Urology	143
110 T & O surgery	153
120 ENT	155
130 Ophthalmology	144
140 Oral surgery	157
142 Paediatric dentistry	114
143 Orthodontics	203
150 Neurosurgery	394
160 Plastic surgery	91
170 Cardiac surgery	208
171 Paediatric surgery	159
172 Thoracic surgery	174
180 A&E	126
190 Anaesthetics	176
191 Pain management	156
300 General medicine	195
301 Gastroenterology	161
302 Endocrinology	183
303 Haematology	130
311 Clinical genetics	2,427

Specialty	Total Costs Per Attendance £
314 Rehabilitation	99
315 Palliative medicine	67
320 Cardiology	185
330 Dermatology	93
340 Thoracic medicine	281
350 Infectious Diseases	110
360 Genito urinary medicine	369
361a Nephrology	176
370a Medical Oncology (does not include Chemo/Radio Drugs costs)	266
400 Neurology	447
410 Rheumatology	157
420 Paediatrics	194
421 Paediatric Neurology	591
430 Geriatric medicine	245
450 Dental medicine specialties	68
501 Obs & Gyn (Obstetrics)	106
502a IVF and Other Fertility Treatments	167
502b Gynaecology (Excluding IVF and Other Fertility Treatments)	117
700 Mental Handicap	251
710 Mental illness	242
711 Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	367
713 Psychotherapy	358
715 Old age psychiatry	285
800 Clinical Oncology	143
822 Chemical Pathology	174
823 Haematology	147

Negligence Cases

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department has paid out (i) in medical negligence cases to plaintiffs; (ii) in legal fees related to negligence cases; (iii) to the lawyers retained by his Department; and (iv) to the legal teams used by plaintiffs suing his Department, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 23832/11-15)

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

	2012/13 £m	2011/12 £m	2010/11 £m
Compensation paid	19	18	23
Plaintiff costs	5	7	4
Defence costs (excl *DLS)	3	2	3
Directorate of Legal Services costs	1	1	1
Total	28	29	32

* DLS – Directorate of Legal Services

Closure of Elderly Care Homes

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he proposes to take any further action against the Health and Social Care Trusts which have breached his Department's policy on the closure of elderly care homes.

(AQW 23835/11-15)

Mr Poots: Proposals – and not decisions - were brought forward by individual HSC Trusts. On 3rd May 2013, I called a halt to the Trust consultation proposal process. I have asked the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to lead on a new, regionalised process of consultation, which will place at its core the principle of sensitivity to the needs and wishes of older people.

My concern has always been to ensure that pace of change is such as to ensure that resident's views and wishes are being heard and accommodated where reasonably possible.

I am content that the actions I have taken now allow for that to happen.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Medical and Administrative Staff

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) medical; and (ii) administrative staff employed in each Health and Social Care Trust, broken down by grade.

(AQW 23838/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- i) Headcount and whole-time equivalent figures for medical staff in each Health and Social Care Trust, as at 31st March 2013, are shown in the table below.

Grade	Belfast HSCT		Northern HSCT		South Eastern HSCT		Southern HSCT		Western HSCT	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Consultant	633	600.1	205	193.5	213	199.6	200	191.2	213	208.9
Associate Specialist/ Staff Grade	63	50.6	32	29.7	29	24.9	35	30.4	36	30.1
Specialty Doctor	59	48.2	59	45.4	58	41.3	74	63.0	34	29.7

Grade	Belfast HSCT		Northern HSCT		South Eastern HSCT		Southern HSCT		Western HSCT	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Specialty Registrar/ Core Trainee/ Locum Appt for Training/ Locum Appt for Service	576	564.5	154	151.5	164	158.6	153	150.5	155	153.7
Foundation Doctors	214	213.2	90	90.0	83	82.7	70	70.0	71	71.0
Hospital/ Medical Practitioner	27	16.1	18	5.8	21	6.6	8	2.7	5	2.1
Other Medical & Dental	17	17.0	1	1.0	0	0.0	3	1.2	2	1.1

Source: Human Resources Management System

Table notes:

- 1 Figures exclude staff on career break and staff with a whole-time equivalent less than or equal to 0.03.
HC=headcount, WTE= whole-time equivalent.
 - 2 'Other Medical and Dental' covers a variety of small groups of medical staff, such as GP Facilitators, Clinical Research Fellows and Medical Officers.
- ii) Headcount and whole-time equivalent figures for administrative and clerical staff in each Health and Social Care Trust, as at 31st March 2013, are shown in the table below.

Grade	Belfast HSCT		Northern HSCT		South Eastern HSCT		Southern HSCT		Western HSCT	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Bands/ Grades 1 to 4	2106	1775.6	1151	930.8	986	802.6	1213	993.6	1038	893.5
Medical/ Personal Secretaries/ Typists	575	474.4	458	375.5	281	239.1	231	184.6	322	283.1
Bands/ Grades 5 to 7	636	603.1	273	254.0	253	237.8	282	261.6	307	298.7
Band 8A to 8D	176	174.6	67	65.8	114	111.6	67	64.1	63	61.7

Grade	Belfast HSCT		Northern HSCT		South Eastern HSCT		Southern HSCT		Western HSCT	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Non-AfC Senior Managers/ Executives/ Chief Executives/ Directors	12	12.0	10	10.0	9	9.0	9	9.0	10	10.0

Source: Human Resources Management System

Table notes:

- 1 Figures exclude staff on career break and staff with a whole-time equivalent less than or equal to 0.03 and members of Boards/Chairperson. HC=headcount, WTE= whole-time equivalent, non-AfC = non-Agenda for Change grades.
- 2 Figures may include non-Trust staff on the payroll for payments purposes only.
- 3 Trusts may differ in coding of senior manager/director, preferring to code with the profession, rather than Admin & Clerical.

Average Daily Cost of a Stay in Hospital

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average daily cost of a stay in hospital; and the average daily cost broken down by medical speciality.

(AQW 23854/11-15)

Mr Poots: The average daily cost of a stay in hospital differs significantly between patients and is subject to a range of variables including the diagnosis, procedures performed and the complexity of the case. In this context, it is not possible to provide a single average daily cost per patient for a stay in hospital.

Regional Psychosexual and Gender Identity Service: Waiting List

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on the waiting list for assessment and treatment with the Regional Psychosexual and Gender Identity Service.

(AQW 23857/11-15)

Mr Poots: Refer to answer in AQW 23733/2011-15.

Tourette's Syndrome

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available in each Health and Social Care Trust for people diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome; and to detail the location of these services.

(AQW 23864/11-15)

Mr Poots: In the event of a person with Tourette's Syndrome being referred into services they will be assessed and signposted at Primary Mental Health Care level to the relevant existing services in general Psychiatry/Psychology.

Closure of Residential Care Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the announcement by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust that it intended to close all its residential care homes, and the award of £14m in contracts to private domiciliary care providers, to detail (i)

the business cases for these contracts; (ii) whether contracts worth over £500,000 were subject to approval by the Department of Finance and Personnel; and (iii) whether these contracts were made to preempt, or in conjunction with, the closure of the statutory residential homes.

(AQW 23867/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern HSC Trust has indicated that it is not aware of £14m in contracts being awarded to domiciliary care providers in their area and therefore the information requested cannot be provided.

Pinewoods Residential Home

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many admissions were made to Pinewoods Residential home for (i) long-term; (ii) respite; and (iii) step up or step down placements, in each year since 2009.

(AQW 23868/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not held centrally and was therefore requested from the Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. The information provided is held in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. ADMISSIONS TO PINEWOOD RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME

Year	Admission Type			Total
	Permanent	Respite	Intermediate Care	
2008/09	0	48	0	48
2009/10	0	15	78	93
2010/11	0	66	101	167
2011/12	0	34	125	159
2012/13	0	13	149	162

Closure of Residential Care Homes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the statement by the Director of Older Persons' Services in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, at the Trust Board on 25 May 2013, that no one was upset by the plans to close residential care homes; and what action he has taken against Trusts since his decision to remove their power to close statutory residential homes.

(AQW 23869/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised that the statement you refer to was part of a briefing by the Director of Older Person's Services to inform the Trust Board of the feedback she had received from the staff who had carried out individual interviews with residents and their families on Friday 26th April. These staff had advised that no resident was distressed when they left the homes having carried out the interviews.

On 3rd May 2013, I called a halt to the Trust consultation process. I have asked the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to lead on a new, regionalised process of consultation, which will place at its core the principle of sensitivity to the needs and wishes of older people.

My concern has also always been to ensure that pace of change is such as to ensure that resident's views and wishes are being heard and accommodated where reasonably possible.

I am content that the actions I have taken now allow for all of this to happen.

Same-Sex Couples with Adopted Children

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what status married same-sex couples with adopted children will have if they move from England or Wales to live here after the relevant Westminster legislation is passed.

(AQO 4255/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill seeks to give effect to the UK Government's decision to introduce same sex marriage in England and Wales. Northern Ireland is not introducing same sex marriage and, accordingly, the Bill provides for an English or Welsh same sex marriage to be treated as a civil partnership in Northern Ireland.

This has prompted queries with regard to the status of a married same-sex couple with adopted children. I am assuming that the Member is endeavouring to establish whether the couple will still be regarded as the child's parents.

An adoption order granted in England, Wales and Scotland is recognised in Northern Ireland under Article 2 of the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987. This position will not change with enactment of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill, nor with the introduction of the Adoption and Children Bill, which will continue to recognise adoption orders made in England, Wales and Scotland. Likewise, adoption orders made in Northern Ireland are recognised in other parts of the UK. This mutual recognition arrangement is designed to ensure that children and adoptive parents have access to the post adoption supports they require, regardless of where in the UK they reside.

Prisoners Diagnosed with a Mental Illness

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the services available to prisoners who have been diagnosed with a mental illness.

(AQO 4270/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, which has responsibility for the provision of health services in prisons, has advised that prisoners have access to a range of mental health services similar to those available in the community to the general public. Access to services is based on the clinical needs of the individual.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust: Chairperson Vacancy

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many applications the Northern Health and Social Care Trust has received for the vacant role of Chairperson; and whether any reorganisation of the Chairperson's roles and responsibilities are planned.

(AQW 23896/11-15)

Mr Poots: A total of 4 applications were received for the Chair post on the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. Due to the small pool of applicants, it is the Department's intention to re-advertise and is now in the planning stage.

I can confirm that no reorganisation of the Chairperson's roles and responsibilities are planned. The role and responsibilities of the Board and Chair are set out in the Trust's Management Statement.

Waiting Times for Podiatry Appointments

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what are the current waiting times for podiatry appointments in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 23897/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not held centrally and was therefore requested from the Southern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust.

