

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 4 October 2013

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 4 October 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Child Internet Safety

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action their Department is taking on internet safety for children and young people.

(AQW 25642/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Department carries out a co-ordinating role with a number of partners, including other relevant departments and agencies, which have a remit for policing, regulating and raising public awareness around internet use in order to protect children and young people online.

The actions which our Department is currently taking include working with the UK Safer Internet Centre to raise awareness of safer internet issues through participating in Safer Internet Day; working with the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland to identify potential areas for collaborative working; commissioning a survey of internet use among P7 pupils across the region; taking forward a review of activity across relevant Departments to identify current actions, gaps and any further actions that could be taken to enhance internet safety; liaising with external organisations such as NSPCC and the National Children's Bureau in Northern Ireland. The opportunities for cross-departmental action in response to the findings of the above are currently under consideration.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister who are the regional support providers appointed to assist community organisations complete application forms for the Social Investment Fund; and what is the financial value of these contracts.

(AQW 25656/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The process by which projects were submitted to the Department for consideration for funding did not involve application forms being submitted by community organisations.

The Social Investment Fund Steering Groups prepared area plans for their zones, which included economic appraisals for up to ten proposed projects within their areas. RSM McClure Waters, Wallace Consulting, Deloitte and Copius Consulting were appointed to assist the Steering Groups to complete the final area plans and economic appraisals for assessment by OFMDFM. The full value of the contracts are not yet finalised as the consultants are still undertaking work in relation to the Departmental review of the Appraisals.

Victims and Survivor Service

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what account is taken of current Peace funding to an applicant group when such a group seeks funding from the Victims and Survivor Service.

(AQW 25679/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) has advised us that every group applying for funding from the Victims Support Programme (VSP) is obliged to list all the sources of funding on their application. Costs covered by other organisations are not eligible for funding by the VSP.

It is a contractual requirement that the applicant does not double fund any of its activities. This is checked as part of the pre-contracting check, carried out by VSS staff prior to release of the letter of offer.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Easton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Social Investment Fund, including when offers of funding will be made to community organisations.

(AQW 25709/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Strategic area plans were received by the Department on 28 February 2013. Each zone submitted economic appraisals for up to ten projects within their area plans. These are currently being considered as part of a comprehensive appraisal process.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Buchanan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the delivery of the Social Investment Fund within each of the nine zones.

(AQW 25766/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Strategic area plans were received by the Department on 28 February 2013. Each zone submitted economic appraisals for up to ten projects within their area plans. These are currently being considered as part of a comprehensive appraisal process.

Social Investment Fund: Western Zone

Mr Buchanan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the Social Investment Fund, when the Western Zone held its last meeting; and whether all the members were notified that the meeting would take place.

(AQW 25767/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Western Zone Steering Group most recently met on 6 June 2013. All members were notified of the meeting.

Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on each of the six Signature Programmes under Delivering Social Change.

(AQW 25954/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Work on the implementation of the 6 Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes, which were announced by us on 10 October 2012, is progressing well.

The Department of Education is leading on the signature programme to improve literacy and numeracy levels in both primary and post-primary schools.

This programme will see, approximately, an additional 234 recently graduated teachers, who are not currently in work, being recruited to deliver tuition to children in a total of 267 primary and post-primary schools who are currently struggling to achieve even basic educational standards.

Recruitment of the teachers progressed well during the summer and a number are already in post. The Department of Education is anticipating that all posts will be filled by the end of October 2013.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has lead responsibility for 2 of the signature programmes – the provision of additional Family Support Hubs, and Support for Parents.

The Family Support Hubs Programme will see 16 existing Family Support Hubs receiving continued support, and 10 new Family Support Hubs being established.

Significant progress has been made to date with regard to the establishment of the new Hubs with development infrastructure fully in place, and it is anticipated that all 10 new Hubs will be online by April 2014; indeed 2 are already operating in the Northern Trust Area.

In respect of the Support for Parents Signature Programme, a suite of programmes has been developed. Through these programmes, guidance, training and information will be provided for up to 1,200 families.

The Department for Social Development is working in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on the programme to create 11 Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs. Through this programme, Hubs will be established in currently vacant commercial premises and will offer a range of business advice and practical support to social enterprise entrepreneurs.

Good progress has been made with leases due to be signed for 9 Hub locations by October 2013 and the remaining 2 Hubs established by January 2014.

The Department for Social Development has been tasked, in collaboration with the Department of Education, to deliver 20 new nurture units within school settings. In line with the objectives of the programme, 20 teachers and 20 classroom assistants have been recruited and the nurture units are now in place for the 2013/14 academic year. It is anticipated 480 children and their families will benefit from the units.

The sixth and final signature programme will see the scaling up and rolling out, by the Department for Employment and Learning, of a pilot intervention to support young people, Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and their families.

From October, the pilot intervention, which targeted 44 families in urban and rural areas, is being replicated to reach up to 720 disadvantaged families.

Further details on specific aspects of each of the signature programmes should be sought directly from the lead departments.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Hilditch asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many planning applications in East Antrim are with the Planning Appeals Commission.

(AQW 25995/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its status, we have asked its Chief Commissioner to provide a response directly to you.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Clarke asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many planning applications in South Antrim are with the Planning Appeals Commission.

(AQW 26146/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its status, we have asked its Chief Commissioner to provide a response directly to you.

Play and Leisure Strategy

Ms Ruane asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Play and Leisure Strategy.

(AQO 4592/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In 2008, the Executive approved a Play and Leisure Policy Statement which set out its commitment to delivering on children and young people's play and leisure needs and on their right to engage in these activities.

The Policy Statement is delivered through the Play and Leisure Implementation Plan which was devised in collaboration with the voluntary, community and statutory sectors and runs until 2016.

Delivery against the plan is on track. Examples of key actions completed to date include the following:

- baseline information on Children and Young People's experiences within public spaces has been gathered;
- 'PlayShaper' and 'Managing Risk in Play' Seminars have been held;
- a Regional Mapping System has been developed to inform distribution and sufficiency of play facilities; and
- a review of the Road Safety Education Service has been undertaken by the Department of the Environment.

We remain committed to overseeing and supporting delivery of the plan and are seeking to ensure the greatest benefits are achieved through effective targeting of resources.

Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the Children and Young People's Strategic Indicators update, what co-operation there has been with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to set and monitor indicators and outcomes.

(AQW 26268/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM, in collaboration with other departments, developed the Children and Young People's Strategic Indicators to measure progress against the high level outcomes of the Ten Year Children and Young People's Strategy 'Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge'. Since the development of the indicators, statisticians from OFMDFM have also worked with officials from the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to ensure that the indicators developed to monitor progress against the Children and Young People's Integrated Plan (developed by the partnership) were consistent with the outcomes and indicators in the strategy. The Plan monitors outcomes at a local level and therefore some of the indicators use different data sources to the Strategic Indicators.

OFMDFM has since commissioned work by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Centre in the University of Ulster to develop a children and young people's rights indicator framework. This work is due to be completed in Autumn 2013 and representatives from the CYPSP sit on the advisory group for the research project. The CYPSP has also been involved in consultative workshops during the development of the framework.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 25601/11-15, how many applications have been made from each designated area.

(AQW 26274/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Each zone has ten projects currently under consideration within the Department.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Rural Broadband

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Rural Broadband infrastructure upgrade.

(AQW 25684/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): My Department is contributing £5m of Rural Development Programme funding to the NI Improved Broadband Project. My officials have completed an analysis of rural broadband not spots and I have agreed the methodology for prioritising broadband spend will be based on multiple deprivation. The project aims to deliver 2 Megabits per second broadband services to all premises across the north of Ireland. It is expected that procurement will commence shortly. As you may already be aware my Department has already invested £1.5m in rural broadband.

Control of Greyhounds etc. Act (Northern Ireland) 1950

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether there are plans to amend or review the Control of Greyhounds etc. Act (Northern Ireland) 1950, specifically the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled when exercised in public places.

(AQW 25696/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: No specific Department has responsibility for the Control of Greyhounds etc. Act 1950; however, my Department has policy and legislative responsibility for animal welfare, dog control, the identification and licensing of dogs and dog breeding.

Any amendment to, or repeal of, the 1950 Act would need to be taken forward through the Assembly and I am already committed to the introduction of a number of pieces of primary legislation in the Assembly in this current mandate. A review of the 1950 Act is not one of my current priorities.

Before making any decision to review the 1950 Act and bring forward amendments, I would want to examine all the available arguments for and against tighter controls on greyhounds as compared to other breeds of dogs. I would also like to engage with stakeholders, particularly Councils given their role in enforcing the dog control legislation here.

Funding Provided: South Down

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the funding provided through the (i) Single Farm Payment; (ii) Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowance; (iii) Rural Development Programme; and (iv) Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme, in the South Down constituency, in 2012/13.

(AQW 25699/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has provided funding in the South Down Constituency as follows:

- (i) Single Farm Payment (SFP) worth £21.13 million has been paid in respect of the 2012 SFP Scheme year.
- (ii) The funding provided through the Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowance (LFACA) in 2013 was £1.43 million. This funding was claimed on the 2012 Single Application Form for a qualifying period in 2012.
- (iii) Funding provided through the Rural Development Programme is £5.1 million. The details of the funding are provided in the attached table. This excludes LFACA and NICMS funding which are provided in (ii) and (iv).
- (iv) NICMS payments worth £282,100 have been paid in respect of the 2012 NICMS scheme year.

AQW 25699/11-15: Detail of the funding provided by through the Rural Development Programme in the South Down Constituency from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013

Priority	Measure	Name	Total (£)
Axis 1	1.1 Vocational training and Information Actions	Farm Family Options – Business Mentoring	8,750
		Supply Chain Development (Training)	1,792
	1.2 Adding value to agricultural and forestry products and improving market capability	Agricultural and Forestry Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme	345,365
	1.3 Modernisation of agricultural holdings	Farm Modernisation Programme	538,170
		Manure Efficiency Technology Scheme Tranche 2	20,000
	1.4 Supply chain development programme	Supply Chain Development (Non-training)	13,708
Axis 1 total			927,785

Priority	Measure	Name	Total (£)
Axis 2*	2.2 Agri-environment Programme (Excluding NICMS).	Countryside Management Scheme, Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme, Organic Farming Scheme, Habitat Improvement Scheme, Countryside Access Scheme	1,057,075
	2.3 First Afforestation (Forest expansion) 2.4 Forest Environments	Woodland Grant Scheme, Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant Scheme.	63,000
Axis 2 Total (excluding LFACA and NICMS)			1,120,075

Priority	Measure	Name	Total (£)
Axis 3	3.1: Diversification into non-agricultural activities		445,467
	3.2: Business creation and development		357,880
	3.3: Encouragement of tourist activities		1,195,924
	3.4: Basic services for the economy and rural population		1,003,937
	3.5: village renewal and development		44,850

Priority	Measure	Name	Total (£)
	3.6: conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage		18,434
Axis 3 total			3,066,492
Rural Development Programme total (excluding LFACA and NICMS)			5,114,352

* Funding for Measure 2.1 Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowances (LFACA) Scheme and NI Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS) are provided in parts (ii) and (iv) respectively of the written ans

Single Payment Scheme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given the significance that Europe places on advanced payments of the 2013 Single Payment Scheme, why local farmers are unable to access advanced payments.

(AQW 25737/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Many European Paying Agencies do not make advance payments. In order to be able to make advance payments, all checks on the Single Farm Payment claims submitted to verify that eligibility conditions have been met have to be finalised.

In 2013, DARD is introducing significant changes to its controls, including the deployment of a new mapping system and ensuring its integration with on-the-spot inspections, including control with remote sensing. For these reasons, DARD will not be able to introduce the changes needed to be in a position to make advance payments in October.

I am looking to pay as many farmers as possible early in December and I will be announcing a more detailed payment timetable in November.

Single Payment Scheme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the 2013 Single Payment Scheme, to detail (i) why her Department is not in a position to make advanced payments; and (ii) when an advanced payment (a) can; and (b) cannot be paid.

(AQW 25738/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) I am committed to ensuring that DARD is in a position to make advance payments and the work that is currently underway in regard to audit compliance should contribute significantly to that objective. My immediate focus has been to ensure that DARD's controls are compliant with EU requirements in order to bring down financial correction. In doing this, I also want to ensure that as many farmers as possible receive their payments in early December 2013. I know that that is an important priority for farming representatives too.

Increased use of control with remote sensing and greater use of online facilities by claimants have the potential to allow us to complete our validation processes earlier and make faster, earlier payments to all claimants, including inspected cases. For 2013, the focus has to be on ensuring the new LPIS mapping control and associated inspections work effectively, together with consolidating the improvements in the timeliness payments on inspected cases. It is not possible to complete the necessary controls sufficiently early to allow advance payments in 2013.

- (i) The EU Regulations allow for payments to be made from 1 December each year. If a Member State wishes to make an advance payment it has to apply to the Commission for derogation to do so. Payments, regardless of whether these are advances or within the December payment window, cannot be made until all administrative and on-the-spot checks have been completed. In practice, an advance payment can usually be made to the majority of farmers when inspection controls in the field are completed before the advance payment is made, but advance payments cannot

be made to individual farmers, such as inspection cases, until all administrative and on-the-spot controls have been completed that relate to that claimant.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she plans to seek a relaxation of the EU state aid rules to allow applicants of the Rural Development Programme, Farm diversification 3.1 measure, to use some of the energy generated for their own energy requirements when constructing renewable generation installations instead of being required to sell the energy produced to a third party.

(AQW 25739/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Firstly can I point out that it is not state aid rules that prevent energy from 3.1 Farm Diversification projects being used to reduce the running costs of the farm. When my officials obtained agreement that stand alone renewable energy projects could be supported under the Axis 3 measures the Commission specified that a farm business diversifying into the sale of renewable energy could only be supported providing 100% of the output is sold to the grid and none is used to reduce farm or farm household running costs. Such activity belongs under Axis 1 the competitiveness of the farm, and renewables was not included in the programme submitted by DARD.

There may be opportunities going forward under the new programme and I would encourage you to respond to the ongoing consultation exercise highlighting this issue.

Equality Impact Assessments

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQO 4511/11-15, when the four Equality Impact Assessments on relocation projects will be published.

(AQW 25752/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As I indicated in my letter to you dated 10th September 2013, the formal consultation on the Equality Impact Assessment for Ballykelly is complete.

Consultation on the equality screening of the other relocations has taken place with the Equality Commission and Trade Union side is currently considering the screening documents. I expect the full EQIA report to be published before the end of the year.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail why her Department will not be able to take advantage of the EU's approval for advance payments in October 2013 under the Single Farm Payment Scheme; and why the necessary administrative measures were not put in place.

(AQW 25763/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am committed to ensuring that DARD is in a position to make advance payments and the work that is currently underway in regard to audit compliance should contribute significantly to that objective. My immediate focus has been to ensure that DARD's controls are compliant with EU requirements in order to bring down financial correction. In doing this, I also want to ensure that as many farmers as possible receive their payments in early December 2013. I know that that is an important priority for farming representatives too.

Increased use of control with remote sensing and greater use of online facilities by claimants have the potential to allow us to complete our validation processes earlier and make faster, earlier payments to all claimants, including inspected cases. For 2013, the focus has to be on ensuring the new LPIS mapping control and associated inspections work effectively, together with consolidating the improvements in the timeliness payments on inspected cases. It is not possible to complete the necessary controls sufficiently early to allow advance payments in 2013.

Dog Collars

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she plans to review the current legal requirement for dogs to wear a collar and identifying tag at all times in a public place.
(AQW 25881/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The control of dogs here is governed by the Dogs Order 1983, as amended by the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011. The requirement for dogs to wear collar tags is set out in the Dogs (Licensing and Identification) Regulations 2012.

Prior to making the 2012 Regulations my Department consulted all Councils on the need to retain the requirement for identification to be worn on a dog's collar in addition to the new requirement for the dog to be microchipped. At that time the majority of Councils preferred to keep both systems running in parallel for the first few years and to review the requirement for collar tags after the microchipping requirement had a chance to become established. Councils advised that the dog licence identification, commonly referred to as a tag, quickly provided visual identification of a dog when a microchip scanner is not available. In addition it could, for example, facilitate the return of a lost dog without the need for the intervention of a dog warden. Furthermore, a warden on patrol can see that a dog appears to be unlicensed where a collar with a tag is absent.

Schedule 8 of the Dogs (Licensing and Identification) Regulations 2012 sets out the shape, dimensions and colour of tags up until 31 December 2014. I intend reviewing the policy on dog tags next year and subsequent proposals will be subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Test, Vaccinate and Release Scheme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 25475/11-15, what impact the total land area ineligible for surveying will have on the Test, Vaccinate and Release (TVR) Scheme.
(AQW 25882/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The total land area, which is ineligible for badger sett surveying in the Banbridge and Castlewellan areas, is expected to have a minimal impact. Ineligible land in both these areas is non-agricultural land, such as roads and land with buildings.

The badger sett survey is an important preparatory phase, which will help to inform the design of the proposed test and vaccinate or remove (TVR) wildlife intervention research.

It is important that the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) are given permission to conduct a badger sett survey on as much of the eligible land within these areas as possible. To date, 74% of the area between Banbridge and Rathfriland and 61% of the area around Castlewellan has already been surveyed.

My officials have again written to invite landowners in those areas who have not as yet given permission to become involved in this survey. Surveying will begin again later this autumn. I would encourage invited landowners to join the study and return their permission slip in the pre-paid envelope provided as soon as possible.

I have been very pleased within the level of farmer co-operation that we have already received and I hope that this support will continue.

Common Agricultural Policy Funding

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail each contact she has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in relation to the allocation of Common Agricultural Policy funding, including (i) dates; and (ii) method of communication.
(AQW 25885/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Over the course of the past two years, I have had direct discussions with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on some thirteen separate occasions covering all aspects of CAP Reform, including budgetary matters. Given the nature and breadth of these discussions, it is not possible to be specific about the precise content of each of these interactions. I have also written to the Secretary of State on a number of occasions covering CAP Reform issues, including budgetary matters

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail how many meetings have been held (i) at ministerial level; and (ii) at official level with counterparts in the (a) rest of the UK; and (b) Republic of Ireland, since May 2007, including under the aegis of the north/south or east/west arrangements.

(AQW 25890/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since 2007, DARD Ministers have attended 17 North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Sectoral meetings (in Agriculture and Aquaculture format); 11 NSMC Plenary meetings; and 2 British Irish Council meetings (BIC).

The figures below relate to meetings at Ministerial level in the current Assembly mandate (May 2011 to date) outside the remit of the NSMC and BIC.

Meetings with:	Number of Meetings:
Counterparts in Britain	21
Counterparts in the rest of Ireland	7

The information requested for meetings at official level is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Strategies, Development Plans and Implementation Plans

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many (i) strategies (ii) development plans; and (iii) implementation plans exist within her Department; and to detail the number of recommendations in each.

(AQW 25901/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The following figures relate to the core Department and its Agencies and provide information on external-facing strategies, development and implementation plans which are currently active and/or awaiting the implementation of recommendations:-

Category	Number	No. of Recommendations
Strategies	8	55
Development Plans	1	26
Implementation Plans	9	169

A number of these initiatives contain actions, other than "recommendations", and these are not included in the figures above, e.g. aims, targets, key activities and measures.

The figures given above exclude the Going for Growth report developed by the industry-led Agri-Food Strategy Board. A draft government response to this report is currently under development and will be brought to the Executive in the near future for agreement on the way ahead.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why organic farming will not be funded under the Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 25955/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Proposals for the next Rural Development Programme (RDP) include a range of funding and support measures which are suitable for organic farmers as well as conventional farmers.

The RDP consultation proposes that no scheme to fund conversion to organic production methods be offered within the next Programme. This proposal is based on the fact that uptake for the 2007-2013 organic farming conversion scheme in the current programme has been limited, with 37 farmers participating.

Current economic conditions and a limited premium for organic produce have meant that in recent years the sector has contracted. A significant number of organic farmers have reverted to conventional production, including some of those encouraged into organic production through the organic farming conversion scheme. This indicates that there is currently insufficient demand for such a conversion scheme in the next RDP.

The Agri-Environment Scheme in the current RDP provides funding for organic farming through an Organic Management Option. This annual maintenance payment recognises the environmental benefit associated with organic farming. Inclusion of a similar measure within the next RDP is under consideration.

Social Farming Across Borders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has had discussions with Social Farming Across Borders; and to outline the plans in place to further develop these projects.

(AQW 25965/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am familiar with the Social Farming Across Borders project and spoke at the event to mark its official launch in September 2012. My Department is supporting this initiative financially through the INTERREG IVA Programme and also through the involvement of DARD representatives on the project's Steering Committee. The outputs and impact of the project will be fully evaluated when it completes in late 2014 and this will inform plans for future social farming activity across the region.

Agri-Environment Scheme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the next Agri-Environment Scheme, how training and advice will be incorporated to be of use to the farmer and the environment.

(AQW 25980/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The new agri-environment scheme is currently under development and will form part of the 2007-2014 Rural Development Plan. It is envisaged that both training and advice will be important features of the final scheme. The nature of how training and advice will be incorporated into the scheme is currently a matter for consultation. This will inform how best to help farmers implement their scheme agreements to benefit the environment.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 25282/11-15, whether the Central Investigation Service made the recommendation to the Special EU Programmes Body to refer the matter to the PSNI to take forward an investigation.

(AQW 25988/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Central Investigation Service (CIS) recommendation to the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) was to seek PSNI advice on the auditor's report.

Equestrian Community

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department is working with the equestrian community to prevent road traffic accidents involving horses.

(AQW 26020/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department works with the equestrian community through the training and support provided by the Equine Team at CAFRE, including Riding and Road Safety courses for new entrants to the equine industry.

Fishing Fleet

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the level of support that is currently available to the fishing fleet.

(AQO 4704/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The main means of supporting the fishing fleet is the European Fisheries Fund. Under this fund £6.74 million has been committed to measures that support the fishing fleet, with £5.13 million of this spent to date. A further £2.33 million remains available for fishing fleet related measures.

In addition, during 2013 I have separately released funding worth approximately £500,000 to assist vessels with harbour and landing fees as part of a package of measures aimed at assisting the fleet to adapt to requirements arising from reform of the common fisheries policy and difficult fishing conditions at the start of this year.

My Department also funds a significant programme of fisheries research and data collection through the Agri-Food and Bioscience Institute. This programme includes assessments of fish stocks to support European negotiations to maintain or increase the fleet's fishing opportunities.

DARD also avails of financial assistance through European Community financial measures for the implementation of the common fisheries policy. This finance makes a significant contribution in terms of reducing the cost to the fleet of complying with European fisheries control rules. Examples of support under these measures includes funding for electronic logbooks and vessel monitoring systems that are required by under the European fisheries control programme.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why farmers are unable to access advanced payments under the Single Farm Payment Scheme.

(AQO 4700/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD has introduced significant changes to its controls this year, including the deployment of a new mapping system and ensuring its integration with on-the-spot inspections, including control with remote sensing. For these reasons, DARD will not be able to introduce the changes needed to be in a position to make advance payments in October.

I would re-emphasise that I am committed to ensuring that DARD is in a position to make advance payments in future years. Many European Paying Agencies do not make advance payments but I remain hopeful that increased use of control with remote sensing by the Department and more online applications by farmers will help us complete our validation processes earlier which in turn will increase the scope for us to make advance payments in future years.

For this year, I am looking to pay as many farmers as possible early in December and I will be announcing a more detailed payment timetable in November.

Cattle: Stolen/Missing

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the number of cattle reported as missing or stolen.

(AQO 4691/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The theft or disappearance of any cattle can be a significant financial loss for any herd keeper and can also cause great emotional distress. Whilst the number of cattle reported as missing or stolen is disappointingly high it should be noted that there are approximately 1,500,000 cattle

registered in NI and the number of cattle that are reported as missing or stolen each year represents 0.20% of the total herd.

Keepers are obliged to report lost or stolen cattle to my Department, and when they do so, the ear tag numbers are removed from the keeper's herd list on the APHIS database. This process ensures that animals identified with those ear tag numbers cannot be presented for sale or slaughter for human consumption, which gives us assurances of effective traceability across the food chain.

Any suspicion of illegal movements of cattle or illegal dumping of animal carcasses is treated very seriously by my Department and investigated thoroughly with other relevant central and local government departments. The PSNI actively investigate reports of stolen cattle.

I would encourage any keeper who suspects that an animal has been stolen to report it to the PSNI as soon as possible so that a full investigation can be carried out.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr Attwood asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department is taking to allow local farmers to receive upfront payments from the Single Farm Payment Scheme, as agreed recently in Brussels.

(AQO 4695/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The European Commission has agreed to allow any Member State that is in a position to do so to make up to 50% advance payments from 16 October 2013. Many Member states do not do so, but some do, including the south of Ireland.

I am committed to ensuring that DARD is in a position to make advance payments in future years and the work that I have carried out in order to improve the Department's key controls in regard to Single Farm Payment is designed to put the Department in a position to be able to achieve this at the earliest opportunity.

For 2013, the focus must be to ensure the new LPIS mapping control and associated inspections work effectively and also to consolidate the improvements in the timeliness of payments on inspected cases that were achieved last year. For this reason, it is not possible to complete the necessary controls sufficiently early to allow advance payments in 2013.

Increased use of control with remote sensing by the Department and more online applications by farmers will help us complete our validation processes earlier which in turn will increase the scope for us to make advance payments in future years.

Birds of Prey

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why there have been long delays in providing the results of the tests on birds of prey which have been found dead in suspicious circumstances.[R]

(AQO 4696/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute's (AFBI) Veterinary Sciences Division (VSD) carries out post-mortem examinations on carcasses of wild animals submitted under the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme. The primary purpose of the scheme is to investigate potential poisoning of animals by chemicals used in agriculture.

Until December 2012, AFBI carried out the chemical analysis for poisons, as well as the post-mortem examinations, when required. Since then, due to the specialised nature of the testing and the high cost / low volume of submissions, AFBI has sent samples to the Scottish Agricultural Science Agency (SASA) in Edinburgh. This approach is more cost effective and is aimed at reducing turnaround times. Test results from the SASA are normally available within three to four months.

I am aware that recently there was a delay in receiving the results of toxicology testing of a Red Kite carcass submitted to VSD by the PSNI. This was due to an administrative error within VSD. The result

has since been reported to the PSNI and internal systems have been reviewed within VSD to prevent recurrence of the delay in reporting. No poisons were detected in this sample.

I am advised that VSD's average turnaround time for a first report on the post-mortem of wild birds during the financial year 2012/13 was two days.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why Northern Ireland will not be eligible to act on the agreement reached at Brussels which allows for an advance 50 per cent contribution to be made under the 2013 Single Farm Payment Scheme.

(AQO 4702/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: For 2013 my Department's the focus is ensuring the new LPIS mapping control and associated inspections work effectively together and that we continue to improve the timeliness of payments on inspected cases. For this reason, it is not possible to complete the necessary controls sufficiently early to allow advance payments in 2013.

I remain committed to ensuring that DARD is in a position to make advance payments in future years and the work that is currently underway in regard to audit compliance should contribute significantly to that objective I also want to ensure that as many farmers as possible receive their payments in early December 2013. I know that that is an important priority for farming representatives too.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Single Farm Payment Review of Decisions procedure.

(AQO 4703/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Single Farm Payment Review of Decisions procedure is a two stage process. Stage 1 involves a review of the decision by an officer within the Department who has not previously been involved in the case, while Stage 2 involves a review by an External Panel. The Panel consider the Department's decision against the EU regulations and agreed Policy and make a recommendation. The Panel's recommendation is not binding on the Department. The final decision rests with the Head of the Paying Agency for the Department.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Sport Northern Ireland Events Programme

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why the Sport Northern Ireland Events Programme is not yet open for applications and what support in the absence of this programme, her Department can give to the Foyle Cup.

(AQW 23834/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Primary responsibility for providing support and funding to events, including sporting events such as the Foyle Cup, transferred in 2010 to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI). I understand that the Foyle Cup has been supported by DETI since then through the NI Tourist Board. Having said that, my Department has approved a one year pilot Sports Events Funding Programme which was launched by Sport NI on 18 June 2013, with a closing date of 2 August 2013 for applications to be submitted.

During this current financial year (2013/14), the Foyle Cup received £20,000 through the Culture Company and the 2013 City of Culture programme. In addition, following a successful bid in the June Monitoring Round, an additional £10,000 each has been provided for the 2013 Foyle Cup and 2013 Milk Cup tournaments.

Welfare Reform

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of how Welfare Reform will impact on the aims and objectives of her Department.

(AQW 24263/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion is the top priority of my Department and its arms length bodies. Programmes and interventions are designed to promote social inclusion and to tackle inequalities in deprived areas, particularly the sectors of greatest inequality in the areas of greatest objective need. Any impacts from Welfare Reform will be addressed in that context.

Programme for Government Update

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the progress made on each of her Department's Programme for Government commitments.

(AQW 25289/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Progress DCAL's Programme for Government commitments is detailed below:

To support 200 projects through the Creative Industries Innovation Fund

To date 98 projects have been supported and letters of offer were issued over summer 2013 to a further 50 projects with several more currently being finalised. There will be a further round of funding opening in January 2014 which is expected to bring the total number of projects supported by the Fund to at least 200 by March 2015.

To develop sports stadiums as agreed with the IFA, GAA and Ulster Rugby

Ravenhill – The project is on target. Two stands have been completed and the construction contract is on target for completion by September 2014.

Windsor Park - The project is on target. Completion of the construction works is anticipated by June 2015.

Casement Park – The project is on target. A planning application was submitted in June 2013 and the construction work is expected to be completed by September 2015.

To host the World Police and Fire Games in 2013

The Games were successfully hosted in August 2013.

Recruitment of Employees

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 24353/11-15, for an update on the recruitment of two full-time employees.

(AQW 25358/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) have recently recruited two new permanent Assistant Scientific Officer (ASO) posts to the Bushmills Salmon Station during July 2013. These staff were recruited to AFBI during the recent external ASO recruitment process and were subsequently assigned to Bushmills, based on their skills and experience.

Staff Suspended on Full Pay

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the (i) number of departmental staff that have been suspended on full pay; and (ii) the duration of the suspension in each case.

(AQW 25442/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are currently no departmental staff within DCAL who have been suspended on full pay.

Sport Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the average length of time between Sports Northern Ireland agreeing a capital grant to a sports club and the release of funds.

(AQW 25485/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Currently Sport NI is distributing capital grant through the Sports Matters Capital Programme. I have been informed by Sport NI that the average time between the date of a letter of offer to an applicant to this programme and the date of first payment is 82 days. This period includes time for: the applicant to complete a formal acceptance of the offer; issuing of a permission to proceed letter; and mobilisation for a contractor on site. From that point, the contractor produces monthly invoices, which are certified by the design team and submitted by the applicant to Sport NI with their claim for payment of grant against eligible works.

Sport Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail how many capital grants have been provided by Sport Northern Ireland (i) with security; and (ii) without security, from the sports club or organisation receiving the grant, in the last three years.

(AQW 25486/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI has approved 236 capital awards to sports clubs or organisations in the last three financial years, from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2013. Of these, 20 have had a security condition placed on the award, and 216 have had no security condition placed on the award.

Sport Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether a sports club that has been awarded a grant by Sports Northern Ireland on the basis of providing security, can then apply for another capital grant.

(AQW 25488/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A sports club that has been awarded a grant by Sport NI on the basis of providing security can apply for another capital grant.

Sport Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of cases in which Sport Northern Ireland have issued a grant on the basis of security from a sports club and have then reclaimed the grant from the security of the asset.

(AQW 25489/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI has never had to invoke a security condition of award to reclaim grant.

Local Creative Industries

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the contributions from local creative industries to (i) employment; and (ii) Gross Value Added compared to the rest of the UK, for every year since 2007.

(AQW 25549/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which produces the UK Creative Industries Economic Estimates, is currently reviewing the classification and measurement of the Creative Industries. When this review is complete, DCMS plans to release revised statistics. DCAL will subsequently release updated statistics for the north of Ireland.

The most recent available data for the north of Ireland is detailed below. Employment data prior to 2009 is not comparable as a result of the updating of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes from SIC 2003 to SIC 2007.

Employment

	NI		UK	
	Employment	% of NI employment	Employment	% of UK employment
2009	21,000	2.8	1,443,338	4.99
2010	N/A	N/A	1,498,173	5.14

Estimates for the north of Ireland and the UK are not directly comparable as they are produced using different methodologies. Due to small survey sample sizes in the Labour Force Survey in the north of Ireland, the DCAL methodology uses a combination of the Labour Force Survey and the Census of Employment. The UK figures are taken from the Annual Population Survey.

Gross Value Added

	NI		UK	
	£ million	% of GVA for all industries	£ million	% of GVA for all industries
2008	436	2.5	36,600	2.82
2009	329	1.9	36,290	2.89

Figures for the north of Ireland are taken from the NI Annual Business Inquiry. UK figures are taken from the Annual Business Survey.

Data prior to 2008 is not comparable as a result of the updating of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes from SIC 2003 to SIC 2007.

Helen's Tower and Somme Museum

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department is helping to promote the newly opened Helen's Tower and Somme Museum site.

(AQW 25555/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Helen's Tower is under the ownership of the Irishland Mark Trust and falls outside of my Department's remit. My Department has not been approached for assistance to help promote the Tower.

The Somme Heritage Centre (also known as the Somme Museum) is currently being funded by my Department. In support of the Decade of Centenaries I have approved £79k of funding for the Centre, over three years, to develop an educational programme linked to the First World War and the Battle of the Somme.

Foras na Gaeilge and the Boord o Ulstèr Scots

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail any reduction of the salaries of Foras na Gaeilge and/or The Boord o Ulstèr Scots' officers who are employed in the Belfast offices, in each financial year since 2008.

(AQW 25558/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There has been no reduction in the salaries of Foras na Gaeilge officers employed in the Belfast office since 2008.

Two members of staff in the Ulster-Scots Agency have reduced their working hours from 37 to 30 hrs per week. This will result in a saving of £17k by December 2013.

Foras na Gaeilge and the Boord o Ulstèr Scots

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail how many posts in the Belfast offices of Foras na Gaeilge and the Boord o Ulstèr Scots have been downgraded, in each year since 2008.

(AQW 25561/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: No posts have been downgraded in the Belfast Offices of either Foras na Gaeilge or the Ulster-Scots Agency since 2008.

Foras na Gaeilge

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in respect of organisations that are core-funded by Foras na Gaeilge to detail (i) the number of posts directly funded in the local organisations with related grades and salary scales; and (ii) the number of posts directly funded by organisations in the rest of Ireland with related grades and salary scales.

(AQW 25564/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A breakdown of the staff by numbers and grades is shown below for each of the organisations core funded by Foras na Gaeilge.

Northern Core Funded Bodies

Altram (7): Part-time Managers x 2 (Deputy Principal Equivalent); Staff Officer x 4; Administrative Assistant. Pay is linked to NI Civil Service [NICS] pay scales

Áisaonad (5): Senior Lecturers x 3; Grade 5; Grade 4 (part-time). Pay linked to Universities and Colleges employers Association scales.

Comhaltas Uladh (0): The organisation is run on a voluntary basis and receives funding for projects.

Forbairt Feirste (3): Director (National Joint Council NJC Scale P05); Irish Language Business Officer (NJC6 Scale); Administrative Officer (part-time) (NJC3 Scale)

Iontaobhas Ultach (4): Director (NJC Scale P03); Deputy Director (NJC Scale P03); Cross-Community/Development Officer (SO1-P03 NJC Scale); Secretary (282 SSO 1 Scale)

Pobal (4): Chief Executive (NJC P08 Scale); Development Officer x 2 (SO 193 Scale); Finance, Personnel & Administrative Office (EOII 289 Scale).

Raidió Fáilte (2): Director (Staff Officer 249); Development/Marketing Officer (Staff Officer 193) [NICS Scales]

Southern Corefunded Bodies

Comhar na Múinteoirí Gaeilge (3): Assistant Principal Officer (part-time); Executive Officer (part-time); Executive Officer (Maternity Leave). [Irish Civil Service Scales]

Comhdháil Naisiúnta na Gaeilge (8): Director (equivalent to Assistant Principal, Ordinary Scale); Marketing & Communications Manager (equivalent to Higher Executive Officer, Ordinary Scale); Administrative & Personnel Executive (Staff Officer, Local Authorities' Scale); Corporate Development Executive (equivalent to Executive Officer, Ordinary Scale); Projects' Executive (equivalent to Executive Officer, Ordinary Scale); Legislation & Planning Executive (Equivalent to Executive Officer, Ordinary Scale); Clerical Officer (Grade 3 Clerical Officer, Local Authorities' Scale); Receptionist (Clerical Officer). [Irish Civil Service Scales except where otherwise indicated]

An Comhlachas Naisiúnta Drámaíochta (2): Director (equivalent to Assistant Principal Officer); Executive Assistant (equivalent to Executive Officer). [Irish Civil Service Scales]

Comhluadar (3): Higher Executive Officer; Executive Officer x 2. [Civil Service Scales]

Conradh na Gaeilge (6): Secretary General (equivalent to Assistant Principal Officer); Deputy Secretary General (equivalent to Higher Executive Officer); Development and Office Executive (equivalent to Executive Officer); Publications' Executive (equivalent to Higher Executive Officer); Financial Executive (equivalent to Administrative Officer); Receptionist (equivalent to Clerical Officer). [Irish Civil Service scales]

Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta (2): Assistant Principal Officer; Executive Officer. [Irish Civil Service Scales]

Gael Linn (6): Manager x 2; Officer x 2; Administrator x 2. [Own organisational scale]
Gaelscoileanna (5): Assistant Principal Officer; Higher Executive Officer; Executive Officer x 2; Clerical Officer. [Irish Civil Service Scales]

Glór na nGael (6): Director (equivalent to Senior Executive Officer, Local Authorities' Scale); Manager (Higher Executive Officer, Local Authorities' Scales); Development Officer x 3 (equivalent to Executive Officer); Administrator (equivalent to Clerical Officer). [Irish Civil Service Scales except where otherwise indicated]

Oireachtas na Gaeilge (4): Director (equivalent to Assistant Principal Officer); Administrator (equivalent to Higher Executive Officer, Higher Scale); Development Officer (equivalent to Executive Officer); Executive (equivalent to Administrative Officer). [Irish Civil Service Scales]

Raidió na Life (4): Station Manager (equivalent to Executive Officer, Higher Scale); Technician (equivalent to Executive Officer, Ordinary Scale); Controller of Programmes (equivalent to Executive Officer, Ordinary Scale). [Irish Civil Service Scales]

Foras na Gaeilge

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in relation to organisations that are core-funded by Foras na Gaeilge, to detail the total number and proportion of post-holders the organisations in each jurisdiction must make redundant by the end of June 2014 in order to comply with the conditions attached to the new funding arrangements, which the North South Ministerial Council in Language format approved on 10 July 2013.

(AQW 25565/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The decision taken at the NSMC meeting on 10 July 2013 did not require Foras na Gaeilge to make anyone redundant. Issues of employment and redundancy are matters for the individual employing organisations involved.

Fishing Loughs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action will be taken to discourage swimming and anti-social behaviour at departmental-maintained fishing loughs (a) to ensure permit holders can fish in the appropriate environment; and (b) in the interests of safety.

(AQW 25570/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Public Angling Estate is an important community asset providing accessible and affordability angling for everyone. It is important that people using these waters set a good example in standards of sportsmanship, care for the environment, safety and show consideration to fellow anglers and other water users. The Department promotes an Anglers Code of Conduct through its Angling Guide to encourage such standards and discourage behaviour which may interfere with the enjoyment of all those using the waters.

My officials also work closely with the other agencies in promoting safety around water. The Department has a link on its angling website to the NI Direct website on the dangers of swimming and safety in general around water.

The Departments fisheries protection officers also carry out regularly patrols and may involve the PSNI in dealing with any incidents of anti social behaviour detected.

Fishing Licences

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many fishing licences have been applied for, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 25607/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The table below details the number of DCAL fishing licenses issued in the last three years for which records are complete:

Angling licenses:

Type of Licence	2010	2011	2012
Game Season	8143	7381	7329
Foyle Endorsement	638	682	694
Coarse Season	2603	2277	2763
Disabled Licence Game	1795	1739	1701
Disabled Licence Coarse	132	151	134
Game Senior Citizens	4489	4448	4786
Game Juvenile	2261	2114	2138
Game 14 Day	54	89	45
Game 3 Day	685	675	637
Coarse Senior Citizens	237	216	292
Coarse Juvenile	525	464	552
Coarse 14 Day	67	37	46
Coarse 3 Day	347	374	412
Joint Coarse 14 Day	996	1011	1248
Joint Coarse 3 Day	1015	907	1169
Joint Game 14 Day	334	334	380
Joint Game 3 Day	2172	2312	3185

Commercial Licenses:

Type of Licence	2010	2011	2012
Eel Long line <1200hooks	79	93	86
Eel Draft	37	38	45
Eel Long line >1200hooks	2	2	9
Draft net	16	20	21
Trammel net (yards)	11,400	10,400	12,600
Trammel net (Coarse) (yards)	46,300	56,700	64,500
Bait net	44	50	70
Tidal Drift net	2	2	2

Type of Licence	2010	2011	2012
Tidal Draft net	2	2	2
Bag net	2	2	0

Angling Licences

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how she ensures that people who lose their angling licence as a result of breaches of the licence or illegal fishing activity cannot purchase a new licence.

(AQW 25613/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department or the courts may, in exceptional circumstances, revoke an angling licence or impose a ban on an individual holding a licence.

In the case of a licence being revoked or a ban imposed, the Department would provide licence distributors with the details of the individual and instruct them not to issue a licence.

Should a distributor issue the person with a licence it would be deemed invalid.

Participation in Cricket

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department plans to support and promote the uptake of cricket by females.