Information on clients waiting for the commencement of podiatry treatment as at 3 June 2013 is detailed in the table below by aggregate time bands.

HSC Trust	Waiting time from referral to commencement of treatment for Podiatry (by weeks waiting)					Total
	0-3	>3 to 6	>6 to 9	> 9 to 13	> 13	
Southern	326	368	296	125	5	1,120

Note: Information refers to active waits.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients at each GP surgery, in each Health and Social Care Trust, are diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis.

(AQW 23902/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available.

Community Nurses and Care Workers: Travel Expenses

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Northern Health and Social Care Trust is proposing to amend the travel expenses paid to community nurses and care workers from 1 July 2013.

(AQW 23925/11-15)

Mr Poots: The new mileage rates from 1 July 2013, for all HSC staff employed under Agenda for Change terms and conditions, will be 67 pence per mile for the first 3,500 miles and 24 pence per mile thereafter. These new travel reimbursement arrangements are a National Agenda for Change Agreement negotiated with the Main National Health Service Trade Unions.

People with a Severe Learning Disability

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area have a severe learning disability.

(AQW 23927/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF), GPs maintain a register of the number of patients aged 18 years and over with learning disabilities. The register includes all patients with learning disabilities, regardless of the severity of their condition. It is not possible to disaggregate the data to determine how many patients have severe learning disabilities.

As at 31 March 2013, there were 2,006 patients on the learning disability registers of GPs located in Southern Health and Social Care Trust area.

This figure has been determined based on the constituency in which the GP practice is located; it should be noted that patients may not reside in the constituency in which their practice is located.

Accident and Emergency Department Patients

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients were processed at each Accident and Emergency Department, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 23933/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the number of patients attending each Accident and Emergency department, in each of the last five years.

Information on attendances (new, unplanned and/or planned reviews) at emergency care departments is published on an annual basis and is available to view or download from:

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

Information for 2012/13 is due to be published on the 27th June 2013.

Stroke Lysis Treatment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 21822/11-15, how many times in the last twelve months a patient at (i) the Causeway Hospital; and (ii) Antrim Area Hospital attended the Accident and Emergency department and, having been diagnosed with a CVA, received stroke Lysis treatment.

(AQW 23949/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) For the twelve months April 2012 – March 2013, 10 patients attended Causeway Hospital A&E and, having been diagnosed with a cerebrovascular accident (stroke) received Lysis treatment.
- (ii) For the twelve months April 2012 – March 2013, 24 patients attended Antrim Hospital A&E and, having been diagnosed with a cerebrovascular accident (stroke) received Lysis treatment.

People with Learning Disabilities

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is a statutory obligation on Health and Social Care Trusts to carry out a tenancy test and apply it to people with learning disabilities, to ensure that the person is fit to live independently.

(AQW 23953/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Trusts do not have a statutory obligation to carry out a tenancy test for adults with a Learning Disability.

A tenancy test does not indicate an individual's ability to live independently - this is determined by a comprehensive assessment of need. In some cases the person may be assessed as able to live independently whereby for others varying degrees of support and assistance will be required for the individual/s to maintain their own tenancy.

HSC Trusts do not award tenancies. These are delivered through provider organisations and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Civil Servants' Salaries

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of civil servants employed in his Department who are in receipt of a salary in excess of £100,000.

(AQW 23957/11-15)

Mr Poots: Two senior officials in my Department (one Civil Servant and one Seconded In) are currently paid in excess of £100,000 per annum.

Revised Late Payment Regulations

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 19675/11-15 and following the transposition of the revised Late Payment Regulations and the publication of DAO (DFP) 04/13 on 12 March 2013, to detail (i) the precise payment terms that now apply to supply contract SS16A; (ii) the date of which the revised payment terms became effective; (iii) to which transactions these revised payment terms apply; and (iv) the date from which these revised payment terms are to apply.

(AQW 24003/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The payment terms set out in the Price and Payment section of the revised supply contract SS16A are as follows:

Price and Payment

- The Contract price shall be net, i.e. after the deduction of all agreed discounts. It shall include the cost of packaging, packing materials, addressing, labelling, loading and delivery to the addresses named in the Contract or order. The amount of any duty additional to the Contract price and any early settlement discounts shall be shown separately in the Contract.
 - Payment shall be made by the Authority in accordance with the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 (as amended by the 2013 Regulations) no later than 30 days after the Authority completes its procedure for verification and acceptance of the goods provided that a valid Contractor's invoice is received by the Authority on or before the completion of its verification or acceptance procedure. The said procedure for verification or acceptance of the goods shall (unless otherwise expressly agreed in writing between the parties) be completed within 30 days from the date of delivery of the goods.
 - Invoices should be quoted in Sterling (GBP) and forwarded to the address as indicated on the purchase order or as advised by the Authority and/or Organisation.
 - An invoice shall be rendered on the Contractor's own invoice form to the Authority, clearly marked with the Authority's order number and quoting the Contract Reference. Where the invoice submitted by the Contractor contains an error such that the invoice cannot be processed by the Authority for payment, the Authority will reject the invoice and return it to the Contractor for correction. In such a case, time for payment of the rejected invoice will not start to run until a fully corrected valid invoice is received by the Authority.
 - The Authority should pay the Contract price to the Contractor, by BACS (Bank Account Clearing System) if the Authority so chooses.
 - Whenever under the Contract any sum of money shall be recoverable from or payable by the Contractor the same may be deducted from any sum then due or which at any time thereafter may become due to the Contractor under the Contract or under any other Contract with the Authority.
- (ii) The payment terms apply to all contracts awarded on or after 16th March 2013 in line with the revised legislation.
- (iii) The revised payment terms apply to all transactions against contracts awarded on or after 16th March 2013.
- (iv) The revised payment terms apply from 16th March 2013

Food Delivery Vehicles

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what regulations are in place to regulate food delivery vehicles.

(AQW 24010/11-15)

Mr Poots: This is a matter for the Food Standards Agency, which is a non-ministerial government department. The FSA has advised as follows.

With regard to regulation of food delivery vehicles from a food hygiene perspective, this is provided for in Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs. This Regulation lays down general rules on the hygiene of foodstuffs that apply to all food business operators and includes specific requirements in relation to transport. This European Regulation is enforced in Northern Ireland through the provisions of The Food Hygiene Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (as amended).

Cross-Infection in Dental Surgeries

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is currently a clinical problem with cross-infection in dental surgeries that warrants the increased use of single use disposable dental instruments.

(AQW 24021/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is not currently a clinical problem with cross-infection in dental surgeries that warrants the increased use of single use disposable dental instruments.

Some items that are difficult to clean and decontaminate are manufactured for single-use only and disposal, such as endodontic files for root canal treatments. Some dentists use other disposable products, which are relatively cheap to mass produce in disposable form, as they save on the reprocessing time for cleaning and decontamination. Examples are saliva ejectors, cups and disposable scalpels. However, most dental instruments are re-usable after undergoing appropriate cleaning and decontamination processes. Most dental care and treatment is provided in High Street dental practices and the DHSSPS PEL (12)23 guidance for Northern Ireland allows for the local decontamination and re-use of dental instruments in these primary care dental settings.

Different guidance applies to Trust-based dental services, i.e. the Community Dental Services and Hospital Dental Services, which come under the Regional Decontamination Strategy. DHSSPS policy is that these decontamination requirements must be met from Sterile Service Departments (SSD) accredited to the essential requirements of the Medical Device Regulations. Only the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) uses single-use metal filling instruments. The BHSCT includes a relatively large number of dental clinics as well as the Royal Dental Hospital. The BHSCT uses a large volume of instruments and has decided this is the most cost-effective option, given that the disposable instruments meet the requirements for clinical use

People Under 18 Diagnosed with Epilepsy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people under the age of 18 in each Health and Social Care Trust area are diagnosed with epilepsy.

(AQW 24046/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available.

Under the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF), GPs maintain a register of the number of patients aged 18 and over who are currently on drug treatment for epilepsy. The register does not include patients under the age of 18 as care for younger patients is generally undertaken outside of primary care.

Annual Cost of Dealing with Alcohol Abuse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the annual cost to the Health Service for dealing with alcohol abuse.

(AQW 24047/11-15)

Mr Poots: Research (http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/social_costs_of_alcohol_misuse_200809.pdf) commissioned by my Department placed the annual cost of alcohol misuse to the Health and Social Care system at up to £240 Million in 2008/09. The breakdown of these costs is as follows:

Area	Upper cost estimate
GP-prescribed drugs	£0.3M
GP/practice nurse consultations attributable to alcohol	£14M
Laboratory testing in primary care	£0.1M
Hospitalisation days – acute	£72.1M

Area	Upper cost estimate
Hospitalisation days – mental illness	£10.8M
A&E attendances	£30.5M
Outpatient hospital visits	£5.4M
Day hospital visits – mental illness	<£0.1M
Day hospital visits – non-mental illness	£2.1M
Community psychiatric teams	£5.3M
Health promotion	£0.4M
Drug and Alcohol Coordination Teams	£4.3 M
Ambulance journeys	£12.6M
Children and family services	£69.2M
Youth justice	£4M
Criminal justice social work	£8.8M
Total Estimated Cost to HSC	£240m

In the same report, total social cost to Northern Ireland of alcohol misuse was estimated at up to £881.1 Million.

Rush Hall Care Home, Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what investigations are on-going into the complaints made about Rush Hall Care Home, Limavady.

(AQW 24051/11-15)

Mr Poots: Abuse of vulnerable adults wherever it occurs and whoever is responsible is wrong and cannot be tolerated; it is particularly abhorrent when the abuse is perpetrated by the very individuals entrusted with the care of vulnerable people.

Making sure that vulnerable people and their rights are fully safeguarded, wherever they live, is a key shared responsibility.

I cannot comment on the specifics of the cases in Rush Hall, as they are the subject of formal investigation by the PSNI.

I can confirm however that the Western Trust will work closely with the PSNI and the Independent Sector Provider involved. This is part of a Joint Protocol which allows for multi-agency co-operation in such cases.

Ownership of Residential or Nursing Homes for Older People

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (a) executive or non-executive members of (i) Health & Social Care Trusts; (ii) the Health and Social Care Board; (iii) local commissioning groups; (iv) the Public Health Authority; (v) the Patient Client Council; (vi) the Business Services Organisation; (vii) the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority; (viii) the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service; and (ix) the Northern Ireland Social Care Council; and (b) officials at Senior Civil Service level within his Department, have interests on the registrar that include ownership of residential or nursing homes for older people.