(AQW 25687/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for supporting and promoting the uptake of cricket by females rests, in the first instance, with the governing body for the sport, Cricket Ireland. That said, my Department's strategy for sport, Sport Matters, identifies a number of high level targets aimed at increasing participation rates in sport generally, including amongst females. To help achieve these targets, Sport NI has provided £1,118,870 funding over the last five years to assist with the development of cricket and help increase participation rates. Examples of programmes funded include Awards for Sport and Active Communities, both of which encourage females to take up cricket as a sport.

Women's Cricket

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what financial support has been provided to women's cricket in each of the last five years.

(AQW 25689/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: During the last five years, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided funding totalling £1,118,870 to the sport of cricket, including women's cricket.

The details are broken down as follows: -

Programme	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Governing Body Plans	£69,978	-	-	-	-
Investing in Performance Sport	-	£144,202	£174,148	£212,007	£196,082
Programme	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Active Communities	-	-	£83,983	£99,543	£96,693

Programme	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Awards for Sport	-	£42,234 provided for the period 2009-2012			-

Funding for Sailing

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the level of financial support provided to sailing, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 25789/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: During the last five years, up to 31 March 2013, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided Exchequer and Lottery funding to sailing totalling £1,872,594. A breakdown of funding provided in each year is detailed in the table below: -

Financial Year	Exchequer	Lottery	Grand Total
2008/09	£95,859	£502,946	£598,805
2009/10	£531,765	£61,335	£593,100
2010/11	£278,050	£21,743	£299,793
2011/12	£152,741	£26,102	£178,843
2012/13	£115,292	£86,761	£202,053
Grand Total	£1,173,707	£698,887	£1,872,594

Belfast Lough

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there are plans to develop Belfast Lough for water sports.

(AQW 25811/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for the development of Belfast Lough is a matter, in the first instance, for the Department of the Environment. I am not aware of any plans to develop Belfast Lough for water sports.

Hosting Large Scale Events

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, following the success of UK City of Culture events in Londonderry and the World Police and Fire Games 2013, what consideration is being given to hosting additional large scale events from 2014.

(AQW 25867/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The World Police and Fire Games were a tremendous showcase of what we have to offer in the North of Ireland and I am committed to taking forward new initiatives inspired by the Games to create a lasting legacy and positively impact the lives of local people.

DCAL officials are currently considering which other events could be held in the North.

As we approach the end of the year and the cultural programme of events, the focus for the City of Culture is focussing on promoting equality and longer term benefits, particularly those sectors and areas facing greatest objective need. Targets to increase jobs, investment and wages and to improve

perceptions, quality of life and opportunities have been developed to address specific need in the City up to 2020.

As part of the focus on legacy, we are working with project partners to consider which aspects of the programme were successful and may return to the city in the future. I am committed to ensuring that major events such as the Tattoo and Fleadh return to the North of Ireland in the future. My Department will play a leading role in the delivery of City of Culture legacy.

We have demonstrated that we can host major international events in the North which will allow us to bid with confidence for future events.

Ulster Fleadh Cheoil 2013

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the economic value of the Ulster Fleadh Cheoil 2013 to the (i) Dromore community; (ii) Co. Tyrone; and (iii) Co. Fermanagh.

(AQW 25884/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I understand that specific details regarding the economic value for the Ulster Fleadh Cheoil 2013 to the Dromore community, Co. Tyrone, or Co. Fermanagh is not yet available as an Economic and Social Study is still in the process of being prepared.

However, I am informed that the organisers estimate that there were 25,000+ visitors to the Fleadh, including tourists from across Europe, North America and further afield. I also understand that local businesses, particularly those in the hospitality industry, in the Dromore, Tyrone and areas close by in Fermanagh have reported well improved business results leading up to and during the Fleadh.

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail how many meetings have been held (i) at ministerial level; and (ii) at official level with counterparts in the (a) rest of the UK; and (b) Republic of Ireland, since May 2007, including under the aegis of the north/south or east/west arrangements.

(AQW 25888/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There have been 15 sectoral meetings of the NSMC in Language format and 13 in Waterways format since May 2007.

Usually in advance of each of these meetings officials from relevant Departments would meet to agree logistics, draft agendas and draft papers.

Since May 2007 there have been 20 British Irish Council meetings in relation to indigenous language work stream at official level and two at Ministerial level. There has also been four seminars at which officials were present.

Post-Primary Schools: Sport

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many post-primary schools provide competitive teams in (i) football; (ii) gaelic sports; (iii) cricket; (iv) rugby; and (v) tennis.

(AQW 25905/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for sport in post-primary schools is a matter for the Department of Education. Neither my Department, nor Sport NI, hold details on post-primary school competitive sporting teams.

Inland Waterways

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the geographical location of the 368 metres of mooring recently developed by Inland Waterways.

(AQW 25991/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The breakdown of the 368 metres of additional moorings reported by Waterways Ireland at the NSMC Inland Waterways meeting on the 19 June 2013 is as follows:

- 350m at Lowtown Harbour, Grand Canal; and
- 18m at 24th Lock Gate, Grand Canal.

A further 60 metres have been completed at Coosan Point on the Shannon Navigation. Waterways Ireland plan to complete 470 metres of additional moorings around Lough Erne. Projects at Knockninny and Galloon await planning permission. Works at Camagh Bay are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2013 and the tender for works to provide additional moorings at Crom is due to close on the 3 October.

Appointees to Department

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number and percentage of (i) Protestants; (ii) Roman Catholics; and (c) Non-determined applicants and appointees to her Department, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26139/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The NICS produces an Annual Report on Recruitment each year which is in the public domain. It provides a summary on recruitment in all NICS Departments, including DCAL. The most recent data available is for the period 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012. The report includes summary data and analysis of recruitment provided by the Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA). It can be accessed at

<https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/pages/content.aspx?Page=annual-reports>

Reports for previous years can also be accessed using the same link.

The majority of external recruitment to DCAL is done via volume, corporate led competitions whereby individuals apply to join the NICS rather than individual departments. Data relating to applicants and appointees to DCAL as a result of three DCAL led recruitment competitions held in the specified time frame is contained in the tables below. To protect the confidentiality of the community background of appointees, appointees from competitions in both years have been combined. Similarly, due to small numbers in the Not Determined/Protestant categories appointees in these categories have been combined.

Applicants to DCAL-specific competitions

	2011		2012	
	No.	%	No.	%
Protestant	32	35.2%	83	36.7%
Catholic	54	59.3%	116	51.3%
Not Determined	5	5.5%	27	11.9%

Appointments from DCAL-specific competitions held in 2011 and 2012

	Total	
	No.	%
Protestant/Not Determined	7	53.8%
Catholic	6	46.2%

Department of Education

University Places for Local Students

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to outline any discussions held with the British Government to ensure that any changes to secondary level qualifications do not prejudice or narrow the opportunity for university places for local students.

(AQO 4564/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): Michael Gove has announced a number of changes to GCSEs and A levels in England. I have written to Mr Gove expressing my concern about the pace of change and his failure to take into account that these qualifications are also offered in the north of Ireland and Wales.

The former Welsh Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews and I met with Mr Gove earlier this year to put our views to him. In spite of our concerns, Mr Gove continues to move ahead with his reforms but has accepted that more time is needed to develop the majority of GCSEs.

Comparability and portability of our qualifications are significant issues for our pupils, parents and teachers. I am determined that qualifications offered here will remain comparable to those offered in England, Wales, Scotland and the south of Ireland.

More importantly, they should be capable of standing on their own terms, capable of competing with the best educational countries in the world. As such, they will continue to be valued by universities across these islands and beyond.

Bangor Grammar School

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education for how much the old Bangor Grammar School site was sold.
(AQW 25644/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The vested element of the old Bangor Grammar School site was sold for £1,258,200.

Part of the old Bangor Grammar School site that was sold, was occupied by the former Conor House Preparatory Department. This element of the site was not vested in the schools estate and is therefore not included in the above figure. The amount payable to the Department in clawback is £1,178,076.

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how many meetings have been held at (i) Ministerial level; and (ii) official level, with the corresponding Minister or Department (a) in the rest of the UK; and (b) in the Republic of Ireland since May 2007, either under the aegis of the North/South or East/West arrangements, or, otherwise.

(AQW 25839/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since taking up office I have attended 1 meeting under the aegis of North/South in the south of Ireland, 1 under the aegis of East/West in England, Scotland and Wales and 1 further meeting with each with my counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales on other issues.

Officials across the Department of Education have held a large number of meetings, since my appointment, with their counterparts in London, Dublin, Cardiff and Edinburgh and continue to maintain regular contact on a wide range of issues. It is simply not possible, without incurring disproportionate costs, for this information to be extracted for the period May 2011 to date.

Free School Meals

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many pupils who are in receipt of Free School Meals receive free music tuition, broken down by (i) Education and Library Board; and (ii) school sector.

(AQW 25842/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Currently, each Education and Library Board (ELB) organises a Music Service as part of its provision in support of education. These Music Services operate across and beyond all school sectors in both formal and informal settings.

The provision of additional music tuition for pupils who wish to learn a particular instrument is the responsibility of the Schools' Music Service of each ELB and the Chief Executive Officers of the 5 ELBs have provided the following information in relation to free music tuition and free instrument hire provided to those pupils entitled to free school meals:

BELB

Sector	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Music Tuition (Figures available for Belfast School of Music only)	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Instrument Hire (figures related to BELB schools & Belfast School of Music)
Controlled Primary	3	94
Controlled Integrated Primary	1	9
Maintained Primary	2	129
Grant Maintained Integrated Primary	1	18
Irish Medium Primary	0	7
Controlled Post Primary	3	17
Controlled Integrated Post Primary	0	2
Maintained Post Primary	2	9
Grant Maintained Integrated Post Primary	0	7
Voluntary Grammar School	6	7
Total	18	299

NEELB

Sector	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Music Tuition	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Instrument Hire
Controlled Primary	0	65
Controlled Integrated Primary	0	11
Maintained Primary	0	25
Grant Maintained Integrated Primary	0	4
Controlled Post Primary	0	3
Controlled Integrated Post Primary	0	1
Controlled Grammar School	0	3
Maintained Post Primary	0	4
Grant Maintained Integrated Post Primary	0	1
Voluntary Grammar School	0	7
Total	0	124

SEELB

Sector	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Music Tuition	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Instrument Hire
Controlled Primary	0	93
Controlled Integrated Primary	0	0
Maintained Primary	0	26
Grant Maintained Integrated Primary	0	0
Irish Medium Primary	0	0
Controlled Post Primary		8
Controlled Integrated Post Primary	0	0
Maintained Post Primary	0	2
Grant Maintained Integrated Post Primary	0	2
Voluntary Grammar School	0	0
Total	0	131

SELB

Sector	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Music Tuition	Number of Pupils Receiving Instrument Hire at a reduced rate
Controlled Primary	0	72
Controlled Integrated Primary	0	2
Maintained Primary	0	142
Grant Maintained Integrated Primary	0	6
Controlled Post Primary	0	11
Maintained Post Primary	0	19
Grant Maintained Integrated Post Primary	0	1
Voluntary Grammar School	0	17
Controlled Special	0	3
Total	0	273

WELB

Sector	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Music Tuition	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Instrument Hire
Controlled Primary	0	202
Maintained Primary	0	439
Grant Maintained Integrated Primary	0	28
Irish Medium Primary	0	11

Sector	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Music Tuition	Number of Pupils Receiving Free Instrument Hire
Controlled Post Primary	0	111
Controlled Grammar	0	12
Maintained Post Primary	0	90
Grant Maintained Integrated Post Primary	0	16
Voluntary Grammar School	0	67
Total	0	976

Free School Meals

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what additional benefits accrue to pupils and schools as a result of free school meals entitlement.

(AQW 25904/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Registered entitlement to Free School Meals is a key indicator used within the Common Funding Formula to distribute additional funding to schools' delegated budgets under the Targeting Social Need (TSN) factor. In the current financial year almost £66.7 million was distributed to schools under the TSN factor, of which £44.2m used free school meal entitlements as an indicator, in full or in part, of social deprivation and additional need.

Research demonstrates that there is a clear link between a healthy diet and children's concentration, behaviour and performance at school. Healthy free school meals, therefore, play an important role in addressing the particular barriers that children from lower income backgrounds face in accessing and participating fully in school life and achieving their potential.

Eligibility for free schools meals also normally brings with it an entitlement (with the exception of pupils of nursery age) to a school uniform grant under the Education and Library Boards' Clothing Allowance Scheme, as the eligibility criteria used are similar to those used for free school meals.

The Department's Extended Schools programme provides additional funding to over 490 schools that serve our most disadvantaged communities. £12 million has been provided for the programme in 2013/14. The eligibility criteria includes all schools with 37% or more Free School Meals Entitlement.

School Costs

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the practice of schools setting deadlines and issuing reminders to both parents and pupils to pay so called voluntary contributions to help meet school costs.

(AQW 25908/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All schools are entitled to request or invite voluntary contributions from parents for the benefit of the school or any school activities.

Article 137 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, as explained in Department of Education Circular No 1991/21, makes it clear that there is no restriction or prohibition on schools requesting or inviting such voluntary contributions; however, the legislation and the guidance also specify that any such request or invitation be framed in such a way that makes it clear to parents that:

- a there is no obligation to contribute; and
- b registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made a contribution in response to the request or invitation.

Pupils and their parents should not be asked why they have not paid voluntary contributions.

Schools should be mindful of the spirit as well as the letter of this legislation. Specifically, my Department recommends that:

- a the voluntary nature of contributions is highlighted in all correspondence issued by schools that requests them; and
- b the design of stationery used for billing or invoicing clearly distinguishes between any compulsory charges being levied and any voluntary component.

School Admissions

Mrs Dobson asked Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 25563/11-15, whether flexibility could be made available for pupils due to start school in September 2014.

(AQW 26056/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The work on identifying potential options to introduce a degree of flexibility around the school starting age is currently ongoing and will be completed as quickly as possible. Therefore I cannot confirm at this stage if flexibility to the school starting age will be introduced for pupils due to start school in September 2014.

St Joseph's High School Autism Unit, Coalisland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education what is the cost per child of providing taxi service transport for qualifying children to attend St Joseph's High School Autism Unit, Coalisland.

(AQW 26071/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am advised by the Southern Education and Library Board that they provide transport assistance to eleven pupils who travel by taxi to the autism unit at St Joseph's College, Coalisland, and that the cost of providing this taxi service is £3,700 per pupil per year. These pupils travel from Armagh, Aughnacloy, Craigavon, Dungannon and Stewartstown.

St Joseph's High School Autism Unit, Coalisland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many pupils who attend the autism unit in St Joseph's High School Coalisland, travel to school by a Southern Education and Library Board funded taxi; and, with the exception of pupils from Coalisland, to detail the areas from which pupils are travelling.

(AQW 26084/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am advised by the Southern Education and Library Board that they provide transport assistance to eleven pupils who travel by taxi to the autism unit at St Joseph's College, Coalisland, and that the cost of providing this taxi service is £3,700 per pupil per year. These pupils travel from Armagh, Aughnacloy, Craigavon, Dungannon and Stewartstown.

Gaisce Award Programme

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education how pupils can apply to participate in the Gaisce Award programme; and how many pupils have participated in these awards, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26089/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Young people in the North of Ireland apply to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and do so by registering with their school or youth group. Upon completion of any level of the Award, the Joint Award Initiative agreement enables any young person, in the North of Ireland to choose the certificate they wish to receive; either the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Gaisce- The President's Award, or the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

The number of young people who have selected to receive a Gaisce Certificate - in each of the last three years in the North of Ireland are detailed below:-

	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Total
2010	115	15	6	136
2011	162	57	5	224
2012	160	64	25	249

Homophobic Bullying

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what new measures are being considered to tackle homophobic bullying in schools.

(AQW 26101/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Bullying, in whatever form and for whatever reason, has no place in schools. All schools are required by law to have a discipline policy which includes measures to tackle all bullying, including homophobic bullying.

We continue to fund and participate in the local Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) which arranges awareness raising activities and provides practical support, resources and guidance to schools, parents and pupils.

I have recently asked the Forum to undertake a high-level review of anti-bullying provision here, identifying weaknesses and gaps in our current provision and suggesting those areas in which the Department should initially focus its efforts.

I look forward to hearing the views of the Forum and will give careful consideration to their suggestions.

Redundant Teachers

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how his Department plans to provide employment for redundant teachers.

(AQW 26131/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Employing Authorities have a system in place that seeks to redeploy teaching staff facing redundancies through identifying vacancies in other schools. However, it is not possible to guarantee that every teacher in a redundant post will be matched with a teacher who volunteers for redundancy. Therefore, with effect from 1 September 2013 a Reorganisation Agreement has been introduced which will ensure that if a reasonable redeployment opportunity cannot be made, the teacher will be employed as an additional supernumerary teacher for a maximum of two years - with an emphasis on ensuring they fulfil a meaningful role for the duration of their pay protection period.

Every effort continues to be made to avoid compulsory redundancies.

Buddy Bear Trust Conductive Education Independent School Report

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what steps his Department has taken, following the recommendation by the Education and Training Inspectorate in the Buddy Bear Trust Conductive Education Independent School report, to explore the possibility of collaborative working with the Department, Education and Library Boards and schools.

(AQW 26135/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have noted the recommendation contained in the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) recent inspection of the Buddy Bear Trust Conductive Education Independent School.

In the first instance Departmental officials have been liaising with ETI regarding the inspection report, and in particular the recommendation regarding the possibility of collaborative working. Officials have

also engaged with the Education & Library Boards in respect of this recommendation. I understand that a meeting will be convened shortly with ETI to discuss the way forward.

School Inspections

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what arrangements exist between his Department and the Education and Training Inspectorate once a school inspection has been completed.

(AQW 26136/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Inspection teams share the key findings with their DE colleagues once the inspection has concluded. Subsequently, they forward the published report. Each school inspected receives a letter from DE congratulating them on the outcome or alternatively outlining what action is required by the Board of Governors in response to the inspection findings.

Teaching Jobs

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what is he doing to create more opportunities for students to find teaching jobs.

(AQW 26159/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I acknowledge that, in the current economic climate, it can be difficult for many Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to find employment in schools. It remains the case that there is substantial competition for posts and all who apply will not be successful or shortlisted for interview, the same can be said of graduates in a wide range of professions. However, I am keen to ensure that NQTs are afforded every opportunity not only to gain permanent employment, but also gain valuable experience by providing substitute cover and by filling temporary vacancies.

Over a number of years my Department has taken a number of significant steps to improve the employment prospects of NQTs, including:

- urging employers to give preference to NQTs and experienced non-retired teachers when vacancies arise;
- issue of guidance to all employing authorities and schools informing them that they must use the NI Substitute Teacher Register when booking substitute teachers, thus enabling schools to identify younger, newly qualified teachers;
- challenging schools and employing authorities if prematurely retired teachers are re-employed in preference to NQTs or non-retired teachers;
- making schools liable for the total cost of employing prematurely retired teachers;
- restricting the pay of prematurely retired teachers who have received discretionary compensation ("added years") but who subsequently return to teaching;
- reducing the overall intake numbers to local Initial Teacher Education courses from 880 in 2004/05 to 600 in 2012/13 – a reduction of nearly 32%, which has in part, helped reduce the oversupply of NQTs; and
- most recently, the creation of some 268 additional full-time equivalent teaching posts for graduates qualified in the period from June 2010 to June 2013 through the Delivering Social Change Signature Project on improving literacy and numeracy for children in primary and post primary schools who are currently struggling to achieve even basic educational standards.

Catholic Certificate of Education

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to end the Catholic Certificate of Education for teacher training.

(AQW 26160/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Certificate in Religious Education is a mandatory requirement of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) for all those seeking appointment to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school and it is therefore important that individuals who wish to teach in those schools have access to appropriate training.

Training is available to student teachers regardless of their religious background either as part of their initial teacher education or through distance learning. However, the onus is on individuals to acquire the Certificate if they wish to do so.

Notwithstanding this, my Department undertook a review of employment opportunities for teaching staff which is available on the Department's website: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/school-staff/review-of-employment-opportunities-for-teaching-staff.htm>. The purpose of the review was to assess the impact of the requirement for a religious certificate and make recommendations to promote equality of opportunity for all teachers.

Whilst the review did not identify any inequality in employment opportunities arising from the requirement, it highlighted barriers in accessing the Certificate for some students and made recommendations about how those barriers may be overcome. My Department is currently taking forward work on the recommendations.

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Education what measures must be put in place by his Department, the Southern Education and Library Board and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, to progress a shared school site for Moy Regional School, St John's Primary School, Moy and Moy Nursery Playgroup. **(AQW 26165/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: In the first instance it will be for the SELB and CCMS, as the school managing authorities, to determine and agree the best way forward including any proposals to co-locate schools and share facilities.

My Department is developing a programme aimed at taking forward the delivery of the 10 shared education campuses announced recently by the FM and dFM. When I am in a position to outline how this initiative will be taken forward the schools may wish to examine whether their proposed solution could be achieved through this programme and express an interest accordingly.

GCSE Pass Grades

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many young people in the North Down constituency (i) achieved; and (ii) did not achieve pass grades in GCSE (a) English; and (b) Maths, in each of the last two years; and how these figures compare to the rest of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 26167/11-15)

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

Number and percentage of school leavers resident in the North Down constituency who (i) achieved and (ii) did not achieve pass grades in GCSE (a) English; and (b) Maths, in each of the last two years

		2010/11		2011/12	
		Number	%	Number	%
(a) GCSE English	(i) Achieved	854 (21078)	97.4 (91.0)	856 (20790)	92.1 (92.1)
	(ii) Not Achieved	23 (2082)	2.6 (9.0)	73 (1778)	7.9 (7.9)
(b) GCSE Maths	(i) Achieved	845 (21389)	96.4 (92.4)	861 (20989)	92.7 (93.0)
	(ii) Not Achieved	32 (1771)	3.6 (7.6)	68 (1579)	7.3 (7.0)

Notes:

Figures in brackets refer to the NI Average

For GCSE, pass grades are grades A*-G

Source: School Leavers Survey

Student Funding

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education how funding is determined for students enrolled for years 13 and 14; and whether resources are allocated for a package for students enrolled in year 13 to cover two years or provided for separate enrolments for year 13 and 14.

(AQW 26211/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the funding arrangements for schools are listed in the Common Funding Scheme which is available on the Department's website: www.deni.gov.uk/schools and [infrastructure/schools](http://www.deni.gov.uk/infrastructure/schools) finance/common funding scheme. Details of pupil count and associated funding arrangements are detailed at Annex B of the Scheme.

Schools receive funding on an annual basis. The main element of funding, (on average around 80%) within the formula allocation to schools, is the Age Weighted Pupil Unit funding. Pupils qualify for the higher sixth form weighting only if they are enrolled in Years 13 or 14 and are following a course leading to a qualification at either GCE Advanced Level or AS Level or broadly equivalent to GCE Level 3.

School AS Stage

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education whether schools are entitled to retain funding allocated for students who are enrolling for years 13 and 14, that subsequently leave the school after the AS stage.

(AQW 26216/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the funding arrangements for schools are listed in the Common Funding Scheme which is available on the Department's website: www.deni.gov.uk/schools and [infrastructure/schools](http://www.deni.gov.uk/infrastructure/schools) finance/common funding scheme.

Details of pupil count and associated funding arrangements are detailed at Annex B of the Scheme. Schools receive a delegated budget based on annual enrolment data from the school census return, verified by the appropriate Funding Authority. No funding adjustment is made where a pupil, having previously been regarded as enrolled in a school, leaves at the end of the school year. The pupil will not then be recorded in the next school Census return and will not, therefore, generate funding entitlements for the school in the next financial year.

Conductive Education

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 25576/11-15, why research has not been commissioned into conductive education to assess the viability of this method of teaching.

(AQW 26239/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As stated in my response to AQW 25576/11-15, I have not commissioned research into conductive education as a method of teaching due to the financial constraints under which my department currently operates; priority must be given to the provision of frontline services.

GCSE Pass Grades

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of people in the North Down constituency that (i) achieved; and (ii) did not achieve five or more GCSE pass grades, in each of the last two years, and to outline how these figures compare with the rest of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 26331/11-15)

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

Number and percentage of school leavers resident in the North Down constituency who (i) achieved and (ii) did not achieve 5 or more GCSE pass grades in the last two years

	2010/11		2011/12	
	Number	%	Number	%
(i) Achieved	837 (21655)	95.4 (93.5)	861 (21363)	92.7 (94.7)
(ii) Not Achieved	40 (1505)	4.6 (6.5)	68 (1205)	7.3 (5.3)

Notes:

Figures in brackets refer to the NI average

For GCSE, pass grades are grades A*-G

Source: School Leavers Survey

School Starting Age

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Education for an update on his recent announcement to review the school starting age.

(AQW 26351/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I refer the Member to AQW 25720/11-15 published on 27 September 2013, tabled by Peter Weir.

Department for Employment and Learning

South West Regional College

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning in relation to the remarks published in the Tyrone Courier on 11 Sept 2013 by the current Director of South West College, to detail; (i) his assessment of the comments; (ii) whether there is provision of these courses in the Dungannon campus; (iii) which campus the director of South West College is predominately based; and (iv) all the direct engagement South West College held with Sperrinview Special School and parents, carers and people with learning disabilities in the Dungannon area over the last two years.

(AQW 25873/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):

- (i) Further education colleges are responsible for determining their own curriculum provision - therefore, it is the responsibility of each college to assess the need for specific courses, taking into consideration all relevant factors, including potential demand, transport infrastructure and financial viability.

I am content that the South West College endeavours to offer a wide range of provision across their catchment areas, through main campuses and community outreach centres, seeking to meet the learning needs of all students in local communities, subject to demand, locally.

- (ii) I am aware that the 'On Board PLP' (Personal Learning Programme), is currently running, on a part-time basis, at the Dungannon campus, and has 9 enrolments. This course is also available in the Cookstown campus on a part-time and full-time basis.
- (iii) The Director is mainly based in the Omagh campus, however he covers all campuses. Deputy Directors are based in each of SWC's main campuses.

- (iv) SWC has advised that they have close links with Day Opportunity Workers and Transitions Officers. Over the past five years, the college has used these links, along with meetings with school principals, open days and celebration of achievement events, to raise awareness of opportunities with students, parents and school managers.

Renewable Energies

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the opportunities that currently exist for people receiving Job Seekers Allowance to start a career in renewable energies.

(AQW 25992/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department offers a wide range of support to clients, including those in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance, to gain employment. My staff within the Employment Service are actively engaging with employers across all industry sectors within Northern Ireland, including those in the renewable energy sector to:

- promote the Department's programmes and services such as the Youth Employment Scheme, Steps to Work and Apprenticeships;
- supply employers with clients who match their recruitment criteria; and
- deliver a customised recruitment service to meet employers' business needs.

My Department's Careers Service also provides professional and impartial all age careers information advice and guidance relating to a range of education and training programmes and employment opportunities. My careers advisers would be able to advise any client on skills and entry requirements, as well as current and future job opportunities, within the renewable energy sector.

ApprenticeshipsNI is my Department's flagship programme in Northern Ireland. It enables learners, who have attained the minimum school leaving age and are in paid employment, to gain an industry recognised apprenticeship qualification. Apprentices follow a national training framework at Level 2 or 3, which lead to attainment of Essential Skills, a competence based qualifications and if applicable, a knowledge based qualification. My Department would be keen to support apprentices into the renewable energy sector.

My Department's further education curriculum policy has been developed to ensure that colleges have a strong focus on provision that supports the economy, strengthens workforce development and advances an individual's skills and learning. Clients can avail of the following courses which are related to renewable energy sector:

- Solar Photovoltaic Installer;
- Solar Thermal Installer;
- Micro Hydro Installer;
- HETAS Biomass (HETAS is the official body recognized by Government to approve biomass heating appliances).

Colleges also offer a Level 3 course in Sustainable Construction (which has renewable energy content).

These are provided by Further Education colleges. They are the main providers of professional and technical education and training in Northern Ireland, and in particular the North West Regional College offers a number of opportunities for JSA participants wishing to start a career in renewable energies.

Electrical Training Trust

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline why applicants on Job Seekers Allowance, who are over the age of twenty four, have to self-finance an apprenticeship with the Electrical Training Trust.

(AQW 25993/11-15)

Dr Farry: ApprenticeshipsNI aims to provide participants with the opportunity to take part in a Level 2/ Level 3 Apprenticeship where the apprentice works towards achieving qualifications as set out in an industry-approved Apprenticeship Framework.

For participants aged from 16 to 24 years of age, in permanent remunerative employment, working a minimum of 21 contracted hours per week, my Department funds the 'off-the-job' training element of an apprenticeship.

From 27 August 2012, funding for adult apprentices (age 25 and over) is available only in the priority economic sectors needed to rebalance the economy. These are: business services (specifically ICT); financial services; food and drink manufacturing; advanced manufacturing; advanced engineering; and the emerging sectors of life and health sciences and the creative industries.

This policy was introduced to ensure support is targeted at meeting the skills needs of high value/high paid jobs in sectors with the potential to expand, to innovate and to export.

Employment Service Advisers, working in the Department's network of Jobs and Benefits Offices, are available to discuss a range of training and employment options.

Finally, as the member will be aware, back in February, I announced a major review of my Department's apprenticeship policy. This review, which is all encompassing in nature, is progressing as planned and I will be reporting its findings in autumn.

English for Speakers of Other Languages Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, following the success of the pilot English for Speakers of Other Languages programme, which provided free access to English lessons for the refugee and asylum seekers community, whether his Department has any plans to roll the programme out to other ethnic minorities.

(AQW 26041/11-15)

Dr Farry: In August 2012 my Department introduced free English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses for asylum seekers only. This particular group do not have access to the UK benefits system and the opportunity to learn English is a critical element in assisting them to settle and integrate into Northern Ireland society. Asylum seekers who commence an ESOL class and then attain refugee status part way through are able to complete that course free of charge. The policy was introduced on a one year pilot basis and remains in place whilst it is being evaluated. There are currently no plans to roll this approach out to other minority groups.

ESOL provision is widely available across Northern Ireland through the further education college network and is given the highest weighting within the funding formula in recognition of its importance to the economy and the promotion of social cohesion. Colleges make a small charge for provision with concession fees available to those on means tested benefits. In the most recent academic year for which full information is available, 2011/2012, there were 4,110 enrolments in ESOL courses.

World Host Programme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the World Host Programme; and for how long his Department plans to continue subsidising the Programme.

(AQW 26045/11-15)

Dr Farry: The WorldHost programme has played an important part in boosting customer service skills during an exciting and challenging period for tourism in Northern Ireland. Nearly 7000 employees have achieved this Level 2 Customer Service qualification with funding assistance delivered through my Department's Skills Solutions Service. Feedback from participants and employers has been very positive indeed indicating improved customer service for the businesses and enhanced skills for individuals leading to increasing satisfaction for visitors.

The programme will continue to be funded until the end of March 2014. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board and People 1st have an evaluation process in place which will guide my Department's future funding decisions on this and associated World Host programmes .

Adult Education and Training

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline his proposals for Adult Education and Training provision in the former St Eugene's Secondary School, Castlederg
(AQW 26153/11-15)

Dr Farry: There are no proposals for Adult Education and Training provision in the former Saint Eugene's Secondary School, Castlederg.

Training Courses for Technical Skills

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline how craft training courses are being promoted to enhance the technical skills training for engineering fabrication and other technical skilled workers.
(AQW 26158/11-15)

Dr Farry: I recognise the importance of the engineering sector to the Northern Ireland economy and as a result, in 2012, I established the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Services Working Group of which I am Chair.

The group is a partnership between Government, business and the education and training sectors and is actively working to identify and overcome the current and future skill needs of the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector.

SEMTA, the Sector Skills Council for engineering, is represented on the group. Its remit is to bring together employers and education to focus action on skills and they are primarily responsible for the promotion of training courses. Training providers and colleges also have a key role to play in promoting course provision through their own employer engagement teams.

My Departments' Skills Solutions team also works with individual businesses with regard to helping employers understand and access the Department's training provision. This is a proactive service to local industry and enables companies to up-skill and re-skill their employees.

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how many meetings have been held (i) at ministerial level; and (ii) at official level with counterparts in the (a) rest of the UK; and (b) Republic of Ireland, since May 2007, including under the aegis of the north/south or east/west arrangements.
(AQW 26222/11-15)

Dr Farry: Since 2007 there have been one hundred and forty six North South Ministerial Council meetings, including twelve in Plenary and seven in Institutional format, which have been attended by Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive.

There have been twenty eight meetings under the aegis of the British Irish Council attended by Ministers, including twelve at Summit level.

We do not collate information on other bi-lateral meetings which have taken place outside the remit of the NSMC or BIC involving individual Ministers or officials.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Future of Film Tourism

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what research her Department has carried out into the future of film tourism.

(AQW 25701/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): According to an independent research report from Olsberg/SPI Ltd “Building sustainable film businesses: the challenges for industry and government”, film has a significant positive effect on tourism, as shown by many studies in a variety of countries around the world. Based on research such as this my Department and its agencies are keen to exploit the potential of film tourism.

Northern Ireland has emerged as a destination for local and international productions with several high profile film and TV productions shot here in recent years including Oscar-winning *The Shore*, *Blandings*, *Nick Nickleby*, *Your Highness*, *Good Vibrations*, *City of Ember* and the award-winning HBO’s *Game of Thrones*. As well as the economic impact and job creation that these productions bring, the media interest generated can deliver exciting tourism opportunities.

Tourist visit decisions are based on several factors but experiencing a destination through a shared, film entertainment experience can be a major element.

With this fact in mind, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and Tourism Ireland continue to explore tourism opportunities arising from this emerging market and I am aware of several TV and film productions, shot on location in Northern Ireland, which are scheduled for release in 2014. NITB and Tourism Ireland will seek to maximise the opportunities that such releases present for the Northern Ireland tourism industry moving forward.

Visitors from the European Union

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how the number of visitors from the European Union compared against the target set, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 25732/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The figures for European Visitors, excluding Great Britain and Republic of Ireland visitors, to Northern Ireland for the last 3 years are as follows:

	2010	2011	2012
**European Visitors	219,003	253,310	252,962

No targets were set in the Programme for Government specifically relating to European visitors. However there has been a 15% increase in all European visitors, excluding Great Britain and Republic of Ireland visitors, visiting Northern Ireland since 2010.

The survey data does not differentiate between EU and non-EU European visitors.

**** Source:** Northern Ireland Passenger Survey, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Survey of Overseas Travellers, Fáilte Ireland

Local Engineering Companies

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the contribution to the local economy made by engineering companies based in Co. Tyrone, including Tyrex Finlay; and to detail how her Department, working in partnership with other Departments, can help local engineering companies to develop further their business.

(AQW 25805/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department and in particular Invest NI is very much aware of the positive contribution that engineering companies in County Tyrone make to the Northern Ireland economy. In particular, Terex GB Ltd, which is owned by the US Terex Corporation, is a major manufacturer of mobile materials handling equipment which is exported worldwide from its facilities in Omagh and Dungannon.

A number of Tyrone engineering companies contribute to the supply chain into Terex GB and other large companies while others are manufacturers and exporters in their own right.

Invest NI's Materials Handling sector team is very active with engineering companies in Tyrone and work on a one to one basis to encourage them to grow.

The full range of Invest NI support is available to these companies. In particular, Selective Financial Assistance (SFA) including the Jobs Fund is available to help companies expand and create jobs, Research and Development support is available and widely used by Tyrone engineering companies to design and develop new internationally competitive products, support to train the management team and workforce compliments the training support available from DEL, and support with market development expenditure is available under the Growth Accelerator Programme (GAP) alongside a range of other advisory and financial support to provide tailored solutions to each company.

Tyrone companies are active participants on Invest NI trade missions and International sector specific exhibitions such as Bauma (Africa), Bauma (Germany), Intermat (France), Hillhead (GB), and Conexpo (USA), where companies are part of an Invest NI organised stand and attend business meetings arranged in advance.

Invest NI in market support now covers the important markets of Asia Pacific, India, Russia, Latin America and other countries, as well as Europe.

Local Product Manufacture

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many companies or individuals, who were assisted with product development by InvestNI, were able to secure local product manufacture and/or assembly.

(AQW 25826/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Between April 2011 and August 2013 Invest NI has assisted in the region of 1,200 product development projects. Products developed range in complexity from large machines to single components.

Invest NI can assist companies with the development of new products and can advise of the range of manufacturing options in Northern Ireland but ultimately companies will take a commercial decision on the best manufacturing model for the product.

Companies have three main options when determining the best model for product manufacture:

- Manufacture in house
- Sub contract manufacture locally
- Sub contract manufacture offshore

Cost is normally the primary driver for this decision however there are a number of other factors companies will consider when making their decision, these include lead time, quality, security of IP, time to implement design changes and better local partnerships.

To stay competitive in global markets Northern Ireland companies need to continually review manufacturing options for their new and existing products. It is therefore difficult to calculate a breakdown of the three main manufacturing options however based on Invest NI's engagement the indicative level of products manufactured completely outside of Northern Ireland would be estimated at no more than 20%.

Invest NI's Technical Advisory Unit (TAU) offer advice to companies who have developed products and want to source manufacturing or assembly options in Northern Ireland. Companies can avail of one to one advice with TAU staff with expertise in specific manufacturing technologies and a comprehensive knowledge of facilities in Northern Ireland. This service allows companies to make an informed decision on retaining manufacture in Northern Ireland.

There are a wide range of Northern Ireland companies who successfully compete in local and global markets for sub-contract manufacture, examples are:

- Metal fabrication – McAuley Engineering Ballymoney, Hutchinson Eng Kilrea
- Injection moulding – Crossen Eng Moneyreagh, IPC Carrickfergus
- Precision Engineering – Moyola Precision Castledawson, J W Kane Precision Craigavon
- 3D printing - Whale Bangor, Laser Prototypes Belfast
- Composites – Creative Composites Lisburn, Wright Composites Ballymena
- Electronics – Elite Electronics Enniskillen, Nitronica Ballynahinch

In the last number of years an increasing number of Northern Ireland companies have taken the decision to source their manufacture and assembly locally. Reasons cited for more favourable local sourcing are:

- Gap between offshore costs and Northern Ireland costs narrowing
- Less labour cost as a % of manufacture reducing as production systems become more sophisticated
- More control over quality, delivery times, batch sizes etc
- Rising fuel costs for transportation from off-shore regions
- Easier to make design changes/amendments at short notice
- Security of Intellectual Property
- Better partnership approach with local suppliers

InvestNI

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of how InvestNI facilitate employment growth.

(AQW 25827/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is responsible for the delivery of the Programme for Government's key priority of promoting 25,000 new jobs by 31 March 2015. In seeking to achieve this goal, the majority of Invest NI's activity is focused on supporting growth projects which will lead to higher added-value jobs by attracting inward investment, and by helping our indigenous businesses to grow and develop, supporting them to invest in R&D and innovation and assisting them to expand into overseas markets.

Invest NI also helps facilitate employment growth by encouraging new business start ups across Northern Ireland and, in direct response to the economic downturn, introduced the Jobs Fund which has a clear priority to create jobs quickly to help address local unemployment.

Despite the economic uncertainty of the last few years Invest NI is on track to deliver against its overall Programme for Government objective, with almost 14,000 jobs promoted by 31 March 2013 and the organisation remains focused on doing all it can to continue to win new high quality inward investments and ensure that our local businesses are fully equipped with everything they need to help them grow and develop further, creating new employment opportunities as they do so.

Exports

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the contribution that exports make to the local economy.

(AQW 25956/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Exports of goods and a small group of internationally-tradable services in Northern Ireland were valued at £6.5 billion in 2011, which represented 22% of gross value added (GVA). This is an increase from 20% in 2010.

Export comparisons with other UK regions are only available for the manufacturing sector. Northern Ireland exports of goods were valued at £6.0 billion in 2011, equivalent to 20% of GVA in 2011. This placed Northern Ireland eighth of the 12 UK regions and below the UK average of 22%.

International comparisons are not available on a like-for-like basis as national economies have data on a wider range of sectors than are available for Northern Ireland. However, small open economies such as Finland (40% of GDP), Switzerland (51%), Sweden (49%), Austria (57%) and Netherlands (87%) clearly demonstrate a high contribution from exports.

It is well established that economies benefit from external trading. At the firm level there are a number of studies which highlight that exporting companies are larger, more productive, pay higher wages and are more capital intensive than those which focus mainly on domestic markets. Evidence also suggests that there are benefits not just from entering export markets, but also from increasing export intensity.

It is for this reason that the Executive's Economic Strategy focuses on export led economic growth, in order to achieve its overarching goal of improving the economic competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy.

Mobile Infrastructure Project

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the (i) level; (ii) dates; and (iii) content of the communication and engagements that have taken place between her officials and Arqiva with regard to the roll out of the Mobile Infrastructure Project.

(AQW 25983/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Mobile Infrastructure Project is administered and resourced directly by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in London and thus DCMS has the contractual relationship with Arqiva as the project supplier.

DETI officials, at management level, have engaged with DCMS on the project since it was first announced and have met with Arqiva on two occasions since contract award. The first occasion was on 5 June 2013 when officials participated in a stakeholder workshop in London at which Arqiva set out details of the implementation process. On 19 July DETI officials hosted a meeting in Belfast in order that DCMS, Arqiva and representatives from their sub-contractor Harlequin could discuss the project with DOE Planning Service officials.

Since that meeting, DETI officials have, through DCMS, provided Arqiva/Harlequin with contact details for other interested parties including Northern Ireland Water and Land & Property Services over access to land and rent and rates issues.

DETI officials are maintaining contact with DCMS and are continuing to assist at a local level where appropriate.

SMEs: equipment

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the work her Department is undertaking to encourage SMEs to improve the energy efficiency of their equipment.

(AQW 26046/11-15)

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

Invest NI Technical Advisors visit businesses and support companies to undertake energy and resource audits as well as offering technical consultancy on energy efficiency and renewable technology projects.

Invest NI also provides full 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.