(AQW 24065/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Boards of all HSC bodies and the Department must keep registers of interest appropriate to the bodies' activities. Chairs and board members must, on appointment, declare any potential conflicts of interests such as business interests, position of authority in a charity or voluntary body in the field of health and social care, and any connection with a voluntary or other body contracting for HSC services. All board members should declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of conducting HSC business. In relation to the questions asked the information would be recorded on the HSC Bodies and the Department's Register of Interest which are available on request, from the relevant body, for public inspection. The current Departmental register of interest does not record that any Senior Civil Servants in the Department have declared interests of the types identified in these three Assembly questions.

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(AQW 24066/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Boards of all HSC bodies and the Department must keep registers of interest appropriate to the bodies' activities. Chairs and board members must, on appointment, declare any potential conflicts of interests such as business interests, position of authority in a charity or voluntary body in the field of health and social care, and any connection with a voluntary or other body contracting for HSC services. All board members should declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of conducting HSC business. In relation to the questions asked the information would be recorded on the HSC Bodies and the Department's Register of Interest which are available on request, from the relevant body, for public inspection. The current Departmental register of interest does not record that any Senior Civil Servants in the Department have declared interests of the types identified in these three Assembly questions.

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(AQW 24067/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Boards of all HSC bodies and the Department must keep registers of interest appropriate to the bodies' activities. Chairs and board members must, on appointment, declare any potential conflicts of interests such as business interests, position of authority in a charity or voluntary body in the field of health and social care, and any connection with a voluntary or other body contracting for HSC services. All board members should declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of conducting HSC business. In relation to the questions asked the information would be recorded on the HSC Bodies and the Department's Register of Interest which are available on request, from the relevant body, for public inspection. The current Departmental register of interest does not record that any Senior Civil Servants in the Department have declared interests of the types identified in these three Assembly questions.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Paediatric Allergy Service

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether dietician services have ever been or are currently provided within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Paediatric Allergy Service; and to outline the reasons for this position.

(AQW 24070/11-15)

Mr Poots: There has never been a dedicated dietetic support for the paediatric allergy/immunology clinics held in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) or the day case treatments which take place in the Immunology Day Centre. The dietetic service is not involved in food challenges for these patients.

General paediatric dieticians working in RBHSC see allergy patients who are resident in the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust area as in patients and outpatients at RBHSC and community clinics; these referrals are from the immunology/allergy consultants with clinics in RBHSC and other paediatricians.

If the patient is not from the Belfast HSC Trust area, the referral is forwarded to the GP with a covering letter asking for a referral to be made to the local Trust dietetic services.

Never Events

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has sought or obtained information on Never Events; and when this information was sought and to what effect.

(AQW 24092/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not sought or obtained information on 'Never Events', as incidents such as those defined by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) as 'Never Events' fall within the Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) reporting criteria and consequently are captured under HSC Board's Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) Reporting System

Organ Donation

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether, at the joint Organ Donation announcement with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on 5 February 2013, an undertaking was given that the Executive would move towards a position of introducing a soft opt-out system of organ donation.

(AQW 24097/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 5 February 2013 I announced my intention to consult on public attitudes towards organ donation, including the possible introduction of an opt-out system, which would be accompanied by a strong message to join the organ donor register. This work is being taken forward by the Public Health Agency in the form of a public survey and focus group meetings with key stakeholders. A decision on the next steps for increasing organ donation in Northern Ireland will be taken when the findings of this work are known later this year. A major public information campaign is also planned for later this year.

Department of Justice

Prisoner Granted Temporary Leave

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21633/11-15, whether the approving Governor was also the Governor who accompanied Mr Parker on the day in question; (ii) whether this is routine practice; and (iii) if not, what level of Governor is assigned for accompaniment on such occasions.

(AQW 22586/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): I have been informed by the Governor of Maghaberry that the governor who accompanied Mr Parker on the day in question was also the approving governor. This would not be routine practice. Accompanied Temporary Release procedures do not specify the grade of accompanying officers.

Maghaberry Prison: Use of Illegal Drugs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether consideration has been given to a pilot project in Maghaberry Prison, aimed at the use of illegal drugs, whereby all medication is dispensed per dose per prisoner; introducing supervised swallowing for all prisoners on prescribed medication; mandatory fully supervised daily drugs testing, and mandatory reporting to the PSNI of all prisoners caught with illegal drugs with a view to court prosecution and conviction.

(AQW 23268/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the South Eastern Trust (SET) worked in partnership to introduce supervised swallow arrangements for high value, tradable medication across the Service. Both NIPS and SET agreed that other medications did not present the same risk, and there was no value in extending the arrangements given the unacceptable demand this would place on healthcare staff, and the implications for delay in delivering the regime. Supervised swallow arrangements are presently being introduced at Maghaberry.

Mandatory, suspicion and progression-linked drug testing is regularly carried out at all prisons.

Prisoners and visitors to the prison found to be in possession of illegal drugs are routinely referred to the PSNI for investigation with a view to prosecution.

Brendan Lillis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the status of the case against Brendan Lillis; and whether the charges against him are being held in abeyance until he is fit to stand trial.

(AQW 23526/11-15)

Mr Ford: Mr Lillis is living in the community on a reinstated life licence, his release having been directed by the Parole Commissioners in August 2011.

The status of the case against him, including any outstanding charges and whether he is fit to stand trial on such charges, is not a matter for the Department of Justice.

Prisoner's Request for Compassionate Leave

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners were refused compassionate leave in each of the last two years; and how many of these decisions were overturned on appeal or by Judicial Review.

(AQW 23529/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of Compassionate Temporary Release applications refused by NIPS in each of the last two years is:

Year	No. of CTR applications refused
2011	222
2012	337
*2013	141

* 1 January - 30 April

Four decisions have been overturned at judicial review, three in 2012 and one, to date, in 2013.

Prisoners on Compassionate Leave

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Joseph McManus who absconded whilst on compassionate leave, why a statement was not immediately released to the media when the issue was discovered.

(AQW 23604/11-15)

Mr Ford: In accordance with Prison Service procedures, Joseph McManus was posted as 'unlawfully at large' on the Department of Justice website after he failed to return to Maghaberry Prison.

Failure to Pay a Television Licence Fee: Custodial Sentences

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22580/11-15, to detail the number of people who served custodial sentences solely as a result of their failure to pay a television licence fee, in 2007 and 2012.

(AQW 23644/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prisoners in custody for failure to pay a television fee are often initially committed to prison on remand or already serving concurrent sentences for other offences. A manual exercise in order to detail the number of people who served custodial sentences solely as a result of their failure to pay a television licence fee could therefore only be conducted at a disproportionate cost to the public purse.

Orders Prohibiting Publicity on the Granting of Injunctive Relief

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of orders that have been made by the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief since 30 April 2012; (ii) when each order was made; (iii) the number that are extant; (iv) whether any such orders have been discharged since 30 April 2012; and (v) the total of orders, whenever made, extant on 29 May 2013.

(AQW 23690/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Two orders have been made by the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief since 30 April 2012.
- (ii) The date when each of these orders was made cannot be provided without risking contravening the terms of the order itself.
- (iii) Of the orders made since 30 April 2012 two are extant.
- (iv) No orders made since 30 April 2012 have been discharged.
- (v) This information is not readily available and could only be compiled at a disproportionate cost.

Further information in respect of the extant orders cannot be provided without risking contravening the terms of the order itself.

Prisoner on Compassionate Leave

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Joseph McManus who absconded whilst on compassionate leave, to detail what he was subsequently charged with after committing further offences which led to his recapture.

(AQW 23706/11-15)

Mr Ford: Joseph McManus appeared at Laganside Courts on 8 April 2013 and was charged with the following offences:

- 1 Driving when unfit through drink/drugs.
- 2 Causing Grievous Bodily Harm by dangerous driving.

- 3 Failing to stop for police.
- 4 Aggravated vehicle taking causing Grievous Bodily Harm.
- 5 Driving while disqualified.
- 6 Using a motor vehicle without insurance.
- 7 Aggravated taking and causing damage to a vehicle.
- 8 Assault on police.
- 9 Failing to provide a specimen.

Compassionate Temporary Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how many prisoners were released on compassionate leave from prisons in each of the last two years; (ii) the reason for release; and (iii) how many were accompanied by prison staff during release.

(AQW 23707/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prisoners who are released temporarily under Prison Rule 27(2) including those released on compassionate leave are not required to be escorted by Prison Service staff. The numbers of those released under this Rule in each of the last two years and the reasons for release are set out in the table below.

Year	Number released under Prison Rule 27(2)	Funeral	Critically III relative	Graveside Visit
2011	37	23	14	NIL
2012	30	21	8	1
2013 (up to 30 April)	13	11	2	NIL

In addition, a number of other prisoners are removed from prison for compassionate reasons under Section 18(2) of the Prison (NI) Act 1953. They are escorted by Prison Service staff and remain in custody. The numbers of those removed under this section of the Act in each of the last two years and the reasons for such removal are set out in the table below.

Year	Number removed under Section 18(2) of the Prison Act	Funeral	Critically III relative	Graveside Visit
2011	34	19	14	1
2012	36	24	9	3
2013 (up to 30 April)	10	3	3	4

Temporary Release of Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22900/11-15, whether Noel Parker would still have met the criteria for temporary release.

(AQW 23750/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that Noel Parker would have met the criteria for temporary release.

Drug Use in Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22661/11-15, in relation to drug use in prisons and concerns expressed by agencies that persons who suffer from drug dependency and addiction are being held in inappropriate conditions, whether he would consider running a pilot scheme to establish if there are any benefits from allocating a specific area in Maghaberry Prison for such prisoners.

(AQW 23751/11-15)

Mr Ford: AQW 22661/11-15 asked if consideration was given to the allocation of an area specifically for those with drug dependencies. While this is not under consideration, the Governor is considering introducing a therapeutic regime to assist individuals with various types of addictions and this may include allocating a separate area within the Maghaberry Prison to house such prisoners.

Prisoner Suicides and Attempted Suicides

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22742/11-15, whether he will commission a detailed review to establish if similarities exist amongst prisoner suicides and attempted suicides, specifically to enable warning signs to be highlighted for the prevention of further incidents and to reduce the risk.

(AQW 23752/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service reviews all attempted suicides and suicides on a case by case basis through current processes; including Supporting Prisoner at Risk case reviews, serious self harm case reviews, and Prisoner Ombudsman's reports. Any learning identified will assist the implementation of changes or improvements to help care for and manage prisoners at risk to prevent further incidents and reduce the risk of self harm.

Dungannon Court House: Custodial Appearances

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) why several people awaiting custodial appearance at Dungannon Court House on Wednesday 29 May were held in PSNI vehicles outside the court building, and not placed in cells; (ii) whether a risk assessment was carried out; and (iii) whether this is common practice.