Invest NI also funds council initiatives to assist small businesses, with a resource spend of less than £30,000 per year, to undertake a variety of energy efficient projects through the LED (Local Enterprise Development) measures. The Cookstown Resource Efficiency Programme and the BITES programme are examples of these initiatives.

InvestNI: Sustainable Development Programmes

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many businesses have signed up to InvestNI's Sustainable Development Programmes.

(AQW 26047/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Invest NI Sustainable Productivity Programme (SPP) provides a range of support for Northern Ireland businesses with a total annual resource spend of more than £30,000 on energy, water, waste and raw materials. This support is aimed at improving the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of businesses through the identification and achievement of cost savings in the consumption of energy, water and raw materials.

The three year programme commenced on 1st April 2012 and aims to provide around £12million of resource efficiency support to Northern Ireland businesses over the period April 2012 to March 2015.

The range of support includes:

- Company visits from Invest NI Technical Advisors
- Resource Efficiency Capital grant
- The Energy Efficiency Loan Fund
- Resource Efficiency Audits
- Technical Consultancy
- Industrial Symbiosis support.

For the period from 1st April 2012 to 31st August 2013 over 1,300 businesses have received support under the Sustainable Productivity Programme.

Resources Efficiency Capital Grant

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many businesses have availed of the Resources Efficiency Capital Grant since its inception.

(AQW 26048/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI provides financial support for resource efficiency projects through the Resource Efficiency Capital Grant as part of the Invest NI Sustainable Productivity Programme. £1.65million of funding is available for the period from April 2012 to March 2015. The aim of this funding is to encourage Invest NI supported businesses to install equipment that will result in water or material efficiencies beyond regulatory requirements through provision of a capital grant of up to £40,000.

Two calls for applications have been completed since the launch of the Resource Efficiency Capital Grant Scheme in September 2012. During this time 70 applications were received resulting in 52 Grant Offers being made to 40 companies to help them achieve combined water and materials savings of £1.7million. A further call for projects closes on 30th September 2013.

Examples of projects that have been funded include equipment to recover value from waste and effluent streams, equipment to recover materials that would otherwise be vented to the atmosphere or discharged to land or waterways, equipment that improves the efficiency of raw material consumption through improved processing or equipment that enables re-use of waste materials in-house and equipment that makes use of sustainable resources such as rainwater, groundwater or borehole water.

Carbon Trust

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department is encouraging SMEs to avail of the Carbon Trust's interest free energy efficiency loans.

(AQW 26049/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI fully funds the highly successful Energy Efficiency Interest Free Loan Fund managed by the Carbon Trust in Northern Ireland. This fund currently sits at £12million and is fully recycled. It is a heavily subscribed and competitive fund with projects delivering energy savings of approximately £1.8million per year.

The Energy Efficiency Loan Fund is promoted at a range of events organised throughout Northern Ireland and through the 1:1 engagements between Invest NI technical advisors and individual companies.

Invest NI also promotes the Loan Fund through nibusinessinfo.co.uk, Invest NI's social media channels and through internal presentations to all Invest NI client facing teams.

Broadband Services

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans her Department has to improve broadband services in South Antrim.

(AQW 26114/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has initiated the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project which aims to provide a 2Mbps broadband service to virtually all premises in Northern Ireland and 24Mbps superfast broadband to 90% of premises by 2015.

A consultation exercise, to identify areas where intervention may be required was undertaken in September 2012 and the outcome published on 5 July 2013, coupled with a refined intervention area.

The process is subject to continuous refinement and a second consultation exercise was recently carried out and completed on 16 August 2013. The results are currently being analysed to ensure that any intervention complies with strict State Aid rules.

It is intended that this project will move to the procurement stage shortly, with a contract expected to be signed by the end of the year and implementation completed by the end of 2015. This project will benefit a number of areas, including rural South Antrim

Economic Conference

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what specific measures her Department has taken to ensure that Co. Fermanagh benefits from the economic conference planned for November 2013.

(AQW 26213/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Investment Conference planned for October is a direct result of the hosting of this year's G8 Summit in Fermanagh under the presidency of the UK and will promote Northern Ireland's ambition for economic prosperity and capitalise on the long term economic potential of a G8 legacy.

It will showcase the substantial benefits that investors have already experienced and will highlight the value proposition on offer to prospective new investors and will allow delegates to experience first-hand the significant assets and capabilities which Northern Ireland has to offer across a range of sectors.

As part of the conference, Invest NI sought material from all 26 Councils for inclusion in a Northern Ireland showcase and I am delighted that Fermanagh District Council responded positively and that appropriate imagery will be incorporated.

In addition, the quality of our food produce from throughout Northern Ireland, including Fermanagh, will be incorporated in to menus which the attendees will sample during the conference.

For any delegates wishing to extend their stay and see more of Northern Ireland, Invest NI has worked with NITB to develop suitable itineraries.

Invest NI is also in the early stages of planning to enable its overseas team to spend two days in Fermanagh next year as part of their annual sales conference to engage with local businesses and stakeholders and enhance their knowledge of the regions proposition.

Green Investment Bank

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what funding opportunities, provided through the Green Investment Bank, can be progressed to the benefit of companies in North Antrim.

(AQW 26257/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Green Investment Bank (GIB) has been proactive in Northern Ireland since it was set up in promoting its remit and investment products. Invest NI has actively supported this through a series of 'Funding for Renewables' events across Northern Ireland at which contact details for GIB were provided.

GIB is mandated to deploy at least 80% of its £3bn capital to three priority sectors: Offshore wind; Waste recycling and energy from waste; and Energy efficiency. It has a range of financial products and up to 20% of its capital can be allocated in other sectors, with emerging technologies such as Biofuels for transport; Carbon capture and storage; and Marine energy.

All Northern Ireland companies, including those in north Antrim, that have potential investment projects which meet the criteria of the bank and in particular the sectors in which it operates should consider GIB as a potential investment partner and I would encourage them to contact GIB and discuss their projects. Invest NI includes GIB as a potential funding source as part of its wider funding in renewables initiative and is well positioned to advise any companies developing renewable projects.

GIB has already approved its first funding project in Northern Ireland, a £20 million investment with Evermore Energy on a project in Londonderry and I understand it is in discussions with other organisations here.

Department of the Environment

Compliance Improvement and Review Team

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 20928/11-15, when the ongoing audit of minerals files by the Compliance Improvement and Review Team is scheduled to be completed; and whether the audit results will be published or made available to the public on request.

(AQW 22040/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): In a response to AQW 20928/11-15 my predecessor (Minister Alex Attwood) indicated that there was an ongoing audit of minerals planning application files which had not yet been completed. The report relating to this audit is currently at draft stage and will be finalised within the next month following consideration by management.

Audit reports are internal and are not published as it is considered that the publication or release of these internal reports could undermine the value of work undertaken by the Compliance, Improvement & Review Team and could potentially prejudice the outcome of any future audit work.

Local Government Staff

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether any of his Department's local government staff have been given salary increases or promotions to deal with the increased workload caused by RPA; and whether any such awards will be permanent.

(AQW 25195/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There has been no salary increases given to Local Government staff to deal with the increased workload in advance of Local Government Reform. There has however, been one temporary promotion to a new Grade 5 (SCS) post for a period of 18-24 months. The post vacated by the officer on temporary promotion will remain vacant for the duration of the arrangement.

Dereliction Scheme

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment what assistance his Department will give local councils that are awarded funding under the dereliction scheme and that may face challenges in spending the funding by April 2014.

(AQW 25254/11-15)

Mr Durkan: One of the conditions which councils must meet when applying for Dereliction Intervention Funding is that their projects have to be completed by the end of the current financial year. This is because the existing public financial process does not permit flexibility, either to the Department or to councils, in relation to this date.

There is, therefore, no assistance that the Department can offer, should councils find that they cannot complete the works by that date.

Activity Centre Kilkeel, Co.Down

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of the Environment why the planning application for an activity centre on Fair Road, Greencastle, Kilkeel, Co.Down was approved by Newry and Mourne Council on 6 September 2012, given that a green form has not yet been issued.

(AQW 25370/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The planning application for an activity centre on Fair Road, Greencastle, Kilkeel was presented to Newry and Mourne Council on 6 September 2012 with an opinion to approve. The Council raised no objection to the proposal.

In view of the level of local objection, the Minister at the time requested that no decision issue until he had heard representations from the Member of Parliament and local objectors. A meeting took place in October 2012.

Thereafter, further information was requested from, and provided by, the applicant. Following a review of this information, my predecessor had intended to have further discussions with officials and to visit the site.

I had the opportunity to visit the site with the planning official recently. I am still considering the application.

Gasification Plant in Derry

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what assessment his Department has made of Brickkiln as an appropriate company to operate the proposed gasification plant in Derry.

(AQW 25465/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The assessment of bidder proposals is a matter for the procuring councils under whose authority and on whose behalf the North West Region Waste Management Group (NWRWMG) has conducted its procurement in accordance with all the requisite legislative guidance. The Preferred Bidder chosen by the councils of the NWRWMG to deliver the new waste infrastructure is a consortium, the SBS Partnership, comprising Sisk, an Irish based international construction firm, Shanks Group PLC, a UK-based international waste management firm with operations in Northern Europe and Canada, and Brickkiln, a Derry-based firm engaged in Waste Management and Civil Engineering.

The record and history of individual members of the preferred bidder consortium in relation to other planning sites was not considered a material planning matter in the determination of the planning application for the proposed gasification plant in Maydown. Each planning application is assessed on its own merits in accordance with the relevant planning policy, guidance and advice.

The consortium's proposed facility will require a permit under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (NI) 2012 issued by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). No permit application for the proposal has as yet been received by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. If and when an application is received, it will have to demonstrate that the installation will be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with Best Available Techniques (BAT) – in particular in line with the requirements of Chapter IV and Annex VI of the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED). This will include provision of detailed information on the proposed process and technologies.

The permit application would be subject to consultation. It would also be advertised and made available for the general public to examine at public registers at Derry City Council and the NIEA offices in Belfast. Anyone may make written representations to NIEA in respect of the application, within 42 days of the advertisement.

Staff Disciplinary Issues

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost in legal fees to each council of staff disciplinary issues, in each year since 2008.

(AQW 25730/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As this information is not held by the Department, it has been obtained from each of the councils. Their responses are recorded in the tables below.

Council	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Antrim	Nil	Nil	Nil
Ards	No Records	No Records	No Records
Armagh	5214.50	10172.00	2965.00
Ballymena	Nil	Nil	Nil
Ballymoney	Nil	Nil	Nil

Council	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Banbridge	326.06	Nil	3009.42
Belfast	Nil	2070.00	Nil
Carrickfergus	Nil	Nil	Nil
Castlereagh	15695.75	14182.44	4118.37
Coleraine	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cookstown	Nil	Nil	Nil
Craigavon	Nil	Nil	Nil
Derry	Nil	Nil	Nil
Down	Nil	Nil	Nil
Dungannon and South Tyrone	1446.00	400.00	1215.00
Fermanagh	Nil	Nil	Nil
Larne	543.09	Nil	Nil
Limavady	1369.50	2475.00	2095.67
Lisburn	3154.24	960.97	21768.43
Magherafelt	Nil	Nil	25761.50
Moyle	Nil	Nil	Nil
Newry & Mourne	98.70	174.60	10772.50
Newtownabbey	Nil	Nil	326.00
North Down	5090.00	2629.00	11133.00
Omagh	532.00	806.00	719.00
Strabane	Nil	Nil	Nil

Council	2011/2012	2012/2013
Antrim	Nil	Nil
Ards	Nil	Nil
Armagh	758.00	Nil
Ballymena	Nil	Nil
Ballymoney	Nil	Nil
Banbridge	105.00	Nil
Belfast	Nil	4400.00
Carrickfergus	Nil	2545.00
Castlereagh	19147.70	Nil
Coleraine	1022.00	Nil
Cookstown	Nil	Nil

Council	2011/2012	2012/2013
Craigavon	2275.00	4216.00
Derry	Nil	Nil
Down	Nil	Nil
Dungannon and South Tyrone	Nil	1287.24
Fermanagh	Nil	Nil
Larne	341.70	Nil
Limavady	1053.36	1811.87
Lisburn	4048.46	648.16
Magherafelt	13120.00	Nil
Moyle	Nil	Nil
Newry & Mourne	5820.00	300.00
Newtownabbey	1083.50	1641.00
North Down	8204.00	15619.00
Omagh	463.00	Nil
Strabane	Nil	Nil

Planning Applications: Open File Policy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 22037/11-15, how his response is in line with his Department's claim to operate an open file policy in regard to planning applications.
(AQW 25740/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has operated an 'Open File System' since 19 November 2001 to enhance the openness of planning processes by making planning application files available for viewing by the public. Planning applications are also available to view online on the NI Planning Portal.

My predecessor (Minister Attwood's) response to AQW 22037/11-15 advises that the information requested is associated with an ongoing audit of minerals planning application files, which is currently at draft report stage for management comment. I would refer the member to my response to AQW 25615/11-15 in this instance.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment what method of notification was used to ensure that local MLAs and the MP for the constituency were informed of his visit to County Hall, Coleraine on 11 September 2013, to meet staff of the Driver and Vehicle Agency.
(AQW 25751/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Local MLAs and the MP were informed of my visit to the East Londonderry constituency by email to the relevant party office on the evening of Thursday 10 September 2013. Regrettably the reason, location and timing of the visit were omitted from the email sent by my private office. I have asked my private office to ensure that in future, adequate notice and as much information as possible is included in all constituency visit notifications.

No Cycling By-Laws in North Down

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his Department's approval of the proposed No Cycling By-Laws for North Down Borough.

(AQW 25785/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Departmental officials have been working with North Down Borough Council (the Council), the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and Departmental Solicitor's Office to ensure that the Council's proposed bye-laws to regulate cycling and other matters are valid and agreeable to all parties.

The Department received a version of the proposed bye-laws from the Council on 30 July 2013 and officials have advised the Council that, subject to a number of amendments being made, the bye-laws are suitable for confirmation.

The Council has been asked to provide the Department with a revised version of the bye-law before it is confirmed by both the Department and DCAL.

Marine Life Rescue Service

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment, given the recent beaching of a Sei whale on a County Antrim beach, whether he has given any consideration to a Marine Life Rescue Service or coordination of volunteers similar to the British Divers Marine Life Rescue.

(AQW 25790/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has competently performed a Marine Life Rescue Role for many years and indeed played the pivotal role in the co-ordination of the Sei Whale stranding response. A member of DOE Marine Division staff arrived on scene and assumed the role of Beach master co-ordinating with other agencies and the general public. An off duty member of NIEA staff who is also a member of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group performed a vital role in keeping the general public and press up-dated with facts and figures as well as explaining the circumstances in which a whale would be euthanized.

DOE Marine Division instructed the local coastguard to provide beach security to protect the animal from further distress and also called on the services of a vet with experience in the assessment and euthanasia of stranded cetaceans. Following the death of the whale, DOE arranged for Moyle Council to secure the site over the weekend and the removal of remains to a landfill site. DOE commissioned at short notice an autopsy, performed by AFBI, assisted by DOE in order to gather more science as to why these creatures strand at the landfill site. These results are forwarded to the UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme. During the autopsy DOE recovered material from the carcass which will be used for public education and future awareness raising such as explaining our policies on when to rescue or euthanize.

In 2008 DOE organised an inter agency Marine Life Stranding training course, attended by DOE, the Coastguard, Local Coastal Authorities, the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, The National Trust and Vets with an expertise in marine mammals. This resulted in an agreed Call Out Protocol, the procurement of life saving equipment and a better understanding of the conditions in which a rescue or humane destruction should be considered.

The protocol was applied in both the Sei whale stranding and more recently in the case of a low profile stranding of a very young pilot whale calf. The agencies involved in these two recent cases included DOE, the Coastguard, the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Moyle and Coleraine Councils and the PSNI.

My Department intends to run a further inter agency training course early in 2014 when the existing protocol will be reviewed and updated.

On the question of whether either of the recent whales could be saved, the simple answer is no. In both cases the veterinary advice based on extensive scientific evidence and the medical condition of both whales was to put them down humanely by lethal injection. The Sei Whale died 30 minutes before the vet arrived.

Any attempt to save either of these two animals would have caused undue suffering, needlessly prolonging the animals' distress.

In the past, smaller animals such as dolphins and porpoises have been saved in similar stranding circumstances when they did not have underlying health problems and were not maternally dependant.

I am content that my Department provides a professional marine life rescue service, as demonstrated in the recent stranding events and therefore there is no need to establish a voluntary service similar to that of British Diver Marine Life Rescue.

Dereliction Fund

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the most recent round of the Dereliction Fund.

(AQW 25800/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Dereliction Intervention Scheme has been very successful and will be a rolling programme which my department will be bidding to maintain.

Over a 3 year period £3.7m has been allocated to councils to tackle the detrimental impact on amenity caused by derelict or dilapidated buildings and gap sites, particularly on the built environment.

As part of the June monitoring round we received funding of £1.5 million. This has been allocated to 15 councils to be spent this financial year.

On 23 August 2013, we received further bids for funding from 16 councils and as a result as part of the October monitoring round we have asked for £2 million. We are currently waiting on a decision as to whether this funding will be made available.

Licences to Bale Tyres

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many licences to bale tyres have been granted to waste disposal firms in each of the last three years.

(AQW 25813/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Two licences which permitted the baling of waste tyres were granted in 2010. No licences were granted in 2011. Two licences were granted in 2012. There have been no applications in 2013.

Recycling of Waste Rubber

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment why Publicly Available Specification 107 and 108 on the recycling of waste rubber have not been endorsed locally.

(AQW 25814/11-15)

Mr Durkan: These business standards for crumbed tyres (PAS107) and baled tyres (PAS 108) are used to develop Waste Quality Protocols which meet the terms of the European Waste Framework Directive. Only one of these standards (PAS107) has been used to develop a protocol in England. They are not used in Scotland and not endorsed in Northern Ireland because of outstanding concerns about chemical leaching.

However, NIEA is working closely with the Environment Agency to update the tyre crumb Quality Protocol with a view to its adoption, and is considering a Regulatory Position Statement to enable local use of baled tyres for construction.

Waste Tyre Disposal

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the current methods used for the disposal of waste tyres.

(AQW 25815/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The All Island Used Tyre Survey that was published in January 2013 made an assessment of how the used tyres generated in the island of Ireland were managed during 2010/11. The following table shows the Northern Ireland tonnages for each management option. Figures for other years are not available.

Management Option	Tonnage
Recycling and Reprocessing	13,370
Reuse/Retread	41
Landfill/Engineering	1,116
Agricultural and other Temporary Uses	942
Part Worns	1,365
Unknown	1,763

The published survey and is available on the DOE website at www.doeni.gov.uk/all_island_used_tyre_survey_report.pdf

Waste Tyre Disposal

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many waste tyres have been disposed of in each of the last four years.

(AQW 25817/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The All Island Used Tyre Survey that was published in January 2013 estimated that in Northern Ireland there was a total of 18,597 tonnes of used tyre arisings in 2010/11, which equates to approximately 1.8 million tyres. Figures for other years are not available.

The published survey is available on the DOE website at www.doeni.gov.uk/all_island_used_tyre_survey_report.pdf

Disposal of Waste Tyres

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many firms have applied for a licence to dispose of waste tyres, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 25819/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Disposal of waste tyres is banned by the Landfill Directive so all tyres must be recovered. This question has been interpreted as licence applications for facilities to manage, treat or store waste tyres which are subsequently sent for reuse or recovery.

There were four applications for licences for waste facilities which included the management of waste tyres in 2010. There were five applications in 2011. There were four applications in 2012. There have been no applications in 2013.

Allotment Provision

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives to encourage local councils to improve allotment provision.

(AQW 25821/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Neither I, nor my predecessor, have had any discussions with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association or the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives on allotment provision.

My Department does not provide funding for the provision of allotments however the Northern Ireland Environment Agency through the Challenge Fund, which is administered by the Northern Ireland Environment Link, last year provided support for two allotment projects.

Councils already have powers to provide allotments and many do, and so my Department has not considered imposing a Statutory Obligation on Councils to provide them.

Allotment Provision

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to imposing a statutory obligation on councils to provide allotments.

(AQW 25822/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Neither I, nor my predecessor, have had any discussions with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association or the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives on allotment provision.

My Department does not provide funding for the provision of allotments however the Northern Ireland Environment Agency through the Challenge Fund, which is administered by the Northern Ireland Environment Link, last year provided support for two allotment projects.

Councils already have powers to provide allotments and many do, and so my Department has not considered imposing a Statutory Obligation on Councils to provide them.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for littering in each council, in each of the last two years; (ii) how much did this accrue in fines; (iii) how many fines were unpaid; and (iii) how many required court action.

(AQW 25832/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department obtains statistical information on fixed penalty notices on an annual basis and this relates to financial years rather than calendar years. The Table attached reflects the information provided by all 26 Councils for the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years.

The figures for some councils show a smaller number of fines paid compared with fines issued. Apart from straightforward cases where the fine has simply not been paid there may be other factors which explain the difference between some of the figures. In an ideal world every fine would be paid. However, in reality, this will not be the case. On occasion, there will be reasons where to pursue payment would not be in the public interest, for example, where further information about the circumstances of an alleged offender comes to light or where someone that had been issued with a fine had moved and a forwarding address cannot reasonably be obtained.