(AQW 23753/11-15)

Mr Ford: Necessary building works at Dungannon Courthouse resulted in three of the nine cells not being available on 29 May 2013. This, in conjunction with a high number of Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) detainees to be dealt with on the day, resulted in two PACE detainees being held in police vehicles, until cellular accommodation became available.

The decision to hold the detainees in police cars was taken by the PSNI, who were responsible for conducting any necessary risk assessment.

This was an isolated incident and PECCS management continue to work closely with PSNI custody suites to avoid any similar occurrences.

Northern Ireland Policing Board: Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail the correspondence that he has had with the Northern Ireland Policing Board on the review of Injury on Duty Awards.

(AQW 23797/11-15)

Mr Ford: Under Regulation 35 (1) the PSNI and PSNI Reserve (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2006 it is the responsibility of the Policing Board to arrange reviews. The Chief Executive of the Policing Board wrote to me on 8 February 2013 advising of his intention to set up an Injury on Duty Working Group. In my response I supported the proposed suspension of the reviews of the degree of disablement pending the report from the working group.

Review of Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to outline the role of his Department in the review of Injury on Duty Awards.

(AQW 23798/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department does not have any role in the review of Injury on Duty Awards.

Under Regulation 35(1) of the PSNI and PSNI Reserve (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2006 the Policing Board is legally obliged to arrange periodical reviews of the degree of disablement of an Injury on Duty award.

Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice whether he would support a discontinuation of the review of Injury on Duty Awards.

(AQW 23799/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer to my answer to AQW 23797/11-15.

Review of Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to detail what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Chief Constable regarding the trauma which the current review of Injury on Duty Awards has caused some former police officers and their families.

(AQW 23800/11-15)

Mr Ford: To date, I have not had any discussions with the Policing Board or Chief Constable regarding the current review of the Injury on Duty awards.

Legal Services Commission's Budget for 2013/14

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22662/11-15, to detail (i) the Legal Services Commission's budget for 2013/14; (ii) the projected expenditure; and (iii) whether an overspend is expected, and if so, the estimated cost.

(AQW 23843/11-15)

Mr Ford: The initial budget available to the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC) at the beginning of the financial year, 2013/14, was £74.8m.

As part of the in year forecasting processes, the NILSC notified the Department of a forecast pressure of £27m in March 2013 for the forthcoming financial year.

Following a meeting of the Departmental Strategic Resources Committee (SRC) in May 2013, an additional allocation of £15m was made available, bringing the total budget available to the NILSC to £89.8m.

The projected shortfall between budget available and current forecast requirement is estimated at £12m. During 2013/14 the Department of Justice will continue to work with the NILSC to monitor the forecast as the year progresses. Any funding pressures will be considered as part of the in-year monitoring round process.

Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 23108/11-15, to outline the criteria that were applied to granting people the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme, subsequent to November 2011.

(AQW 23844/11-15)

Mr Ford: The criteria applied to the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme are:

- (i) age 50 or over at 8 November 2011;
- (ii) in an eligible surplus grade; and
- (iii) staff released in least cost order.

Average Cost Per Prisoner in 2007 and 2012

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to detail the average cost per prisoner in (i) 2007; and (ii) 2012.

(AQW 23861/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service calculates an average cost per prisoner place for each financial year. The table below sets out the cost for the financial years 2007/08 and 2012/13 (subject to audit).

Financial Year	Average cost per prisoner place
2007/08	£81,254
2012/13	£66,494 (subject to audit)

Temporary Release of Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22900/11-15, whether the administrative error stated refers to the Northern Ireland Prison Service interpretation of AQW 21633/11-15 as submitted, or information held on Prison Service records which contained details of the application and granting of temporary release.

(AQW 23882/11-15)

Mr Ford: An administrative error occurred in one section of Mr Parker's file in which the word niece had been transcribed as daughter. This typographical error did not impact on the outcome of the Risk assessment, Mr Parker's eligibility with regards to accompanied temporary release or the operational decision for Mr Parker to attend his niece's wedding.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Appeals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of appeals lodged against dismissal from the Northern Ireland Prison Service to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeals Board that were (i) withdrawn; and (ii) struck out, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 23885/11-15)

Mr Ford: This information has been withheld as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998 and in order to protect the identity of those involved.

Transfer of Civil Law Reform for Family Law

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) what contact his Department has had with the Department of Finance and Personnel about the transfer of civil law reform for family law; (ii) the reasons for the delay of the transfer of civil law reform for family law from the Department of Finance and Personnel to his Department; and (iii) when he expects that civil law reform in family law will be fully transferred to his Department.

(AQW 23887/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have in the past corresponded with the Minister of Finance and Personnel regarding the desirability of all justice related matters coming within the remit of my Department. However there is at present no Ministerial agreement on the transfer of responsibility for civil law reform or family law to my Department and I am unable to indicate when such a transfer is likely to occur.

Removal of Peace Walls or Barriers

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22856/11-15, whether consideration of the removal of peace walls or barriers would necessitate consultation and require agreement.

(AQW 23894/11-15)

Mr Ford: In considering the future of interface structures there will be consultation with residents and others.

The issue of the determination of agreement is complex and I would not want to be prescriptive.

Indecent Images of Children Online: Limit the Availability

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Justice to outline the action that his Department has taken to limit the availability of indecent images of children online.

(AQW 23917/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 3 of the Protection of Children (NI) Order 1978 prohibits the possession, distribution and publication of indecent images of children under 18 years, with a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment.

Regulation of the internet is a reserved matter and not one which can be dealt with in a devolved manner by this Department.

Inquiry into the Criminal Justice Services

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what progress his Department has made on implementing the recommendations in the report by the Committee for Justice on its Inquiry into the Criminal Justice Services available to Victims and Witnesses of Crime in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 23941/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since the publication of the Committee's report in June 2012, I have published a new five-year strategy for victims and witnesses of crime. This strategy, entitled 'Making a difference to victims and witnesses of crime – Improving access to justice, services and support', includes actions that respond to 28 of the 30 recommendations included in the Committee's report.

I have also published an action plan for 2013-15 and this reflects 20 of the recommendations from the Committee's report. Some of the key actions include the development of a Victim Charter, the introduction of Victim and Witness Care Units, promoting the use of Victim Personal Statements and the introduction of a comprehensive formal assessment process to identify victim and witness needs in relation to special measures and other support requirements. Work has already commenced on a number of these actions, including through the establishment of a pilot Victim and Witness Care Unit and pilot Registered Intermediaries Schemes were launched last month.

My Department will be providing six-monthly updates to the Justice Committee on progress against these actions.

In respect of the Committee's recommendation on statutory case management, I have publicly consulted on the management of criminal cases and will be making provision for this in the forthcoming 'Faster, Fairer Justice' Bill.

The remaining recommendation deals with participation in restorative practice. The Department will continue to explore opportunities to develop services with a restorative focus. Support is also being provided to a number of projects promoting restorative interventions with victims and offenders.

RUC Reserve Gratuity Fund

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22688/11-15, if he consider distributing the remaining funds of £392,000 to the people for whom it was provided in the initial case.

(AQW 23966/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible either to reopen the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme to allow late applications or to establish another similar scheme in order to distribute the residue, due to the terms and conditions of the scheme.

I am considering a range of options for allocating the residue and expect to make a decision in the near future.

Prisoners Granted Compassionate Bail

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 23178/11-15, of those who absconded, how many remain unlawfully at large.

(AQW 23986/11-15)

Mr Ford: Of those prisoners who absconded while on compassionate bail, two remain unlawfully at large.

Equal Pay Settlement: Business Case

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice when his Department received the business case from the PSNI on the issue of the equal pay settlement, and to outline the action that was taken, including where and when it was subsequently sent.

(AQW 24077/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PSNI sent my Department a business case in October 2010 for discussions on whether it demonstrated a legal entitlement to the NICS equal pay settlement. Upon receiving the business case, my Department consulted DFP on it to confirm the view on the issue of legal liability.

The advice received from DFP on 22 February 2011 clearly affirmed my Department's understanding that the pay and grading delegation that had been granted to the NIO in 1996 was to include the Northern Ireland Policing Board, formerly PANI, and that this pay delegation had not been rescinded.

As a result of this advice, which was shared with PSNI on 1 March 2011, the business case could not proceed along the approvals process since it was clear that there was no legal basis to make a payment.

Further to the receipt of the DFP legal advice, my Department did not receive any further formal correspondence from the PSNI requesting that the business case be progressed.

Drug-Related Crime

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Justice what actions his Department is taking to combat the problem of drug-related crime.

(AQO 4260/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice is actively working within the criminal justice system, and with other stakeholders, to combat the scourge of drugs on our streets and in our communities.

My Department and other criminal justice organisations are major contributors to the outcomes defined in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs 2011-16.

Through the Community Safety Strategy the Department of Justice, the Prison Service, the Youth Justice Agency and the Probation Board provide a range of financial and other resources to both statutory and community bodies to help those offenders who are using drugs which may be a contributing factor in their offending behaviour.

In addition, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships work with their local community to identify local problems and seek workable solutions.

The Department of Justice also seek to address drug trafficking and supply through the Organised Crime Task Force. A subgroup of the OCTF is dedicated to this issue and includes PSNI, Home Office Border Force, Serious Organised Crime Agency, the Post Office, DHSSPS and Forensic Science.

Combating the issue of drugs and crime requires a joint effort across Government and the community. The Police, in their Policing Plan Update for 2013-14 recognise that street level drug dealing is under-reported and the challenge is to encourage the public to report such matters, either through the PSNI or through the Crimestoppers charity, and so reduce this crime further. I would encourage anyone with information to do this.

Permanent Staff: Contractual Right to Pay Progression

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 22409/11-15 and AQW 23404/11-15, for his assessment of whether the type of document submitted was appropriate and adequate.

(AQW 24096/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has sought legal advice on the contractual right of staff to pay progression. This advice has been shared with the Department of Justice and the NILSC is seeking to bring to a conclusion the ongoing pay discussions.

As the legal advice provided is covered by legal professional privilege I am not in a position to comment on the specific points raised in the Question.

Security Industry Authority Door Supervisor Licences

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many people hold Security Industry Authority Door Supervisor Licences; and of these (i) how many have convictions for violence related offences; and (ii) how many have been convicted of offences for which they received life sentences.

(AQW 24131/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Security Industry Authority (SIA) has advised that there are currently 223,725 active door supervisor licences in the United Kingdom. Of these, 4,335 have home addresses in Northern Ireland.

Information on the number of licence holders who have convictions, including convictions for violence related offences or convictions for which the individual received a life sentence, is not retained by the SIA in a readily accessible format.

Inquest Files

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Justice when, and on whose authority, the Court Service became involved in the development of a protocol with the Public Record Office to prevent the release of inquest files to bereaved families.

(AQO 4269/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no protocol between the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland to prevent the release of inquest files.

Decisions on the release of inquest files are governed by the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the convention rights incorporated by the Human Rights Act 1998. All NICTS decisions and recommendations on this subject are based on this legislative framework and relevant case law. Part of this process is the need to consult with interested parties when considering what exemptions, if any, may be required in an individual case.

In considering individual access requests, NICTS and PRONI apply a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out how the consultation process is undertaken.

Equal Pay Settlement: Civilian Staff

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Justice if his Department can authorise payments to civilian staff working for the PSNI, who are not covered by the equal pay settlement, without being legally compelled to do so.

(AQO 4271/11-15)

Mr Ford: The point raised was debated in the Assembly on Tuesday 4 June 2013. As I informed the House at the time, I as Minister of Justice do not have the authority to authorise payments solely on the basis of fairness, where no liability or right has been established and where the court has ruled to the contrary.

The judgement of His Honour Judge Babington in the recent Equal Pay case heard in the County Court was clear that PSNI staff did not have a contractual right to equal pay terms.

Any decision to make payments in this case would be contrary to this legal judgement and would, based on DFP advice of 22 February 2011, fall outside the delegated authority granted to my Department by DFP.

There appears to be some confusion with respect to this matter and in an attempt to address this, I have given an assurance to the Assembly that I would write to the Finance Minister. I will ask him to set out the basis on which my Department and in turn, his Department, could approve a business case based on arguments of fairness where the court has ruled that no legal liability exists. I will also ask him to guarantee that if he is in a position to approve such a business case, that he will also make the arrangements to provide the necessary funds to meet the additional costs and any further liabilities that might flow from such an action.

Legal Aid: Judicial Reviews

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the use of Legal Aid in relation to judicial reviews.

(AQO 4272/11-15)

Mr Ford: Civil Legal Aid is available for judicial review proceedings. Judicial Review proceedings are heard at the High Court.

Legal Aid will be granted for judicial review proceedings where the applicant meets the 2 statutory tests, namely that the applicant qualifies for legal aid under the financial eligibility rules and the Legal Services Commission is satisfied that the case merits legal aid funding. Decisions on the grant of legal aid in an individual case are taken by the Legal Services Commission, independently of government.

The Access to Justice Review recommended that legal aid should continue to be available for Judicial Review proceedings.

Department for Regional Development

Local Councils: Parking Attendants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amount (i) that each local council paid to companies to provide parking attendants, over the last twelve months; and (ii) of revenue each local council raised from parking tickets during this period.

(AQW 22708/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Local councils do not make payments for NSL parking attendants and local councils do not obtain revenue from parking tickets issued by NSL attendants.

A5 Road Scheme: Spending

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on the A5 road scheme to date.

(AQW 22943/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As of the end of May 2013 the amount spent on the A5 Western Transport Corridor scheme was £58,238,000, of which £35,542,000 was spent prior to my taking up of office in May 2011.

A breakdown of the total amount spent on the A5 shows that, £47,782,000 was used for fees; £4,353,000 for surveys; £1,508,000 for construction costs; £1,792,000 for contractor's design costs; £894,000 for utilities costs; £744,000 for public consultation/legal costs and £1,165,000 for land/compensation.

The land/compensation figure includes an amount of £796,000 associated with 90 per cent advance compensation payments which have been paid to five landowners. These five landowners have been given the option of returning the money or selling the land to the Department by agreement. Discussion with these landowners is ongoing.

Illegally Erected Republican Monuments

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of illegally erected Republican monuments on roadsides.

(AQW 23156/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is aware of twenty illegally erected Republican monuments on roadsides.

Salt Bins in Antrim Borough Council and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the location of salt bins in (i) Antrim Borough Council; and (ii) Newtownabbey Borough Council.

(AQW 23460/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the locations of salt boxes in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council areas are available in the Assembly Library.

Road Infrastructure: Maze Development

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to improve the road infrastructure in and around the Maze Development.

(AQW 23531/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation (MLKDC), under the auspices of OFMDFM, which is responsible for the development of the site and associated roads infrastructure.

This year's Balmoral Show emphasised the need for new roads infrastructure to support the development of the site.

I am aware MLKDC has a development plan setting out proposals for road links to the M1 motorway. However, to date the MLKDC has not made a planning application.

My Department's experience is that the processes and timeframes for the development of new roads can be time-consuming, complex and can take a number of years to complete.

The processes involve the identification of a preferred option, the preparation of a design and an environmental impact assessment, an application for planning permission, the acquisition of land, procurement and then construction.

My officials will work with MLKDC and OFMDFM to assist in expediting the development of their proposals and I have written to Terence Brannigan, the chairman of MLKDC, and the First and deputy First Ministers to formally make this offer.

Road Safety Measures for the Gransha Road, Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the timescale for the proposals for road safety measures for the Gransha Road, Bangor.

(AQW 23535/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is currently commissioning consultants to carry out a feasibility design to consider possible options to improve pedestrian facilities at the Gransha Road Roundabout, Bangor. Officials expect this study to be completed within the next six months, when they will be in a better position to establish the best way forward.

I have asked Mr Bertie Ellison, Divisional Roads Manager (Acting), Roads Service Eastern Division to advise you of the outcome.

Illegal Road Side Monuments

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of illegal road side monuments to terrorists.

(AQW 23554/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is aware of nineteen illegal roadside monuments to terrorists.

Dignity at Work Cases

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Dignity at Work cases have been lodged in his Department in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) core department; and (ii) non-departmental public body; and how many of these cases have been successfully resolved.

(AQW 23574/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The information for my Department and its Arm's Length Bodies is detailed in the table below.

Year	Organisation	Total Number of Cases	Number of Cases Resolved	Number of Cases Outstanding
2008/09	DRD	9	9	0
	Northern Ireland Water	1	1	0
	Translink	44	44	0
2009/10	DRD	13	13	0
	Northern Ireland Water	1	1	0
	Translink	32	32	0
2010/11	DRD	12	12	0
	Northern Ireland Water	3	3	0
	Translink	53	53	0

Year	Organisation	Total Number of Cases	Number of Cases Resolved	Number of Cases Outstanding
2011/12	DRD	5	5	0
	Northern Ireland Water	4	4	0
	Translink	28	28	0
2012/13	DRD	14	3	11
	Northern Ireland Water	8	7	1
	Translink	7	2	5

Hollywood Golf Club: Brown Signs

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development when brown signs for Hollywood Golf Club will be erected.

(AQW 23606/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department recently wrote to the Tourist Information Centre, Bangor, regarding a proposal to provide direction signs to Hollywood Golf Club. This includes the erection of direction signs at the B198 Belfast/Jacksons Road junction, Jacksons Road/Old Hollywood Road junction and the entrance to the golf club itself. The cost of providing and erecting these signs will be £671.44.

Upon receipt of confirmation that the golf club is content to proceed, my Department will make arrangements to purchase and erect the signs, which should take a further eight weeks to complete.

Parking Tickets: Coalisland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development when a parking ticket was last issued in Coalisland.

(AQW 23622/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: No Penalty Charge Notices have been issued in Coalisland since the beginning of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, in 2006.

The number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in any one town or area depends on many factors, not least of which are the size of the town, the extent of parking restrictions and the volume of traffic. These factors plus the level of illegal parking will influence where Traffic Attendants (TA) are deployed.

For example, in Coalisland there are very few parking restrictions to be enforced which is the primary reason that no PCNs have been issued.

Traffic Wardens: Donaghmore and Coalisland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 21613/11-15 and AQW 22800/11-15, to detail whether traffic wardens operated in (i) Donaghmore during 2012/13; and (ii) Coalisland in any of the last three years.

(AQW 23624/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Traffic Attendants have visited Donaghmore on 32 occasions during 2012/13, but have not visited Coalisland over the last three years.

My Department has to prioritise its limited Traffic Attendant resource so it can provide an effective and balanced enforcement service. Although it is not possible to cover every restriction, we do respond where we receive complaints or requests for enforcement.

Fixed Penalty Notices for Parking Violations in Coalisland and Donaghmore

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 21613/11-15 and AQW 22800/11-15, to detail (i) the reasons for the disparity in the number, and in some cases, non-existence, of Fixed Penalty Notices for parking violations in Coalisland and Donaghmore, compared to Aughnacloy and particularly Fivemiletown; (ii) whether a threat was made directly or indirectly to traffic wardens not to patrol and/or issue Fixed Penalty Notices; and (iii) what action he intends to take to ensure that this trend is reversed and that enforcement is equitable.

(AQW 23705/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in any one town or area depends on many factors, not least of which are the size of the town, the extent of parking restrictions and the volume of traffic. For example, in Coalisland there are very few parking restrictions to be enforced which is the primary reason no PCNs have been issued. In addition, the level of illegal parking will also influence where Traffic Attendants (TA) are deployed.

To provide an effective and balanced enforcement service, my Department has to prioritise its limited TA resource. Although it is not possible to cover every restriction, my Department does address problem areas where complaints or requests for enforcement are received.

Neither my Department nor NSL are aware of any evidence of threats made against Traffic Attendants in either Coalisland or Donaghmore.

Deployment levels in all towns are regularly reviewed and updated, if required. My Department will continue to monitor the situation in the towns you have mentioned and take appropriate enforcement action based on compliance with the relevant parking restrictions.

A5 Road Scheme: Reallocate Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what response there has been from other Executive Ministers on proposals to reallocate funding for the A5 road scheme.

(AQW 23748/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I wrote to the Minister of Finance, Sammy Wilson MP MLA on 9 May 2013 to inform him of the current issues surrounding the delay to the A5 scheme, the subsequent financial implications and options for other road improvements.

In view of the strategic importance of this issue I copied the correspondence to Executive colleagues. I look forward to the Minister of Finance bringing a paper to the Executive on the underlying budgeting issues for collective discussion.

Minister Poots has responded to me directly on the issue.

Door-2-Door Transport Scheme Journeys: Fee

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will provide a commitment that the fee for Door-2-Door Transport Scheme journeys which exceed 3 miles, will not increase.

(AQW 23754/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The issue of setting fares for the Disability Action Transport scheme is primarily an operational matter for Disability Action; however, any potential increases would be discussed with the Department in advance. Disability Action has informed me that it intends to establish a User Forum in September this year. Any issues arising will be discussed with this Department.

North West 200: Flexible Road Closures

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what support he will provide, in the form of flexible road closures, to better facilitate the North West 200.