Council	2011/12				2012/13			
	FPNs Issued 2011/12	FPNs Paid 2011/12	FPN RECEIPTS	Number of Cases Referred for Court Action for Fixed Penalty Non-Payment	FPNs Issued 2012/13	FPNs Paid 2012/13	FPN RECEIPTS	Number of Cases Referred for Court Action for Fixed Penalty Non-Payment
Antrim	30	24	£1,200	0	24	24	£1,200	0
Ards	12	11	£550	0	3	3	£225	0
Armagh	14	13	£625	0	17	12	£1,160	0
Ballymena	30	29	£1,450	1	28	28	£1,400	0
Ballymoney	4	3	£150	0	4	1	£50	0

Council	2011/12				2012/13			
	FPNs Issued 2011/12	FPNs Paid 2011/12	FPN RECEIPTS	Number of Cases Referred for Court Action for Fixed Penalty Non-Payment	FPNs Issued 2012/13	FPNs Paid 2012/13	FPN RECEIPTS	Number of Cases Referred for Court Action for Fixed Penalty Non-Payment
Banbridge	12	9	£450	0	14	8	£580	2
Belfast	1534	1005	£50,250	107	1790	1326	£89,333	326
Carrick-fergus	19	19	£450	0	16	16	£860	0
Castlereagh	26	22	£1,100	4	95	84	£4,200	5
Coleraine	16	12	£600	2	98	82	£4,120	2
Cookstown	12	11	£550	0	22	19	£1,040	1
Craigavon	1046	978	£48,900	11	672	631	£53,760	41
Derry	41	14	£700	0	182	121	£6,400	28
Down	60	46	£2,385	0	289	200	£13,195	17
Dungannon & South Tyrone	1	1	£50	0	4	4	£315	0
Fermanagh	8	5	£250	0	17	7	£350	0
Larne	23	25	£1,250	0	28	21	£1,080	2
Limavady	4	4	£200	0	4	3	£150	1
Lisburn	42	42	£2,100	0	20	19	£1,425	0
Magherafelt	40	36	£1,800	0	45	44	£3,690	0
Moyle	5	4	£200	0	7	7	£375	0
Newry & Mourne	89	62	£3,100	0	92	43	£3,010	0
Newtown-abbey	150	120	£6,000	7	157	135	£7,580	9
North Down	4	4	£200	0	34	29	£1,450	2
Omagh	24	13	£650	2	32	18	£850	3
Strabane	22	22	£1,100	0	48	48	£2,400	0
Totals	3268	2534	£126,260	134	3742	2933	£200,198	439

Reform of Local Government

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many consultations responses his Department received on the reform of local government.

(AQW 25843/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A total of 77 responses were received to the consultation on the Local Government Reform Policy Proposals that issued on 30 November 2010. These responses represented the views of a wide range of interested stakeholders including councils, elected representatives, community and voluntary groups and individuals.

The Departmental Response to the consultation issued on 5 July 2012 with a copy being placed in the Assembly Library.

Carrier Bag Levy

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the reduction in the use of plastic bags since the introduction of the Carrier Bag Levy.

(AQW 25845/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The 5 pence single use carrier bag levy was introduced on 8 April 2013 and has been well received by both retailers and shoppers. The levy applies to all single use carrier bags made from plastic, paper or other natural materials. As such retailers are not required to stipulate the material type when making their quarterly returns to the Department and for this reason it is not possible to provide data specifically in relation to plastic bags.

Provisional figures from retailers indicate that 18 million single use bags were dispensed during the period 8 April to 30 June 2013. This retailer data cannot be used to accurately forecast the potential annual reduction, due to a number of factors such as seasonal variation. However, given that an estimated 300 million single use bags were dispensed during the whole of 2012, there is good reason to believe that a substantial reduction will be achieved over the first full year of charging.

I can also advise that figures from several major supermarkets suggest a possible annual reduction of well in excess of 80% in those stores.

My Department intends to produce validated statistics after the first full year of operation.

Reform of Local Government

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how much will be saved on an annual basis as a result of the reform of local government.

(AQW 25846/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The PricewaterhouseCoopers economic appraisal of local government service delivery, carried out on behalf of and published by the Department in October 2009, indicated that under the preferred option (i.e. Transformation with Regional Collaboration), implementation of the local government reform programme could achieve savings of £438 million over twenty-five years.

Local government also examined the potential for savings through its Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Programme (ICE) and estimated savings of as much as £570m over 25 years.

The Regional Transition Committee commissioned the Finance Working Group in 2012 to develop an up-to-date and accurate analysis of the full costs (transition and transformation) and benefits (including savings) of the reform implementation programme. Since then, local government has worked on this issue, and a response is expected within the coming weeks.

Red Squirrel Population

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to protect the Red Squirrel population.

(AQW 25847/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In 2008 the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) published an all Ireland Species Action Plan for the red squirrel which identified

the main threats to the species and proposed a series of measures which were aimed at conserving the remaining population.

To further the conservation effort and to progress actions contained within the Species Action Plan, NIEA has taken on the role of chair of the Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum (NISF). The Forum brings together various organisations in order to develop and deliver best practice in red squirrel conservation.

Since taking on this role, NIEA has helped create, and subsequently supports, 7 local Squirrel Groups, with an eighth Group being developed in South Tyrone during September 2013. These community groups focus on local squirrel issues and work with local stakeholders, providing regular updates to the NI Squirrel Forum. There is an active Squirrel Group in North Down focusing currently on the Ards Peninsula area, chaired by the National Trust at Mount Stewart.

Additionally, my Department has recently joined the other UK Country Agencies to provide funding to support the work of the Moredun Research Institute in Edinburgh who are developing a vaccine to protect red squirrels from the deadly squirrel pox virus that is spread by the non-native greys.

Highway Code

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to review the Highway Code to account for the safety needs of cyclists.

(AQW 25883/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has a statutory responsibility under Article 51 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 to promote road safety and specifically to revise and make available the Highway Code. Revisions, other than alterations needed following legislative change, are subject to public consultation.

The Highway Code for Northern Ireland was last revised in 2008 in liaison with the Department for Transport and the Driving Standards Agency. The current edition of the Highway Code is very similar to that in Britain, containing a similar number of 'Rules' in the same order, supported by the same illustrations.

The Code is revised when necessary to provide up to date advice to road users. The situation is similar in Britain and colleagues from both jurisdictions work closely on any of the changes being adopted as well as the timing / publication of revisions. There are no plans either in Northern Ireland or Britain to conduct a review at this time.

The current edition of the Highway Code for Northern Ireland addresses the specific safety needs of cyclists in a number of ways. Recognising that certain road users require extra care, advice on how drivers should treat vulnerable road users, including cyclists, is covered in Rules 204 to 218 of the Code.

A section dedicated to 'Rules for Cyclists' includes information on issues such as appropriate clothing and lighting as well as advice when cycling on cycle routes, cycle tracks, cycle lanes and bus lanes. The correct procedures to be followed at road junctions, roundabouts and crossing the road are also covered alongside other important safety requirements (Rules 59 to 82).

A further section entitled 'You and your bicycle' considers some of the factors that will help make sure that you feel confident of your ability to ride safely on the road. This advice can be found in Annex 1 of the Code (page 118).

I am satisfied that the current edition of the Highway Code for Northern Ireland provides all road users, including cyclists, with detailed guidance that will prepare them for the demands of today's roads. There is no doubt, if all road users know and follow the advice in the Code, many collisions would be avoided and the Road to Zero road deaths would be advanced.

Disposal of Waste Tyres

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment how many licences for dealing with waste tyres have been granted to firms, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 25891/11-15)

Mr Durkan: This question has been interpreted as covering facilities which treat or process waste tyres e.g. baling, shredding. It does not include Material Recycling Facilities that have permission to accept and store waste tyres but do not carry out any processing or treatment.

Four licences were granted for the treatment of waste tyres in 2010. Five licences were granted in 2011. Two licences were granted in 2012. There have been no applications in 2013.

Recycling Tyres

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the methods used to recycle tyres.

(AQW 25892/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Recycled tyres are those that are reprocessed into products, materials or substances whether for the original or other purposes. Used tyres can be reused or recycled in a number of ways:

- 1 Agricultural use as silage clamps.
- 2 Other temporary uses such as boat fenders and sports safety barriers.
- 3 Landfill engineering, replacing other construction materials, for a lightweight backfill in gas venting systems, leachate collection systems, and operational liners.
- 4 Shredding and crumbing of tyres, to make granulate for the equestrian, garden, sports and child care sectors, and matting products and carpet underlay.
- 5 Tyre bales, for road sub bases, retaining walls, gabions, waterway control, flood control, mud slide and erosion control, soakaways, impact barrier for motorways and racetracks, shock absorption for foundation walls, firing ranges and bunkers and sound barriers along motorways and railways.
- 6 Pyrolysis (although not strictly recycling), heating whole or shredded tires in a reactor vessel containing an oxygen free atmosphere and a heat source. An oily type liquid can be produced and steel is removed from the resultant residual solid material.

These methods and uses may require a waste authorisation issued by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Peugeot Parts, Portglenone

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment what information his Department holds on the methods used by Peugeot Parts, Portglenone, to recycle tyres.

(AQW 25893/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The primary use of recycled tyres from PPP Recycling Portglenone is as a Used Tyre Derived Aggregate Replacement forming the leachate drainage layer at Craigmole Landfill just outside Garvagh. A small quantity has also been exported to South Korea for use as a tyre derived fuel in cement production.

Waste Management Licence

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment what qualifications must be met to be granted a Waste Management Licence to recycle used tyres.

(AQW 25894/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The relevant certificate of technical competence (CoTC) that an operator must hold, or be in the process of obtaining, to be granted a waste management licence to recycle used tyres, is level 4 in waste management operations: Managing treatment non hazardous waste.

Dereliction Funding

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the current status of the process for Dereliction Funding that is accessible to councils.

(AQW 25911/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Dereliction Intervention Scheme has been very successful and will be a rolling programme which my department will be bidding to maintain.

Over a 3 year period £3.7m has been allocated to councils to tackle the detrimental impact on amenity caused by derelict or dilapidated buildings and gap sites, particularly on the built environment.

As part of the June monitoring round my department received funding of £1.5 million. This has been allocated to 15 councils to be spent this financial year.

On 23 August 2013, my department received further bids for funding from 16 councils and as a result as part of the October monitoring round has asked for £2 million. My Officials are currently waiting on a decision as to whether this funding will be made available.

Retrospective Planning Permission

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of times, since 2000, stop notices have been served on (i) mineral extraction sites; and (ii) sites where either a retrospective planning permission had been applied for and was being processed or where retrospective planning permission had been granted.

(AQW 25917/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Since 2000, there have been a total of 16 Stop Notices and Temporary Stop Notices on sites dealt with by the Minerals Enforcement team that include extraction and ancillary operations. The information you have requested cannot be readily extracted from the computerised database in relation to retrospective applications.

Equality Impact Assessment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 17637/11-15, how many negative Equality Impact Assessment determinations were changed to positive determinations as a result of the review.

(AQW 25920/11-15)

Mr Durkan: AQW 17637/11-15 referred to Environmental Impact Assessments. I have therefore assumed that this question was also intended to ask about Environmental Impact Assessments.

I can confirm that through the review no negative determinations have been changed to positive determinations.

Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Figures

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste figures for each of the ARC21 councils over each of the last four years.

(AQW 25935/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As the question does not specify precisely what Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste (LACMW) figures are needed data has been supplied for the following three key performance indicators in the current waste management strategy;

Kpi (e) Percentage of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings sent for recycling and composting

Kpi (f) Percentage of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings landfilled

Kpi (j) Total Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings

Other LACMW metrics and / or data for other years are publically reported at
http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/waste-home/municipal_data_reporting.htm

Since the 2012 / 13 data are still undergoing validation (publication due late November 2013) the previous 4 reporting years of finalised data have been used.

Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste data 2011 / 12

2011/12	KPI(j)					KPI (e)		KPI(f)
Area	Lac Municipal Waste Arising's (Tonnes)	Lac Municipal Dry Recycling (Tonnes)	Lac Municipal Composting (Tonnes)	Lac Municipal Dry Recycling Rate	Lac Municipal Composting Rate	Lac Municipal Waste Sent For Recycling (Inc Composting) As A % Of Lac Municipal Waste Arising's	Lac Municipal Waste Landfilled (Tonnes)	Lac Municipal Waste Landfilled As A % Of Total Lac Municipal Waste Arising's
arc21								
Antrim	35,186	10,321	8,406	29.3%	23.9%	53.2%	16,001	45.5%
Ards	42,435	7,665	8,527	18.1%	20.1%	38.2%	26,080	61.5%
Ballymena	31,926	6,108	6,114	19.1%	19.2%	38.3%	19,693	61.7%
Belfast	148,866	23,607	16,445	15.9%	11.0%	26.9%	105,500	70.9%
Carrick-fergus	24,272	7,129	4,049	29.4%	16.7%	46.1%	13,093	53.9%
Castlereagh	31,004	6,413	6,707	20.7%	21.6%	42.3%	17,468	56.3%
Down	32,635	6,079	4,026	18.6%	12.3%	31.0%	22,414	68.7%
Larne	20,396	6,776	4,042	33.2%	19.8%	53.0%	8,743	42.9%
Lisburn	58,637	11,576	11,873	19.7%	20.2%	40.0%	34,481	58.8%
Newtown-abbey	45,212	8,445	9,931	18.7%	22.0%	40.6%	25,689	56.8%
North Down	47,404	12,242	8,748	25.8%	18.5%	44.3%	26,075	55.0%
All arc21	517,972	106,362	88,869	20.5%	17.2%	37.7%	315,238	60.9%

Source: excerpts from Table 3 on page 27 of http://www.doeni.gov.uk/lac_municipal_waste_2011-12.pdf

Notes

- 1 Rates calculated by dividing total tonnage of LAC municipal waste sent for recycling, composting and landfill by total LAC municipal waste arising's.
- 2 The tonnages of recycled (including composted) and landfilled waste may not always equal the waste arising's because the recycling measures were defined to capture outputs from recycling processes which excludes reuse and energy recovery.

Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste data 2010 / 11

2010 / 11	KPI(j)					KPI (e)		KPI(f)
Area	LAC municipal waste arisings (tonnes)	LAC municipal dry recycling (tonnes)	LAC municipal composting (tonnes)	LAC municipal dry recycling rate	LAC municipal composting rate	LAC municipal waste sent for recycling (inc composting) as a % of LAC municipal waste arisings	LAC municipal waste landfilled (tonnes)	LAC municipal waste landfilled as a % of total LAC municipal waste arisings
arc21								
Antrim	35,282	9,676	7,529	27.4%	21.3%	48.8%	17,727	50.2%
Ards	44,686	8,564	8,366	19.2%	18.7%	37.9%	27,629	61.8%
Ballymena	33,576	6,072	5,068	18.1%	15.1%	33.2%	22,432	66.8%
Belfast	152,113	23,611	14,913	15.5%	9.8%	25.3%	112,798	74.2%
Carrick-fergus	23,467	5,584	4,117	23.8%	17.5%	41.3%	13,767	58.7%
Castlereagh	31,880	6,776	6,375	21.3%	20.0%	41.2%	18,401	57.7%
Down	34,973	6,039	4,212	17.3%	12.0%	29.3%	24,626	70.4%
Larne	20,105	4,004	3,673	19.9%	18.3%	38.2%	12,286	61.1%
Lisburn	61,377	12,426	11,760	20.2%	19.2%	39.4%	36,523	59.5%
Newtown-abbey	46,660	8,463	9,900	18.1%	21.2%	39.4%	28,023	60.1%
North Down	47,878	11,705	8,821	24.4%	18.4%	42.9%	27,139	56.7%
All arc21	531,996	102,920	84,734	19.3%	15.9%	35.3%	341,350	64.2%

Source: excerpts from Table 3 on page 9 of Appendix of http://www.doeni.gov.uk/waste_2011r.pdf

Notes

- 1 Rates calculated by dividing total tonnage of LAC municipal waste sent for recycling, composting and landfill by total LAC municipal waste arisings.
- 2 The tonnages of recycled (including composted) and landfilled waste may not always equal the waste arisings because the recycling measures were defined to capture outputs from recycling processes which excludes reuse and energy recovery.

Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste data 2009 / 10

2009 / 10	KPI(j)					KPI (e)		KPI(f)
Area	LAC municipal waste arisings (tonnes)	LAC municipal dry recycling (tonnes)	LAC municipal composting (tonnes)	LAC municipal dry recycling rate	LAC municipal composting rate	LAC municipal waste sent for recycling (inc composting) as a % of LAC municipal waste arisings	LAC municipal waste landfilled (tonnes)	LAC municipal waste landfilled as a % of total LAC municipal waste arisings
arc21								
Antrim	37,378	11,118	8,008	29.7%	21.4%	51.2%	18,024	48.2%
Ards	45,682	8,605	8,383	18.8%	18.4%	37.2%	28,640	62.7%
Ballymena	34,661	6,307	5,532	18.2%	16.0%	34.2%	22,818	65.8%
Belfast	157,321	24,116	10,994	15.3%	7.0%	22.3%	122,079	77.6%
Carrick-fergus	22,308	3,937	2,955	17.6%	13.2%	30.9%	15,416	69.1%
Castlereagh	31,226	6,627	5,254	21.2%	16.8%	38.0%	19,201	61.5%
Down	36,968	6,424	4,037	17.4%	10.9%	28.3%	26,460	71.6%
Larne	20,758	4,071	3,260	19.6%	15.7%	35.3%	13,407	64.6%
Lisburn	62,211	12,474	10,209	20.1%	16.4%	36.5%	39,440	63.4%
Newtown-abbey	46,620	7,909	8,187	17.0%	17.6%	34.5%	30,371	65.1%
North Down	48,067	8,960	7,577	18.6%	15.8%	34.4%	28,886	60.1%
All arc21	543,200	100,549	74,395	18.5%	13.7%	32.2%	364,742	67.1%

Source: excerpts from Table 3 on page 9 of Appendix of http://www.doeni.gov.uk/northern_ireland_municipal_waste_management_statistics_annual_report_2009-10r.pdf

Notes

- 1 Rates calculated by dividing total tonnage of LAC municipal waste sent for recycling, composting and landfill by total LAC municipal waste arisings.
- 2 The tonnages of recycled (including composted) and landfilled waste may not always equal the waste arisings because the recycling measures were defined to capture outputs from recycling processes which excludes reuse and energy recovery.

Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste data 2008 / 09

2008 / 09	KPI(j)					KPI (e)		KPI(f)
Area	LAC municipal waste arisings (tonnes)	LAC municipal dry recycling (tonnes)	LAC municipal composting (tonnes)	LAC municipal dry recycling rate	LAC municipal composting rate	LAC municipal waste sent for recycling (inc composting) as a % of LAC municipal waste arisings	LAC municipal waste landfilled (tonnes)	LAC municipal waste landfilled as a % of total LAC municipal waste arisings
arc21								
Antrim	37,304	10,304	8,189	27.62%	21.95%	49.6%	18,811	50.4%

2008 / 09	KPI(j)					KPI (e)		KPI(f)
Area	LAC municipal waste arisings (tonnes)	LAC municipal dry recycling (tonnes)	LAC municipal composting (tonnes)	LAC municipal dry recycling rate	LAC municipal composting rate	LAC municipal waste sent for recycling (inc composting) as a % of LAC municipal waste arisings	LAC municipal waste landfilled (tonnes)	LAC municipal waste landfilled as a % of total LAC municipal waste arisings
Ards	46,238	7,472	7,214	16.16%	15.60%	31.8%	31,552	68.2%
Ballymena	35,409	7,404	5,112	20.91%	14.44%	35.3%	22,890	64.6%
Belfast	158,443	24,825	10,037	15.67%	6.33%	22.0%	123,581	78.0%
Carrick-fergus	22,732	3,656	2,793	16.08%	12.28%	28.4%	16,284	71.6%
Castlereagh	31,795	6,747	5,020	21.22%	15.79%	37.0%	19,678	61.9%
Down	38,339	6,506	3,855	16.97%	10.06%	27.0%	31,727	82.8%
Larne	20,738	4,246	2,957	20.48%	14.26%	34.7%	13,666	65.9%
Lisburn	62,848	12,505	7,961	19.90%	12.67%	32.6%	42,355	67.4%
Newtown-abbey	48,806	8,646	7,382	17.72%	15.12%	32.8%	32,778	67.2%
North Down	50,400	8,701	7,741	17.26%	15.36%	32.6%	31,068	61.6%
All arc21	553,054	101,012	68,260	18.26%	12.34%	30.6%	384,391	69.5%

Source: excerpts from Tables on page 33-34 of http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/municipal_waste_management_report_2008-09.pdf

Notes

- 1 Rates calculated by dividing total tonnage of LAC municipal waste sent for recycling, composting and landfill by total LAC municipal waste arisings.
- 2 The tonnages of recycled (including composted) and landfilled waste may not always equal the waste arisings because the recycling measures were defined to capture outputs from recycling processes which excludes reuse and energy recovery.