(AQW 23773/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Under the 1986 Road Races (Northern Ireland) Order, my Department may only grant ten road closing orders (excluding hill climbs) in a calendar year. However, the legislation limits the number of days any particular road may be used for, or in connection with motor races, to a maximum of three days in any calendar year. The exception being races held over the Dundrod Circuit, due to special arrangements contained in the 1986 Order, and its predecessors. The aim of the legislation is to strike a balance between the considerable interest in the sport in Northern Ireland and the needs of the general public, in terms of normal use of the road network.

The Order requires applications for road closing orders to be received and approved by my Department, by 31 March each year.

There is no specific provision in the legislation regarding the day, or days of the week, on which a road may be closed. It is up to promoters to decide on which days to run their race and practices. There is no provision to enable the date, or dates, of a race to be changed after the 31 March deadline due to, for example, bad weather or an outbreak of contagious disease such as 'Foot and Mouth' etc.

After the 'washout' of the 2011 Northwest 200 race, and following advice from my Department, the race promoters increased the time the roads were closed on the three days, to allow more flexibility in the event of adverse weather. There are now a number of races held on the Thursday night to ease pressures on the main race day, Saturday.

In principle, I am supportive of the proposals to achieve greater flexibility. However, my officials have obtained legal guidance, advising flexibility cannot be achieved without a change to the 1986 Order. Therefore, I have decided to seek the Executive's approval to commence proceedings to progress a short single purpose bill, by way of accelerated passage, in order to achieve the flexibility sought. While very challenging, I will be endeavouring to have the changes in place for the 2014 racing season.

Road Closures: Greater Flexibility

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made in offering greater flexibility to the organisers of events, such as the North West 200, regarding the number of days that road closures can apply.

(AQW 23785/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Under the 1986 Road Races (Northern Ireland) Order, my Department may only grant ten road closing orders (excluding hill climbs) in a calendar year. However, the legislation limits the number of days any particular road may be used for, or in connection with motor races, to a maximum of three days in any calendar year. The exception being races held over the Dundrod Circuit, due to special arrangements contained in the 1986 Order, and its predecessors. The aim of the legislation is to strike a balance between the considerable interest in the sport in Northern Ireland and the needs of the general public, in terms of normal use of the road network.

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short single purpose bill, by way of accelerated passage, in order to achieve the flexibility sought. While very challenging, I will be endeavouring to have the changes in place for the 2014 racing season.

Park and Ride Facilities in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans there are to increase Park and Ride facilities in North Down.

(AQW 23787/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In August 2011, I endorsed my Department's 'Strategic Review of Park & Ride' report and approved the proposed way forward. The report presented recommendations for the delivery and prioritisation of Park & Ride facilities.

My Department has established a Park & Ride Programme Board with responsibility for co-ordinating and prioritising the implementation of Park & Ride projects in line with the Departmental Strategy. The Programme Board has produced a 'Park & Ride Strategic Delivery Programme 2013-15', which is a schedule of Park & Ride projects with clearly defined responsibilities for funding, implementation, maintenance and operation, to be taken forward by my Department's Transport Projects Division, Transport NI and Translink.

I am aware that there is significant demand for Park & Ride facilities in North Down, with many existing sites operating close to capacity. This demand highlights the success brought about by my Department's investment in the railway network in recent years and it is something that I would like to continue to build upon.

As a result, the Park & Ride Strategic Delivery Programme 2013-15 will include proposals for increased Park & Ride facilities in North Down as follows:

- Bangor - My Department is currently developing a business case which will consider a number of options for the provision of additional Park & Ride facilities in Bangor, to supplement those currently available at Abbey Street. Subject to the identification of a suitable site and the satisfactory completion of the necessary processes, which may include land purchase and attaining planning permission, the new facilities could be provided in late 2014/2015.
- Cultra - Translink are entering into a lease agreement with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum to operate Park & Ride from a section of the museum's car park on a trial basis. This will utilise the Cultra Train Halt and become operational by September 2013.

Bangor, Portadown, Larne, Derry and Portrush Rail Services

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total number of journeys on the (i) Bangor; (ii) Portadown; (iii) Larne; (iv) Derry; and (v) Portrush rail services, each year from 2001/2002 to 2011/2012.

(AQW 23827/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below shows the total number of journeys on the (i) Bangor; (ii) Portadown; (iii) Larne; (iv) Londonderry; and (v) Portrush rail services, each year from 2001/2002 to 2011/2012, with a more detailed split per line for the period 2004/2005 to 2011/2012.

It has only been possible to provide total journey statistics for the years 2001/02, 2002/03 and 2003/04 as a different ticketing system was in operation then which precludes extraction to the level of detail requested.

Line	Bangor	Portadown	Larne	Londonderry	Portrush	Total local
Yr						
2001/02	-	-	-	-	-	5,247,316
2002/03	-	-	-	-	-	5,188,377

Line	Bangor	Portadown	Larne	Londonderry	Portrush	Total local
2003/04	-	-	-	-	-	5,665,706
2004/05	1,517,315	1,940,826	1,827,617	850,056	465,682	6,601,496
2005/06	1,860,752	2,171,165	1,477,979	874,954	508,486	6,893,336
2006/07	1,956,803	2,505,060	1,720,189	1,020,684	518,162	7,720,898
2007/08	2,064,231	3,008,833	1,905,071	1,174,870	466,562	8,619,567
2008/09	2,236,576	3,200,632	2,076,398	1,401,745	488,831	9,404,182
2009/10	2,323,403	3,051,491	2,084,904	1,311,128	483,426	9,254,352
2010/11	2,410,165	3,077,546	2,111,129	1,476,929	528,530	9,604,299
2011/12	2,523,443	3,217,248	2,153,142	1,561,364	543,593	9,998,790

Enterprise Train Journeys: Average Number of Customers

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average number of customers per Enterprise train journey, each year from 2001/2002 to 2011/2012.

(AQW 23828/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise that Translink introduced a new ticketing system during 2003/04. For the years prior to that, Translink cannot readily reconcile information with that produced by the current ticketing system. Accordingly, the statistics provided are from financial year 2004/05 to date.

These are as follows:

Year	Average Loadings per Journey
2004/05	171
2005/06	168
2006/07	167
2007/08	183
2008/09	173
2009/10	147
2010/11	156
2011/12	154
2012/13	172

Enterprise Train Service: Scheduled Journey Time

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the scheduled journey time for the Enterprise train service, each year from 2001/2002 and 2011/2012.

(AQW 23829/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise you that Translink have confirmed that scheduled journey times vary depending on the stopping pattern of the train and the effect of other train schedules.

For example, up until 2008 the fastest Enterprise train incorporated only one intermediate stop at Portadown and did not serve Newry, Dundalk or Drogheda. From December 2008 additional stops were included at Newry and Dundalk. Subsequently a number of Enterprise trains also stop at Lisburn

in addition to Portadown, Newry, Dundalk and Drogheda. Train running times will be impacted by the stopping patterns and by influence of the local trains sharing the same running lines.

The minimum/maximum journey times for Enterprise services are as outlined in the table below:

MIN - MAX JOURNEY TIMES

BELFAST CENTRAL / DUBLIN

Enterprise	Min	Max
2001	01:51:00	02:10:00
2002	01:51:00	02:10:00
2003	01:51:00	02:15:00
2004	01:51:00	02:15:00
2005	01:51:00	02:13:00
2006	01:55:00	02:15:00
2007	01:53:00	02:15:00
2008	01:53:00	02:15:00
2009	02:00:00	02:16:00
2010	02:00:00	02:15:00
2011	02:00:00	02:15:00
2012	02:00:00	02:15:00

Journey Time for Bangor, Portadown, Larne, Derry and Portrush Rail Services

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the scheduled journey time for (i) Bangor; (ii) Portadown; (iii) Larne; (iv) Derry; and (v) Portrush rail services, each year from 2001/2002 and 2011/2012.

(AQW 23830/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Scheduled journey times vary depending on the stopping pattern of the train and the effect of other train schedules.

In relation to local trains, running times are principally impacted by stopping patterns. The minimum running times will reflect 'express' services, maximum running times will reflect 'all stops' services. Running times on all lines will be affected by Temporary Speed Restrictions over extended periods and Permanent Speed Restrictions applicable at various times over the years in question due to, for example:

- Significant Infrastructure improvement or repair works (track conditions)
- Damage – flooding/subsidence etc.
- Vandalism/civil disorder
- Other extraneous factors such as Third Party works / interfaces

On the Derry line, in particular, scheduled running times are influenced by the number of trains which have to meet and cross on what is a single track infrastructure with passing loop. Between 2001 and 2004 a maximum of 18 trains operated per day. Now NIR operates 38 trains per day on the same infrastructure.

Details of minimum/maximum journey times year on year are as outlined in the table below.

Min - Max Journey Times to Belfast Great Victoria Street / Belfast Central

	Bangor-Central		Portadown-GVS		Larne Hbr-Central		L'derry-Central		Portrush-Coleraine	
	Min hr:min	Max hr:min	Min hr:min	Max hr:min	Min hr:min	Max hr:min	Min hr:min	Max hr:min	Min hr:min	Max hr:min
2001	00:20	00:31	00:39	00:49	00:52	00:58	01:59	02:00	00:12	00:12
2002	00:18	00:29	00:39	00:50	00:52	00:58	02:01	02:03	00:12	00:12
2003	00:18	00:31	00:39	00:50	00:54	00:58	02:01	02:04	00:12	00:12
2004	00:18	00:31	00:30	00:50	00:54	00:58	02:01	02:04	00:12	00:12
2005	00:18	00:27	00:34	00:42	0:00	0:00	02:04	02:07	00:12	00:12
2006	00:19	00:28	00:34	00:48	00:52	01:01	02:05	02:09	00:12	00:12
2007	00:19	00:30	00:34	00:48	00:50	01:01	02:04	02:7	00:12	00:12
2008	00:19	00:30	00:34	00:48	00:48:30	01:00	02:08	02:15	00:12	00:12
2009	00:16	00:30	00:36	00:48	00:49	01:00	02:08	02:13	00:10	00:12
2010	00:19	00:30	00:36	00:48	00:49	00:59	02:03	02:05	00:10	00:13
2011	00:19	00:30	00:36	00:48	00:49	00:59	02:03	02:05	00:10	00:13
2012	00:19	00:30	00:36	00:48	00:49	00:59	02:03	02:05	00:10	00:13

Note: For most of 2005 rail services were suspended on the Larne line due to track re-lay and bus substitution measures were put in place.

Park and Ride Facility for Translink Passengers at Dungiven

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he would consider carrying out a feasibility study to establish the need for a Park and Ride facility for Translink passengers at Dungiven. **(AQW 23836/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department previously investigated the purchase of a part site, owned by the old controlled secondary school, to facilitate a dedicated Park and Ride site. However, it did not proceed with the purchase as consultations with local residents indicated strong opposition to the proposals.