Waste Tonnage Commitments

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment whether there will be waste tonnage commitments made to ARC21/Becon by each of the participating councils.

(AQW 25936/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Whilst the participating councils would be expected to commit waste tonnage, the specific quantities are a matter for arc21, its Bidder and arc21's constituent councils. The Department is not a party to the arc21 procurement and I cannot comment on the commercial aspects of the project.

Proposed ARC21/Becon Facility

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment whether recycling tonnages will have to be diverted to the proposed ARC21/Becon facility to feed the incinerator and ensure its viability.

(AQW 25937/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department is not a party to the arc21 procurement and I cannot comment on the commercial aspects of the project.

However the facilities proposed in the arc21 procurement for residual waste treatment are part of the preferred integrated mix of treatment solutions set out in the arc21 Waste Management Plan. This plan accords with the waste hierarchy set out in the EU Waste Framework Directive and includes mechanical biological treatment and energy recovery from incineration.

The proposed facilities are therefore intended to maximise recycling, not to either restrict or reduce it and there is no basis on which the viability of the proposed incinerator would be dependent on material which would otherwise be recycled.

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment to detail how many meetings have been held (i) at ministerial level; and (ii) at official level with counterparts in the (a) rest of the UK; and (b) Republic of Ireland, since May 2007, including under the aegis of the north/south or east/west arrangements.

(AQW 25960/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Since 2007 there have been eleven Environment Sector North South Ministerial Council meetings. There have been five Environment Ministerial meetings under the aegis of the British Irish Council.

We do not collate information on other ministerial or official bi-lateral meetings which have taken place outside the remit of the NSMC or BIC.

Recycling Figures: East Antrim

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the current recycling figures for East Antrim.

(AQW 25994/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department does not have recycling rate information for the area bordered by the parliamentary constituency of East Antrim. However, recycling rate information is available for the constituent council areas – Carrickfergus, Larne, Moyle and Newtownabbey.

NIEA collates recycling information from local councils on the WasteDataFlow database, and further information on waste arisings and recycling can be found at:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/waste-home/municipal_data_reporting.htm.

The latest annual validated figures available are for 2011/12, however, provisional estimates for 2012/13 are also available but these are subject to further revision until they are fully validated and published in late November 2013.

Council	Household waste¹ recycling and composting rate – 2011/12 (validated figures)	Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste² recycling and composting rate – 2011/12 (validated figures)
Carrickfergus Borough Council	40.9%	46.1%
Larne Borough Council	50.8%	53.0%
Moyle District Council	41.2%	38.5%
Newtownabbey Borough Council	43.4%	40.6%

Council	Household waste¹ recycling and composting rate – 2012/13 (provisional estimates)	Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste² recycling and composting rate – 2012/13 (provisional estimates)
Carrickfergus Borough Council	39.4%	41.5%
Larne Borough Council	50.1%	52.9%
Moyle District Council	40.8%	38.5%
Newtownabbey Borough Council	45.7%	43.2%

Notes:

- 1 Household waste includes materials collected directly from households (kerbside collections) or taken to bring sites, civic amenity sites or collected by private and voluntary organisations not included elsewhere
- 2 Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste is waste under the control or possession of a district council including non household sources.

Population of Squirrels

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the estimated population of (i) red squirrels; and (ii) grey squirrels.

(AQW 25997/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As you may be aware accurate population estimates for reclusive wild mammals are difficult to deliver and rely on extrapolations of sighting data and habitat modelling.

In 2008 the Environment & Heritage Service, the predecessor to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), along with National Parks and Wildlife Service in the Republic of Ireland, published a document entitled 'All Ireland Species Action Plan - Red Squirrel', that cited a figure of around 40,000 for the red squirrel population in the whole of Ireland. This was based on figures collated by Dr. Colin Lawton at the National University of Ireland, Galway. A Queen's University project by Dennis O'Teangana in 1999 had previously given an estimated figure of 10,000 red squirrels across Northern Ireland.

The 2008 'All Ireland Species Action Plan - Red Squirrel' cited that there were at least 250,000 grey squirrels on the island of Ireland, if we project that a quarter of these are in Northern Ireland then an estimate of 60,000 – 70 000 would seem to be proportionate. There is an estimate of 2.5 million grey squirrels across the UK cited by Scottish Natural Heritage amongst others.

Currently the NIEA is working with members of the Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum to obtain up to date presence or absence data for both grey and red squirrels across Northern Ireland.

Vehicle Licensing Duty

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the reasons for the policy of no longer issuing reminders to all vehicle owners when their vehicle licensing duty is due for renewal.

(AQW 26004/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The issue of a reminder notice is not a statutory requirement but is a concession which was introduced in 1987 for the convenience of customers. There are no plans at present to cease the issue of a renewal reminder notice to customers in Northern Ireland.

It is not possible to provide the volume of penalties that relate to the non issue of a reminder notice, however, a breakdown of the overall total number of late licensing penalties issued in each of the last three years is set out in the table below.

Period	Volume
1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013	73,485
1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012	59,189
1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011	61,501
Total	194,175

Note: Figures were sourced from DVA information systems and are not validated DOE/DVA Official Statistics.

Renewal reminder notices are not issued on a random basis. A monthly process extracts those vehicle records where the tax is due to expire and issues reminders to customers against set criteria to ensure the maximum number of keepers who are due to relicense their vehicle receive a renewal reminder. On average, approximately 110,000 reminders are issued to Northern Ireland customers every month.

Vehicle Licensing Duty

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment how many fines have been issued to drivers for failure to renew their vehicle licensing duty disc since the introduction of the policy to no longer issue reminders to all drivers.

(AQW 26005/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The issue of a reminder notice is not a statutory requirement but is a concession which was introduced in 1987 for the convenience of customers. There are no plans at present to cease the issue of a renewal reminder notice to customers in Northern Ireland.

It is not possible to provide the volume of penalties that relate to the non issue of a reminder notice, however, a breakdown of the overall total number of late licensing penalties issued in each of the last three years is set out in the table below.

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Total	194,175

Note: Figures were sourced from DVA information systems and are not validated DOE/DVA Official Statistics.

Renewal reminder notices are not issued on a random basis. A monthly process extracts those vehicle records where the tax is due to expire and issues reminders to customers against set criteria to ensure the maximum number of keepers who are due to relicense their vehicle receive a renewal reminder. On average, approximately 110,000 reminders are issued to Northern Ireland customers every month.

Vehicle Licensing Duty

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment how many fines have been issued to people for failure to renew their vehicle licensing duty in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26006/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The issue of a reminder notice is not a statutory requirement but is a concession which was introduced in 1987 for the convenience of customers. There are no plans at present to cease the issue of a renewal reminder notice to customers in Northern Ireland.

It is not possible to provide the volume of penalties that relate to the non issue of a reminder notice, however, a breakdown of the overall total number of late licensing penalties issued in each of the last three years is set out in the table below.

Period	Volume
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Total	194,175

Note: Figures were sourced from DVA information systems and are not validated DOE/DVA Official Statistics.

Renewal reminder notices are not issued on a random basis. A monthly process extracts those vehicle records where the tax is due to expire and issues reminders to customers against set criteria to ensure the maximum number of keepers who are due to relicense their vehicle receive a renewal reminder. On average, approximately 110,000 reminders are issued to Northern Ireland customers every month.

Vehicle Licensing Duty

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether reminders to renew vehicle licensing duty are no longer issued, or if they are issued on a random basis.

(AQW 26007/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The issue of a reminder notice is not a statutory requirement but is a concession which was introduced in 1987 for the convenience of customers. There are no plans at present to cease the issue of a renewal reminder notice to customers in Northern Ireland.

It is not possible to provide the volume of penalties that relate to the non issue of a reminder notice, however, a breakdown of the overall total number of late licensing penalties issued in each of the last three years is set out in the table below.

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Renewal reminder notices are not issued on a random basis. A monthly process extracts those vehicle records where the tax is due to expire and issues reminders to customers against set criteria to ensure the maximum number of keepers who are due to relicense their vehicle receive a renewal reminder. On average, approximately 110,000 reminders are issued to Northern Ireland customers every month.

MOT Reminders

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether MOT reminders are still issued as standard to all vehicle owners.

(AQW 26008/11-15)

Mr Durkan: DVA issues MOT reminder letters to the registered keepers of all vehicles subject to mandatory vehicle testing. These reminder letters are dispatched by post approximately seven weeks before the vehicle is due to be tested.

Road Traffic Accidents Involving Horses

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department is working with the equestrian community to prevent road traffic accidents involving horses.

(AQW 26021/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has a statutory duty to promote road safety and, within the context of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy, does this through a wide range of road safety education activities, including road safety public information campaigns and education programmes.

The Department consulted extensively with a wide range of stakeholders in developing the Road Safety Strategy to 2020. Along with other road user groups, the consultation targeted groups representative of horse riders to seek their input. The British Horse Society and the Equine Council for Northern Ireland were among those who responded representing the interests of horse riders. As a result of the responses received, the following medium term action measure was included in the Strategy:

AM 150: We will extend our road safety website to include new approaches and further advisory information; for example, to include information on horse riders and their safety.

Many of the action measures included in the Strategy contribute towards the prevention of road traffic collisions generally, including those involving horses and riders.

My officials are currently working on reviewing and updating a suite of leaflets to be published in hard copy and on NI Direct. The leaflet 'Horse Sense for Riders and Motorists' is one of these of leaflets currently being revised, and officials in my Department have been working in partnership with the British Horse Society to ensure the correctness of information and advice contained in this leaflet. The leaflet has recently completed its final quality assurance process and will be going to print shortly.

The Department's most recent road safety campaign 'Share the Road to Zero' launched in April of this year. The core message of this campaign is that if we all share the road, shouldn't we all share the responsibility. The opening scene shows several road user groups and the main crash scene takes place on a rural road and involves a driver moving out to avoid a horse rider. This campaign encourages all road users to act appropriately on the roads. The online element of this campaign asks road users to sign up to a pledge to support the ambition of zero road deaths. Individuals can go to www.sharetheroadtozero.com and identify which road user group they belong to, including horse riders, and they in turn receive road safety advice via email, Facebook and twitter.

When the campaign launched, a local representative from the British Horse Society contacted officials to express their appreciation of the campaign and showed their support by pledging the organisation to share the Road to Zero.

All road users are provided with detailed guidance through the Highway Code for Northern Ireland which contains rules, information and advice that helps prepare road users for the demands of today's roads. Knowing and applying these rules could significantly reduce road casualties. The current edition of the Highway Code includes extensive advice that drivers should treat vulnerable road users, including horse riders, with extra care and attention. It also dedicates a section to 'Rules about animals' that includes specific information and advice for horse riders (rules 49 to 55).

It describes the legal requirement for children under the age of 14 to wear a securely fastened helmet and encourages all others to do likewise. It encourages all riders to wear appropriate clothing at all times and to use appropriate lighting where a person is riding or leading a horse on the road at night. Rules 52 to 55 set out advice on the proper riding of a horse on a road that is shared with other forms of traffic.

Other road users, including motorists, motor cyclists and cyclists, are advised on how to overtake horse riders safely (Rules 163 and 215) and on how to approach a roundabout safely (Rule 187). They are encouraged to be particularly careful of horses and to treat all horses as a potential hazard as they can be unpredictable despite the efforts of their rider.

In addition the Driver & Vehicle Agency has developed in consultation with the Equine Council for Northern Ireland and the British Horse Society a specific guide for the use of Horseboxes and horse trailers on the road. The guide has been developed to clarify the legal requirements in relation to operating horseboxes, whether they are trailers or rigid vehicles. DVA officials have also agreed to attend a series of meetings with the equine sector to discuss the use of these vehicles on the road.

Northern Ireland has made considerable progress over the past number of years seeing the tragic and unnecessary loss of life due to road traffic collisions reduce considerably but there is still more work to be done. Every single life lost on our roads is one life too many. I believe we should all be striving as a community to reduce further all deaths and serious injuries on our roads, with the ultimate ambition of zero road deaths, where any death is unacceptable. This is a challenging but achievable objective if we all work together and take responsibility for our own safety and the safety of others. I encourage every road user to take the pledge and 'Share the Road to Zero'.

Vehicle Licensing Duty

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment how many people, who were not issued with a reminder to renew their Vehicle Licensing Duty, subsequently received a fine.

(AQW 26055/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The issue of a reminder notice is not a statutory requirement but is a concession which was introduced in 1987 for the convenience of customers. There are no plans at present to cease the issue of a renewal reminder notice to customers in Northern Ireland.

It is not possible to provide the volume of penalties that relate to the non issue of a reminder notice, however, a breakdown of the overall total number of late licensing penalties issued in each of the last three years is set out in the table below.

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Renewal reminder notices are not issued on a random basis. A monthly process extracts those vehicle records where the tax is due to expire and issues reminders to customers against set criteria to ensure the maximum number of keepers who are due to relicense their vehicle receive a renewal reminder. On average, approximately 110,000 reminders are issued to Northern Ireland customers every month.

Planning: Rural Areas

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he will take to make it easier for rural dwellers to secure planning permission for building family homes in the countryside.

(AQO 4608/11-15)

Mr Durkan: PPS 21 already offers considerable development opportunities for rural dwellers wishing to build a dwelling in the countryside. It does this by providing for: replacement dwellings; the conversion and reuse of non-residential buildings as dwellings; new dwellings within an existing cluster or ribbon of buildings; social and affordable housing schemes; development within designated Dispersed Rural Communities; a dwelling to meet compelling personal or domestic circumstances; and a policy Dwellings on Farms.

However, the member will be aware that my predecessor undertook a review into how PPS 21 was being applied in practice. This work promoted a flexible approach to decision making in line with the content

and substance of existing policy. I agree with my predecessor that PPS 21 is working much more effectively now and that a more practical and flexible approach is being adopted by planners to make it easier for rural dwellers to secure planning permission for family homes.

The Member will also be aware that I am undertaking a comprehensive consolidation and review of planning policy as part of the overall programme of planning reform. This will reconfigure existing policy provisions, including PPS21, into a single 'Strategic Planning Policy Statement' that will be more appropriate for the introduction of a new two tier planning system in 2015. It is intended that the consolidated strategic planning policy statement will be more strategic in focus, shorter and clearer.

Driver and Vehicle Agency: Jobs

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment what steps his Department has taken to secure the jobs of the 300 Driver and Vehicle Agency staff in Coleraine.

(AQO 4611/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As you know, vehicle licensing is delivered in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA), under an agreement between the Department of the Environment and the Department for Transport. DVLA, the Agency in Swansea responsible for vehicle licensing services across the UK, is nearing completion of a project to integrate the separate NI and GB computer systems, to produce an integrated system for vehicle licensing services across the UK. The DVLA is proposing to use the integration of the two computer systems as an opportunity to transfer all the work not done online or in Post Offices to Swansea and to terminate the agreement with the Department of the Environment. The consequences of this proposal would be the closure of all vehicle licensing offices in Northern Ireland with a loss of over 300 public jobs and a catastrophic impact on the local economy, particularly in Coleraine.

My predecessor, Alex Attwood, robustly opposed DVLA's centralisation plans throughout his period in office, eventually, after protracted negotiations with London, securing a commitment to a public consultation on the proposals. The consultation was published on 17th July and closed on 11th September.

Since coming to office, I have also vigorously challenged the DVLA proposal on centralisation and I will continue to tirelessly campaign to protect local services and save local jobs.

I wrote to all Northern Ireland MPs, MLAs and Chief Executive Officers of District Councils seeking their support and urging them to avail of the opportunity to respond to the consultation. I strongly believe that the DVLA consultation presents a one-sided case that promotes centralisation without adequately exploring other options. I arranged for all recipients to receive a copy of a critique of the DVLA consultation documentation 'An appraisal of the DVLA Consultation Documents' to provide them with sufficient information to formulate an informed response to the DVLA consultation.

An independent economic impact assessment was commissioned which was carried out by Oxford Economics. The report estimates that the aggregate impact of the proposed closure of all vehicle licensing offices in Northern Ireland would be the loss of 523 jobs and an annual loss to the economy of £11.2m in wages and £22.4m overall in gross value added (the common measure for economic activity).

I formally responded to the DVLA consultation on 6 September in which I set out clearly my rejection of the centralisation proposals on economic, social and customer service grounds, namely:

- The flawed process of options appraisal and the inadequate consultation process;
- The negative economic impact of the loss of funding and the associated jobs, accentuated by the "multiplier effect";
- The negative impact on the local labour market;
- The disproportionate impact on NI, compared to the larger economy of GB;
- The resultant lower standards of service and the removal of choice, especially from older and other more vulnerable customers;

- The loss of the benefits of DVA's exemplary record of very high standards of performance and customer service;
- The impact on staff; and
- The failure to identify the best option.

I also pointed out to Stephen Hammond the better option of continuing to use DVA to deliver services to local motorists and to supplement this work by transferring work for UK-wide customers to DVA. I have sought a meeting with Stephen Hammond to discuss this matter before he reaches a final decision.

I have also visited the local licensing office in Derry and met with staff in Coleraine to hear first hand the impact of the centralisation proposals are having on staff morale and to reassure staff that every possible step will be taken to protect the jobs in Coleraine and the local offices.

There has been a high level of support for the campaign to oppose the centralisation of vehicle licensing services in Swansea, with a number of MPs, MLAs and District Councils responding to the DVLA consultation. In addition, Laurence Robertson, MP, Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee has written to the Secretary of State for Transport pointing out that, at their meeting on 4 September 2013, the members of the Committee agreed that a powerful case had been made for the issue to be re-examined as the economic situation in NI justifies applying different criteria, when considering rationalisation of jobs, than those applied to GB. Mr Robertson also pointed out that the DVLA proposal is another example of how centralisation proposals by GB departments always act against the interests of NI and how NI is never considered as a suitable base for UK-wide business.

A motion has been tabled in the Assembly on Tuesday 24th September, and I would urge all political representatives to make their views known and to exert all possible influence to protect the local vehicle licensing service.

Road Safety Strategy

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the implementation of the measures contained in the Road Safety Strategy.

(AQO 4612/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 includes 221 Action Measures. A Strategy Delivery Board monitors and reports on progress on the implementation of those measures. This Board is chaired by DOE and comprises organisations with responsibility for road safety including, DRD, PSNI, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service. I also chair a Ministerial Road Safety Group and a Road Safety Forum.

Implementation of each action measure remains the responsibility of the organisation with lead authority in the relevant area. Progress is reported primarily through an Annual Report, with interim updates provided to the Environment Committee.

The latest update was provided to the Committee in July and covers progress up to 30 April 2013. This showed that 64 measures are either complete or embedded in business as usual, representing 29% of the overall total of 221 measures. Looking just at the 74 short term measures planned for completion by the end of 2013, 56 (76%) are either complete or embedded in business as usual. The remainder are on track for completion by the end of the year.

I have placed in the Assembly library copies of the first Annual Report for 2011 and the update from which the above figures are drawn. These documents, which provide information on the implementation of each of the 221 measures, are also available on the Department's website.

The 2012 Annual Report and a further progress update will be available before the end of 2013.

Illegal Dump at Mobouy Road

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether his Department is aware of any illegal dump in Europe which is larger than that at the Mobouy Road; (ii) to provide further details; and (iii) how the scale of the illegal dump at Mobouy Road compares to other illegal dumps which have been discovered in Europe.

(AQW 26286/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Illegal waste management is a serious problem in a number of developed countries. In the European Union I understand that individual member states record details of illegal landfills discovered in their territory. My Department does not hold this information.

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 25615/11-15, and given that he specified the exception in regulation 12(4)(d) in the refusal, to detail the estimated time in which the information will be finished or completed as directed by the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, Part 3, Regulation 14(4).

(AQW 26361/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My response to AQW 25615/11-15 indicated that there was an ongoing audit of minerals planning application files which had not yet been completed. The report relating to this audit is currently at draft stage and will be finalised within the next month following consideration by management.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Ulster Bank

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the effect of the Ulster Bank's Corporate Responsibility Group within Ulster Bank on local business.

(AQW 25426/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): I am aware that the Ulster Bank as part of its corporate and social responsibility activities supports events aimed at encouraging social enterprise in Northern Ireland.

However, my Department has not made an assessment of the impact of these activities on business locally.

Costs of Judicial Cases

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel pursuant to AQW 25071/11-15 to detail (i) why the department cannot answer part (i) and (ii) of that question; (ii) the cost of the most expensive legal case which the Department lost during since 2007 and (iii) why his Department does not record and disaggregate the costs of lost judicial cases for public scrutiny.

(AQW 25745/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The disparate nature of the department's functions and the litigation brought against it together with the volume of cases, make the keeping of statistics in relation to cost and outcome, a task which would not make the resources required to undertake it a productive use of public money.

Emigration

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) for his assessment of the impact of rising emigration on the unemployment rate; and (ii) to quantify the current level of emigration among the working age population.

(AQW 25796/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS based unemployment rate for the period April to June 2012 was estimated to be 7.6% of the economically active or 66,000 people. It is not possible to quantify how many persons who emigrated from Northern Ireland in 2012 would otherwise have become unemployed.