An alternative Park and Ride site has been identified at Magherabuoy Terrace, as part of the ongoing development of the A6 dualling scheme between Londonderry and east of Dungiven. It is expected this site would be delivered in conjunction with construction of the first phase of the dualling scheme.

Flags and Other Materials Attached to Lamp Posts and Other Street Furniture

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development what health and safety assessments have been undertaken of the dangers posed by flags and other materials attached to lamp posts and other street furniture. **(AQW 23850/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department's assessment is that flags or other materials attached to lamp posts or other street furniture do not, generally, cause structural concerns. However, where such attachments interfere with the light output of the street lights or the visibility of traffic signs there would be safety implications for the travelling public. In these situations, attachments would be removed on safety grounds.

In addition, large banners attached to street lighting columns, which have not been designed for this purpose, would also cause safety concerns, due to the effect of wind loading on the structural stability of the column. In such circumstances, officials would seek to have such banners removed on safety grounds.

Roads Service Employees: Lamp Posts

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development if his Department considers lamp posts as places of work for Roads Service employees.

(AQW 23851/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My officials are required to work in a range of environments, including offices, depots, stores, workshops, construction sites, and on the public highway. Lamp posts however are not considered to be places of work. Work on lamp posts is generally regarded and treated as site works on the public highway, and is carried out under a range of health and safety regulations and procedures relevant to the specific operation. These include compliance with the necessary signing and guarding of the works to ensure safety of workers and road users.

Level-Crossings: Jordanstown and Trooperslane

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development if his Department will bid for funding under the June Monitoring Round for improvements to level-crossings at Jordanstown and Trooperslane.

(AQW 23852/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is providing funding to Translink to enable it to take forward a project to improve signalling arrangements at Jordanstown and Trooperslane level crossings.

The works will help reduce the duration of level crossing barriers/road closures when trains are in this line section.

The project is expected to be fully complete by late summer this year.

Pay and Display Car Parks

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of maintenance and repairs for all Pay and Display car parks, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 23858/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I assume the Member's question relates to the maintenance of Pay and Display equipment.

My Department currently has 609 Pay and Display machines, of which, 275 are on-street and 334 off-street. During the last three years, the number of Pay and Display machines has fluctuated due to car parks changing from kiosk operated or free car parks to Pay and Display.

Maintenance of on-street and off-street Pay and Display machines is carried out under the same contract, therefore, figures for on-street and off-street are not compiled separately.

Details of the costs for maintenance and repair of all Pay and Display equipment, in each of the last three financial years, are provided in the table below:

Year	Maintenance and Repair of all Pay and Display Machines
2010/11	£325,832
2011/12	£399,160
2012/13	£364,615

Racism and Sectarianism on Translink Buses

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail what plans he has to raise awareness of, and apply a zero tolerance approach to, the issue of racism and sectarianism on Translink buses.
(AQW 23890/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink bus drivers are trained to deal with difficult situations generally, including the conduct of passengers.

As an organisation, Translink has a zero tolerance towards any display of racism and sectarianism and staff use their discretion to deal with such situations as and when they arise. I fully endorse this approach.

Door-2-Door Transport Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the progress that has been made in securing a long-term provider for the Door-2-Door Transport Scheme.
(AQW 23892/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: At the end of last year my Department commenced a project to secure long-term arrangements for the provision of a Door-2-Door-type transport scheme. A multi-disciplined team from across my Department and Central Procurement Directorate [DFP] was established to identify and deliver a scheme that would meet the transportation needs of the elderly and disabled people living in urban areas.

As part of the project, a workshop was held earlier this year to specify the scope and timescale for the project. This highlighted the complex interaction between a number of the Department's Accessible Transport Services including provision in rural and urban areas. As these services have been developed and implemented at different times, the project team identified the need for a review of the relevant policy objectives. This work is on-going as part of the project and when completed will enable the Department to identify an accessible transportation service that meets the transportation needs of the elderly and disabled people.

Mains Extension: Ballygorian Road, Hilltown

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 22682/11-15, if the water mains extension due to commence in November 2013 will reach each property on the Ballygorian Road, Hilltown.
(AQW 23965/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the purpose of replacing the water main on Ballygorian Road, Hilltown is to increase water pressure to properties in the area to at least the minimum standard of 1.5 bar pressure at the property supply point of connection to the main. The new main will be available to all properties on the road, and existing connections will be transferred to the new main on a like for like basis. Any new connections will need to be applied for and approved by NIW's Customer Connection team in the normal way. Guidance notes and an application form are available on the NIW website at www.niwater.com.

Where properties are at an elevated ground level relative to their connection to the public water main, it may be necessary for individual homeowners to boost the water pressure to their property by fitting and maintaining a domestic booster pump on their private supply pipe.

Department for Social Development

Private Sector Landlords: Notice of Unfitness and Disrepair

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of private sector landlords that have been prosecuted for failing to carry out work specified in notices of unfitness or disrepair, in each of the last three years; and the average level of fine imposed during this period.

(AQW 22469/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The number of private sector landlords that have been prosecuted for failing to carry out work specified in notices of unfitness or disrepair, in each of the last three years; and the average level of fine imposed during this period is detailed below:

Year	No of landlords where prosecution proceedings commenced.	Result of Prosecution
2010/11	2	1 case adjourned and £500 fine for the other.
2011/12	5	2 cases withdrawn (work carried out) 1 fined £500, 1 fined £750 1 convicted no fine imposed.
2012/13	2	1 withdrawn (work carried out) 1 fined £500

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Fitness Inspections

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many fitness inspections in the private rented sector were carried out, by each District and Borough Council, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 22471/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The number of fitness inspections carried out in the private rented sector by each District and Borough Council, in each of the last three years, is detailed below.

District Council	No of inspections carried out		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Antrim	22	22	21
Ards	75	114	78
Armagh	21	16	12
Ballymena	47	78	69
Ballymoney	12	14	10
Banbridge	34	36	41
Belfast	469	435	405
Carrickfergus	19	29	29
Castlereagh	8	5	12
Coleraine	20	33	33

District Council	No of inspections carried out		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Cookstown	15	10	15
Craigavon	65	74	67
Down	18	30	37
Dungannon	31	15	25
Fermanagh	30	36	16
Larne	49	60	48
Limavady	7	7	3
Lisburn	56	53	12
Londonderry	26	21	26
Magherafelt	8	27	31
Moyle	13	11	4
Newry & Mourne	35	28	31
Newtownabbey	24	35	24
North Down	79	83	108
Omagh	21	16	23
Strabane	33	23	24
Total	1237	1311	1204

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Private Rented Sector Strategy on Standard of Fitness

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what action has been taken to progress Action 5 of the Department's private rented sector strategy on standard of fitness.

(AQW 22472/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Following the issue of the Private Rented Sector Strategy in 2010, a stakeholder group was established to take forward proposals to enhance the fitness standard applicable to the private rented sector. However, the statutory fitness standard currently applies across all housing tenures, and not just the private rented sector.

My Department's new Housing Strategy Action Plan, due to be published shortly, will set out timescales for taking this work forward. I anticipate we will consult on a proposed standard during 2014 and seek to commence the legislative process for changes to the fitness standard within this Assembly mandate.

DSD Information Service Staff

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

(AQW 23040/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development employs six Executive Information Service staff to deliver communications services to the Department, the Social Security Agency and the Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service.

Salary cost for 2013/14, based on averages, is £257,000 .

People from an Ethnic Minority Background

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development what training and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that staff respect and understand people from an ethnic minority background.

(AQW 23369/11-15)

Mr McCausland: All staff undertake a 'Diversity Now' training course and then receive refresher training every three years. Additionally, every six months, all staff in the Department are reminded of their responsibilities through circulation of the Equal Opportunities documentation. Complaints relating to this work area are regularly monitored to highlight specific trends and identify training needs.

From a customer perspective, customer facing business areas of the Department have customer complaints procedures in place, and regular monitoring of all complaints is undertaken to identify trends and areas of concerns.

Ethnic Minority Communities

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to protect ethnic minority communities.

(AQW 23506/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires my Department to have due regard to (inter alia) the need to promote equality of opportunity between people of different racial groups. The Department's Equality Scheme sets out how we will fulfil those duties.

New policies and decisions are screened before implementation, to ensure that any impact on Section 75 groups (including people of different racial groups). Any adverse impacts identified are mitigated, or an alternative policy adopted

People from Ethnic Minority Backgrounds

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to train Jobs and Benefits, Housing Executive and other front line staff to respect and understand people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

(AQW 23512/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department provides extensive training for all staff to respect and understand claimants from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The Department for Social Development runs a mandatory Diversity Now training programme for all new staff, and refresher on-line training is provided to all staff every 3 years. The training is supplemented by Equal Opportunity Policy Guidance which is accessible through the staff Intranet. The guidance is circulated regularly and it is compulsory that all staff read, discuss and sign that they understand the content on a six monthly basis. Branch Managers complete a Certificate of Assurance each month confirming staff compliance to Equal Opportunity policies.

The Housing Executive runs extensive cultural awareness, Race Relations Act and Section 75 training programmes for all staff. The Race Relations Act section of the Equality Awareness training was developed in conjunction with the Multi Cultural Resource Centre. To date over 2,500 staff have attended Equality Awareness training. Training is available on using and accessing communication support services for people who do not have English as a first language. The Building Relationships in Communities training programme also provides staff with training in good relations with all customers. Additionally to structured training events, the Housing Executive staff have access to a Cultural

Awareness Handbook and receive bulletins from their Equality Unit in relation to communicating with customers whose first language is not English and a yearly Black and Minority Ethnic and Migrant Worker Mapping Update. The Housing Executive has also established a Consultative Forum on Equality and Black and Minority Ethnic Forum, which provide feedback from representatives of Black and Minority Ethnic communities on how the Housing Executive works with Black and Minority Ethnic customers.

Dignity at Work Cases

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development how many Dignity at Work cases have been lodged in his Department in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) core department; and (ii) non-departmental public body; and how many of these cases have been successfully resolved.

(AQW 23590/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information relating to the number of Dignity at Work (DAW) cases lodged in each of the last five financial years in both the core Department and the non-Departmental public bodies is included at Table 1. The cases are categorised as 'closed' when they have been considered fully under the DAW policy. The 'closed' category includes cases that have been investigated and upheld, partially upheld, not upheld or withdrawn. It will also include cases that were considered and not taken forward to investigation.

TABLE 1

	Core Department	Non-departmental Public Bodies									
		NIHE		Charities Commission NI		ILEX		ILEX			
		No. of DAW Cases Closed	No. of DAW Cases Lodged	No. of DAW Cases Closed	No. of DAW Cases Lodged	No. of DAW Cases Closed	No. of DAW Cases Lodged	No. of DAW Cases Closed	No. of DAW Cases Lodged	No. of DAW Cases Closed	No. of DAW Cases Lodged
2008/2009	20	20	7	7	7	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2009/2010	27	26	5	5	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2010/2011	20	20	6	6	6	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2011/2012	25	23	0	0	0	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2012/2013	24	18	4	4	4	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Sandy Row/Shafesbury Square Development Proposals

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Sandy Row/Shafesbury Square Development proposals.

(AQW 23710/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development has been working with the South Belfast Partnership Board to commission a Physical Development Framework for Shafesbury Square and the surrounding areas of south Belfast. The aim of the project is to set out a shared vision of the area's development potential that can be used by statutory bodies involved in regeneration and private developers, over the next decade, to inform their development priorities. Following a procurement competition, GM Design Associates has been appointed to take this work forward. It is anticipated that the results of their findings will be available in December 2013.

Welfare Reform: Social Security Agency

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what additional resources have been made available to the Social Security Agency to address any business demands resulting from Welfare Reform; and for what purposes have any such funds been identified.

(AQW 23746/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the Spending Review 2010 settlement the Social Security Agency received the following additional funding for Welfare Reform, as a result of bids submitted in the Spending Review Process.

£'K	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
Resource Bids Met		6,000	16,000	36,300	58,300
Capital Bids Met	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,000

This funding is being used to implement the reforms contained in the Welfare Reform programme. The detailed activities and related requirements and funding needs are being assessed through the Welfare Reform projects which are being taken forward by the Social Security Agency. These projects cover the implementation of Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Social Fund reforms, Fraud and Error Strategy, Employment and Support Allowance Legislative changes and Appeals reforms. Funding has also been made available to the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety for the purposes of implementing measures associated with Welfare Reform.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development when those people who are in receipt of Incapacity Benefit will have completed their reassessment process.

(AQW 23779/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Work commenced on 28 February 2011 to reassess the claims of approximately 83,000 existing Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support (paid on the grounds of incapacity) claimants to determine if they are entitled to Employment and Support Allowance. At the end of May 2013 over 58,000 claimants had commenced the reassessment journey.

The last cases are expected to commence reassessment in March 2014 and it is estimated these will be completed by the end of June 2014.

Get Britain Building: Housing Associations

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development which Housing Associations will be offered the £7.2 million for affordable homes under Get Britain Building, in the current year.

(AQW 23780/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Three Housing Associations have submitted successful bids against the £19 million funding available under the Get Britain Building banner. My officials are currently negotiating the necessary loan agreements with the successful Associations and once these agreements have been signed, I will be announcing the details of the programme and the relevant Housing Associations involved.

I hope to make this announcement before the Summer Recess.

Dignity at Work: Sports Paraphernalia

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to to AQW 22253/11-15, what is the policy under Dignity at Work relating to sports paraphernalia.

(AQW 23810/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department operates under the NICS Dignity at Work policy. Within the policy, guidance is included as to the common forms of unwanted unreasonable and offensive conduct. Whilst not specifically mentioning sporting paraphernalia, the guidance refers to flags, bunting, emblems and sportswear which may be deemed offensive by others.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether he was consulted on the housing issues relevant to his Department prior to the announcement by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the Together: Building a United Community Strategy; (ii) how any consultation took place; and (iii) when he was consulted.

(AQW 23814/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have ongoing and regular discussions with the First Minister and deputy First Minister on all matters pertaining to housing. I and my officials are currently considering how to take forward proposals for an additional 10 new shared housing developments in light of the recent announcements by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on Together: Building a United Community.

Coleraine Town Centre: Retail and Car Parking Developments

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what is the expected timescale for the retail and car parking developments under consideration for Coleraine Town Centre.

(AQW 23859/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department continues to work with the developers of both the Lanes scheme and the Ramparts schemes to ensure that these can commence as soon as they are economically viable. The Department is currently receiving advice on the economic viability of The Lanes scheme and a decision regarding the potential relocation of educational and training services in the town centre, which may be facilitated as part of the Ramparts scheme.

Job Seekers Allowance IT Payment System Fault: Foyle Area

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development what fault existed within the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) IT payment system in the Foyle area; and how many claimants this fault has prevented from receiving the JSA payments on the correct payment date.

(AQW 23865/11-15)

Mr McCausland: To ensure that all claimants receive their Jobseekers Allowance payments by the due date, arrangements are made to advance payments around bank holidays. A problem was identified for Jobseekers Allowance claimants for the 27th May Bank Holiday whereby due to a system fault, payments were not automatically credited to some claimants account on the due date. In Foyle Jobs and Benefits Office three claimants reported on the 28th May that they had not received their payment.

The due payments were credited to their bank account within four hours of the claimant notifying the office. The issue has been escalated and is being investigated.

Housing Executive Properties in North Down: Proposed Demolition

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the timescales for any proposed demolition of Housing Executive properties in North Down.

(AQW 23935/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The only proposed demolition of Housing Executive properties in North Down is for the Kilclief Flats in the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is in the process of tendering for a specialist demolitions contractor to allow them to progress this demolition.

This process involves the preparation of the contract documents, the tender process itself and the subsequent analysis and awarding of the tender.

This is being treated as a priority and it is anticipated that work will commence on site in September 2013.

Heating Oil Dispensed in Drums

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of increasing fuel poverty, what steps he will take to address retailers charging up to £1 per litre for heating oil dispensed in drums, when the same oil is available for delivery in homes at 55.5p per litre for larger quantities.

(AQW 23951/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The most recent Northern Ireland House Condition Survey notes a slight decrease in fuel poverty from 44% in 2009 to 42% in 2011. My Department's Fuel Poverty Strategy recognises that the price and affordability of home heating oil is a contributory factor to fuel poverty and that some low income households can find it difficult to budget for large deliveries of oil. The strategy takes forward a range of measures to alleviate fuel poverty and targets those most affected by fuel poverty.

The regulation of the price of utilities is a matter for the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment working with the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation. The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment has advised that the Office of Fair Trading report published in October 2011 considered that the Northern Ireland oil distribution sector is transparent and competitive on price, with retail prices cheaper than most regions in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Regulation of the Northern Ireland heating oil industry would result in additional costs to consumers and is unlikely to result in the unit price of oil in 20 litre containers being reduced by a significant amount. Oil retail prices respond to fluctuating international wholesale prices which are outside the control of government.

The Northern Ireland Oil Federation in conjunction with the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland agreed a Customer Charter for oil consumers, which was published in October 2012. This includes codes of practice, standards of customer care, complaints procedures, and general customer advice on servicing and safety. The Charter builds on the Voluntary Agreement between the Northern Ireland Oil Federation and the Department.

Closure of Rural Primary Schools

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to raise any concerns with the Minister of Education on the proposals to close some rural primary schools, following the public consultation on draft area plans for primary provision which ended on 1 June 2013.

(AQW 23955/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The draft area plans for primary provision are a matter for the Minister of Education, however should any members of the community who are served by my Departments Neighbourhood Renewal programme raise concerns; then I will of course raise them with the Education Minister.

Unfinished One and Two Bedroom Apartments in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many unfinished (i) one; and (ii) two bedroom apartments there are in North Down.

(AQW 24001/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that, in relation to social housing, the table below shows the number of two bedroom apartments that are currently on site and yet to complete in the North Down Parliamentary Constituency. Currently, there are no schemes on site in this constituency which include one bedroom apartments.

On site year	No. of Two Bedroom Apartments
2009/10	6
2012/13	47
TOTAL	53

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Occupancy Rates for Housing Executive Units in Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus and Larne

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the occupancy rates for Housing Executive units in (i) Newtownabbey2; (ii) Carrickfergus; and (iii) Larne.

(AQW 24012/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At 31 May 2013, the Housing Executive had 5,337 properties within their Newtownabbey 2, Carrickfergus and Larne local office areas. Of these, 78 properties were vacant; with only 22 in a lettable condition. The remainder were vacant for a variety of reasons such as undergoing repairs or decanting of tenants.

The table below details the breakdown of vacant stock by the various Housing Executive local offices in question.

Local Office area	Total Stock	Tenanted Stock	Total Vacant
Newtownabbey 2	2,138	2115	23
Carrickfergus	1,901	1863	38
Larne	1,298	1281	17
Total	5,337	5259	78

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Social Housing Waiting List for Dromore, Co. Down

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current social housing waiting list for Dromore, Co. Down.

(AQW 24053/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the social housing waiting list for Dromore as at 1 June 2013.

Area	Social Housing Waiting List
Dromore Rural Cottages	2

Area	Social Housing Waiting List
Dromore Town Centre	76
Dromore/Ballela	0
Total	78

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New Build Social Housing at Bayview Park, Derrymore, Aghagallon

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed new build social housing at Bayview Park, Derrymore, Aghagallon, including the timescale for completion.

(AQW 24056/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The proposed scheme at Bayview Park for 4 No. 5 person/3 bedroom units is being taken forward by Clanmil Housing Association. A Consultant Architect has been appointed and Clanmil intend to commence the community consultation process by end June, with a view to submitting a planning application in September/October 2013.

The Housing Association is currently working towards achieving an onsite start for this scheme of March 2014.

Maximising Incomes and Outcomes Community Roadshows

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of Maximising Incomes and Outcomes community roadshows that have been planned to date; (ii) the cost of these roadshows; (iii) the sponsorship that has been received for each roadshow; (iv) how sponsorship was sought and what procurement process was followed; (v) the monitoring and evaluation criteria that have been identified in relation to assessing the outcome of the roadshows.

(AQW 24075/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) The first Maximising Incomes & Outcomes Community Roadshow Event is planned for 20 June 2013 in the Ballymoney Council area. A similar event is planned for each Council area across Northern Ireland by 2016.
- (ii) It is anticipated that the first roadshow will cost in the region of £1,000.
- (iii) No financial sponsorship has been sought or received for the roadshows.
- (iv) No financial sponsorship has been sought or received for the roadshows.
- (v) The following criteria will be used after each roadshow in each Council area:
 - The number of people attending;
 - The number of organisations participating to promote benefits, services and supports;
 - The number of benefit entitlement checks delivered; and
 - The amount of people benefiting and the additional benefits secured.

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Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,
Belfast: The Stationery Office

and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

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TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents

ISSN 1463-7162

Daily Editions: Single copies £5, Annual subscriptions £325

Bound Volumes of Debates are issued periodically during the session: Single copies: £90

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited

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ISBN 978-0-339-70299-8