Table 1 shows the level of migration among the working age population (16-64), both in and out of Northern Ireland by origin/destination for the year ending mid-2012.

Table 1: Migration of Persons Aged 16-64, by origin/destination, for the year ending mid-2012

	Persons Aged 16-64 at mid-2012
Inflows from Great Britain	8,468
Outflows to Great Britain	10,534
Net GB Migration	-2,066
Inflows from outside UK	10,355
Outflows to outside UK	10,352
Net International Migration	3
Total Inflows	18,823
Total Outflows	20,886
Total Net Migration	-2,063

Gross Domestic Product

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide Gross Domestic Product figures for the last five consecutive years for which data is available.

(AQW 25825/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The production of estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the responsibility of the Office for National Statistics (ONS). However, GDP figures are not produced on a regional basis.

Estimates of Gross Value Added (GVA) are available for Northern Ireland from the ONS Regional Accounts. Table 1 attached shows the GVA for NI for the last 5 years for which data is available.

Table 1: Headline workplace based GVA, at current basic prices for NI 2007-2011 (£ million)

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
28,310	28,607	27,969	29,155	29,870

Source: ONS Regional Gross Value Added (income approach), December 2012 release

Equality Impact Assessment for Flag Flying

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to departmental buildings (i) if he intends to fly the union flag at buildings that have not flown it before, and if so, at which sites; (ii) if the

decision to erect new flagpoles was subject to equality screening and an Equality Impact Assessment; and (iii) if members of staff were consulted over new flagpoles being erected.

(AQW 25874/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I intend to fly the Union flag, on designated days, at the following Departmental buildings where it previously did not fly:- College Street, Rosepark, Victoria Hall, Clare House and Goodwood House.

No equality screening was carried out.

No consultation was undertaken with employees in relation to the proposal to erect flag poles and fly the Union flag on office buildings where DFP has premises responsibility.

Code of Conduct for Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel pursuant to the Civil Service (Special Advisers) Act 2013 to detail (i) whether a Code of Conduct for Special Advisers has been issued; and (ii) when will such be laid before the Assembly.

(AQW 25899/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Code of Conduct for Special Advisers has been issued and was laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly on 20 August 2013.

Life Expectancy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the current life expectancy for (i) males; and (ii) females; and how does this compares with (i) England; (ii) Scotland; (iii) Wales and (iv) the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 25918/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Table 1 overleaf shows the latest available figures for life expectancy at birth for males & females in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

Table 1: Period Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex and Country

Country	Males	Females
Northern Ireland	77.4	81.8
England ¹	78.7	82.7
Scotland ²	76.1	80.6
Wales ¹	77.8	82.0
Republic of Ireland ³	76.8	81.6

1 Latest available figures are 2009/2011, Office of National Statistics

2 Latest available figures are 2009/2011, National Records of Scotland

3 Latest available figures are 2005/2007, Central Statistics Office, Ireland. These are calculated using 2006 Census-based population estimates.

Life Expectancy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail life expectancy broken down by (i) constituency; and (ii) council area.

(AQW 25922/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Life expectancy figures for Northern Ireland are currently produced by the Office for National Statistics. Figures for areas within Northern Ireland are currently only produced at local government district level, therefore data by constituency is unavailable.

Table 1 shows 2008/10 figures for life expectancy at birth by local government district area. These are the latest available local data and will be revised to take account of updated local area population statistics from the Census.

Table 1: Period Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex and Local Government District, 2008/2010

Local Government District	Male	Female
Antrim	78.1	81.2
Ards	78.5	82.3
Armagh	76.5	81.7
Ballymena	78.4	82.7
Ballymoney	78.3	82.2
Banbridge	78.2	82.3
Belfast	73.9	79.8
Carrickfergus	77.4	81.8
Castlereagh	78.1	82.6
Coleraine	77.6	82.3
Cookstown	76.1	82.4
Craigavon	77.0	82.2
Derry	75.5	79.9
Down	78.7	82.0
Dungannon	77.5	81.0
Fermanagh	77.7	82.5
Larne	76.8	80.9
Limavady	76.6	83.2
Lisburn	78.0	81.6
Magherafelt	79.4	82.6
Moyle	78.7	81.2
Newry and Mourne	76.8	81.1
Newtownabbey	78.0	81.9
North Down	79.0	82.2
Omagh	77.3	82.8
Strabane	77.4	80.9

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many meetings have been held at (i) ministerial and (ii) official level with the corresponding Minister/Department under the aegis of the north/south or east/west arrangements, or, otherwise. in (a) the rest of the UK; and (b) the Republic of Ireland since May 2007.

(AQW 25948/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Since 2007 there have been one hundred and forty six North South Ministerial Council meetings, including twelve in Plenary and seven in Institutional format, which have been attended by Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive.

There have been twenty eight meetings under the aegis of the British Irish Council attended by Ministers, including twelve at Summit level.

My Department does not collate information on other bi-lateral meetings which have taken place outside the remit of the NSMC or BIC involving myself or officials.

Gross Domestic Product

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the measured Gross Domestic Product for the last five years for which data is available.

(AQW 25957/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The production of estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the responsibility of the Office for National Statistics (ONS). However, GDP figures are not produced on a regional basis.

Estimates of Gross Value Added (GVA) are available for Northern Ireland from the ONS Regional Accounts. Table 1 below shows the GVA for NI for the last 5 years for which data are available.

Table 1: Headline workplace based GVA, at current basic prices for NI 2007-2011 (£ million)

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
28,310	28,607	27,969	29,155	29,870

Source: ONS Regional Gross Value Added (income approach), December 2012 release

Gross Domestic Product

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the measured Gross Domestic Product for an employee in the (i) private sector; and (ii) public sector, for the last five years for which data is available.

(AQW 25958/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures are not produced on a regional basis. Annual estimates of Gross Value Added (GVA) are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for the countries and regions of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland. GVA is an estimate of the value of goods and services produced by a country or region in a given time period. However, it is not possible to split GVA into public and private elements as the data is produced for the whole economy and industry section level only.

Working Age Population

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the ratio of working age to total population for the last five years for which data is available.

(AQW 25984/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The population made up from males aged 16 to 64, and females aged 16 to 59, was previously referred to as the “working age population”. From April 2010 however, the state pensionable age for women has started to increase to equal that of men over the next decade. As a result, an increasing proportion of the female population aged 60 and 61 can be classified as working age for the years 2010 to 2012.

The table overleaf shows for each mid-year 2008 to 2012, (A) the total population, (B) the number of males aged 16 to 64 and females aged 16 to 59, and (C) the working age population accounting

for the change in the state pensionable age for women, as well as the ratio of working age to total population for both the previous (B/A) and current (C/A) definition of working age.

	Total Population (A)	Males 16- 64, Females 16-59 (B)	Working Age Population (C)	Ratio per 1,000 population (B/A*1,000)	Ratio per 1,000 population (C/A*1,000)
2008	1,779,152	1,106,162	1,106,162	622	622
2009	1,793,333	1,113,095	1,113,095	621	621
2010	1,804,833	1,117,481	1,118,961	619	620
2011	1,814,318	1,119,836	1,125,942	617	621
2012	1,823,634	1,121,327	1,132,165	615	621

Project Bank Accounts

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) to detail the construction projects which will involve the use of Project Bank Accounts; and (ii) to explain how such an approach will protect sub-contractors from possible risk of non-payment.

(AQW 26078/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Project Bank Accounts will be used on all appropriate construction works contracts procured by Central Procurement Directorate where the contract value exceeds £1million and there are significant subcontract opportunities.

To date, Central Procurement Directorate has awarded one construction contract with a Project Bank Account and another is scheduled to be awarded within the next month. A further six contracts which include provision for Project Bank Accounts are currently being procured.

The use of a Project Bank Account will mean that the subcontractors, to be paid through the Account, will receive payment at the same time as the main contractor. A Project Bank Account's trust status also means that such payments would be protected in the event of insolvency of the main contractor. However, work completed by a subcontractor since the last contract valuation, but which has not yet been paid into the Project Bank Account, would not be protected.

On the initial projects, only key subcontractors will be paid through the Project Bank Account. However, on subsequent projects, it is expected that the requirement will be extended to include first tier subcontractors with a subcontract valued at over 1% of the main contract price.

As well as leading on the introduction of Project Bank Accounts for the projects which it procures, CPD is also preparing a Procurement Guidance Note on Project Bank Accounts. This Guidance Note, which is scheduled to be considered by the Procurement Board in November 2013, would extend the use of Project Bank Accounts across the departments.

Civil Service Employees

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) applicants and (ii) appointees to the Civil Service in the last 12 months broken down by; (a) Protestant; (b) Roman Catholic; and (c) non determined applicants.

(AQW 26118/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The information requested is not yet available for the last 12 months. The latest information available is for the calendar year 2012 as part of the NICS Annual Report on Recruitment for 2012. This is in the public domain and is available on the NICS recruitment web-site at

<https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/pages/content.aspx?Page=annual-reports>.

Public Sector Reform Division

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) to detail the targets set for the public sector reform division; and (ii) whether any of these targets are time bound.

(AQW 26195/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Public Sector Reform Division was established to provide support to NI departments in the implementation of reform across the public sector as well as to encourage innovation in service delivery by identifying and disseminating successful examples of best practice.

It is important to note that NI departments will retain responsibility for the planning and implementation of reform, including the achievement of the associated targets relating to improvements in service delivery and realisation of cost savings.

A work programme is currently being developed for the Public Sector Reform Division with a focus on examining how innovation can be driven forward across the public sector. The performance of the Division will be assessed in terms of its achievement of the actions contained within this work programme.

Rates Relief Scheme for Stud Farms

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans he has to introduce a Rates Relief scheme for Stud Farms, in line with the arrangements in England, Scotland and Wales.

(AQW 26224/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department is not actively considering rate relief for stud farms.

As is the case with any call for new rate reliefs for business it is for the policy competent Department to consider in the first instance and in the case of stud farm relief this would be DARD. Indeed, Ministerial correspondence confirmed that position some years ago following the publication of the Equine Strategy back in 2007.

As matters stand my Department has not received any kind of persuasive case to justify the introduction of rate relief for stud farms in this part of the UK. Although I am fairly open minded about it, any case must establish need, properly assess the economic benefit, be affordable, consider alternative support measures, align with Programme for Government priorities and last but not least overcome EU State Aid Rules. These rules are particularly strict in this area and may inhibit any new schemes of this nature, notwithstanding that they already exist in other parts of the UK.

Unemployed People in Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of unemployed people under the age of twenty five in the Fermanagh District Council area in each quarter for the last six years.

(AQW 26225/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS is a sample survey and estimates of the number of unemployed people under the age of twenty-five in Fermanagh District Council Area are not sourced to the LFS because of the relatively large confidence intervals around the estimates. This is due to sample size constraints in the LFS.

The following table is sourced instead to the claimant count measure of unemployment. This shows the number of persons aged under 25 claiming unemployment related benefits at February, May, August and November of each year since 2007.

Table 1: Claimant count for people aged under 25 in Fermanagh District Council Area

Date	Number
February 2007	170
May 2007	125
August 2007	180
November 2007	155
February 2008	185
May 2008	160
August 2008	240
November 2008	275
February 2009	375
May 2009	400
August 2009	465
November 2009	425
February 2010	460
May 2010	430
August 2010	525
November 2010	440
February 2011	495
May 2011	425
August 2011	500
November 2011	485
February 2012	535
May 2012	440
August 2012	565
November 2012	490
February 2013	525
May 2013	450
August 2013	475

Additional Funding to DHSSPS

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the additional funding awarded to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety during in year monitoring within each of the past six financial years.

(AQW 26284/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The table below shows the additional in-year allocations made to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) over the last six years.

Table: In-year Allocations to DHSSPS (£m)

Year	Non Ringfenced Resource	Capital
2008-09	20.0	0.0
2009-10	31.6	17.0
2010-11	30.0	8.1
2011-12	20.0	5.0
2012-13	57.0	15.5
2013-14 (to date)	10.6	44.0

It is important to note that Budget 2008-11 included provision that DHSSPS would have first call on available resources in year up to £20 million per year. This commitment was honoured and these in-year allocations are included in the table above. The table also includes allocations made in relation to Swine Flu (net of the amount returned to donating departments), allocations in respect of equal pay settlements and allocations from the Invest to Save fund.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Childcare Services in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the childcare services and providers in the North Down constituency.

(AQW 25721/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The website, www.familysupportni.gov.uk, lists all registered childcare providers across Northern Ireland. Registered childminders are also included on the website apart from a small number who have requested that their details are withheld on security grounds.

The following table details the number of registered childcare providers in the North Down constituency.

Childminders	276
Afterschools	6
Creches	2
Day Nurseries	18
Playgroups	20

Nutrition Strategy and Healthy Ageing Agenda

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the withdrawal of the community meals service in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust as no older person has met the referral criteria, what assurances he can give that there will be a continuation of a viable, accessible community meals service to support the Department's Nutrition Strategy and healthy ageing agenda in Transforming Your Care.

(AQW 25747/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has informed my Department that it has not withdrawn the community meals service. The Trust continues to provide a comprehensive domiciliary care service, including a meals service throughout the Trust. Service Users access nutritional support

through a range of different sources, namely meals on wheels and attendance at luncheon clubs and Day Centres.

In addition, there is increasing availability of ready meals which individuals and/or family members may prefer to access, which is independent of the Trust.

The Trust has advised that it will always provide help where someone cannot heat, plate or needs help to eat a meal because of their disability or frailty and where they have no other source of support.

Physiotherapists and Podiatrists

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the changes required to existing legislation and health service regulations to enable physiotherapists and podiatrists to practice as independent prescribers; and (ii) the timescale for those changes to be enacted through the Assembly.

(AQW 25748/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- On 20th August 2013, new UK wide legislation - **Human medicines (Amendments) Regulation 2013** - came into force. This allows suitably qualified & registered Physiotherapists & Podiatrists across the UK to independently prescribe medication for their patients.
- Physiotherapists & Podiatrists who wish to independently prescribe will have to undertake additional training approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and be annotated on the HCPC Register. They will only be able to prescribe relevant to their job role.
- Changes will be required to the Pharmaceutical Services Regulations (NI) 1997 to allow prescriptions prescribed by Independent Prescribers to be dispensed in Northern Ireland and also to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002. These sub-ordinate legislation changes will be taken through the Assembly in due course.

Health and Social Care Trust Staff

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, over the last three years, (i) how many Health and Social Care Trust staff have been disciplined under Trust guidelines for misusing their work phones; (ii) of these staff, how many were (a) dismissed; (b) disciplined; (c) given the opportunity to repay the money; and (iii) what were the sums involved.

(AQW 25760/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) 5 Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust staff have been disciplined under Trust guidelines for misusing their work phones;
- (ii) of these:
 - (a) 3 were dismissed;
 - (b) 2 were disciplined;
 - (c) none were given the opportunity to repay the money; and
- (iii) the sums involved were negligible.

Childcare Services

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the childcare services and providers in the South Antrim constituency.

(AQW 25787/11-15)

Mr Poots: The website, www.familysupportni.gov.uk, lists all registered childcare providers across Northern Ireland. Registered childminders are also included on the website apart from a small number who have requested that their details are withheld on security grounds.

The following table details the number of registered childcare providers in the South Antrim constituency.

Childminders	279
Afterschools	12
Creches	3
Day Nurserys	36
Playgroups	29

Daytime Opportunities and Training Services Programmes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what engagement takes place between the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and parents, carers and people with learning disabilities to notify them of Daytime Opportunities and Training Services Programmes in Armagh and Dungannon; and whether there is scope for this communication to be broadened to allow maximum uptake and inclusion.

(AQW 25833/11-15)

Mr Poots: Engagement with parents, carers and people with learning disabilities about day time opportunities and training service programmes in Armagh and Dungannon takes place at various levels - including at annual review stage, ad hoc meetings with members of the adult community learning disability team and/or community access officer, and also through group discussion.

Contact may be made through transitions co-ordinators, community access officers and day care staff who provide individuals with an early opportunity to discuss options and receive information in a variety of ways – including telephone or face to face meetings which include transition and review meetings. In an attempt to meet each individual's assessed needs, opportunities are also offered to visit venues and activities, to discuss suitability and compatibility and to engage in taster sessions.

Trust staff liaise with training providers to negotiate and co-ordinate training opportunities and to highlight options of potential interest to individuals. Community Access Officers hold focus groups and information sharing sessions which may result in referrals to the voluntary sector. To further maximise uptake and inclusion, there are also plans to run a number of information sessions in local areas for people with disabilities and their carers to highlight the range of community opportunities available.

Complaints About Hospital Food

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department collates complaints about hospital food as part of the information it collects from the Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 25853/11-15)

Mr Poots: Complaints regarding the quality of hospital food are currently recorded under the category Hotel/Support/Security Services on the DHSSPS information collection; although, it is not possible to disaggregate this information. This category includes all complaints referring to ancillary or support services e.g. portering, facilities, catering etc. It also includes complaints regarding security issues e.g. stolen vehicles parked on Trust property.

Information on the number of complaints received by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts is published annually by the Department, and is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospitalstats/patient_safety/complaints.htm

Nursing Care Standards for Patient Food in Hospital

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the effectiveness of the Nursing Care Standards for Patient Food in Hospital campaign in tackling (i) malnourishment; (ii) improving patient satisfaction levels; and (iii) reducing food waste.
(AQW 25854/11-15)

Mr Poots: “Get your 10 a day! Nursing Care Standards for patient food in hospital”(2007) were developed collaboratively by DHSSPS and the RCN, Northern Ireland.

A Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN) audit (May 2012) considered the nutritional experiences of patients within acute settings of each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts against the standards set out in “Get your 10 a day’ The aim of this project was to evaluate the extent to which standards 1-7 had been implemented in all five Trusts and to support further implementation of these. The audit identified areas of good practice along with areas of work needed to achieve the best possible outcomes for patients in terms of their nutrition.

(i) Effectiveness of the Nursing Care Standards for Patient Food in Hospital campaign in tackling malnourishment;

Findings from the GAIN audit are as follows:

- The findings echo earlier research which identifies that key responsibilities of nurses for nutritional care include assessment (screening), monitoring and referral for specialist assessment where appropriate.
- Current practice related to the management of nutrition for people in hospital settings varies across Northern Ireland.
- Areas of improvement were found in relation to:
 - 1 nutritional assessment (approx 85% screened ;approx 83% rescreened who were medium risk and 75% who were high risk);)
 - 2 nutrition care plans
 - 3 accuracy of monitoring (i.e. recording of food intake or weight and height).
- Areas for improvement from the completed audit include the following recommendations:
 - 1 BMI measurement is to be measured as soon as possible by professionals;
 - 2 Nutritional rescreening on a weekly basis for those participants who are in hospital for more than 7 days
 - 3 A documented care plan for each patient that has an identified nutritional risk.
 - 4 For those at high risk they must have a referral made to the dietician

(ii) Effectiveness of the Nursing Care Standards for Patient Food in Hospital campaign in tackling improving patient satisfaction levels;

The GAIN audit found:

- evidence of the promotion of good nutritional care by managing mealtimes, and enhancing the mealtime environment.
- Despite initiatives to improve their experience of eating in hospital, patients’ nutritional needs can be better met if the standards inherent within the DHSSPS “Get your 10 a day! Nursing Care Standards for patient food in hospital” are adhered to.

In relation to patient satisfaction, recommendations of the GAIN audit include:

- Patients where possible, providing input into their nutritional care plan; This input should be documented in their care plan;

- All trusts should have a method in place to identify if a patient requires assistance and this information should be up to date and accurate; Of those who require this assistance 100% received this
- where a protected mealtime policy exists this should be enforced, where none is in existence then consideration should be given as to implementing a policy;
- Whilst it is recognised that medical assessments are required throughout the day, where possible assessments should be carried out outside mealtimes unless totally necessary;
- Where possible, Ward rounds should not be carried out during mealtimes.
- All unnecessary activity, whether medical or non-medical, should cease during meal times.

Within Patient Client Experience quarterly monitoring (on agreed areas), there is a specific question in relation to patients gaining assistance with eating and drinking. Trusts will undertake local action depending on response to this question.

In 2011/12, Trusts reported examples of actions taken at a local level, including:

- Reinforcing the importance of the fundamentals of care;
- Providing additional training for some staff in feeding patients skills;
- Highlighting the importance of hydration and nutrition recovery.

In light of the 2012/13 monitoring information, a number of areas were identified as regional priorities for 2013/14 with actions to be progressed by the Patient Client Experience working group

(iii) Effectiveness of the Nursing Care Standards for Patient Food in Hospital campaign in reducing food waste;

Whilst not specifically audited within the GAIN audit this did find that of those who required assistance with eating, 100% received this. It is recognised that when those who need assistance receive this, that food plate waste is likely to be reduced if patients are supported to eat.

Food for Thought: Views of Patients and the Public on Hospital Meals

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any of the five recommendations made by the Patient and Client Council, in the March 2011 publication Food for Thought: Views of Patients and the Public on Hospital Meals, have been adopted as practice and policy in the Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 25855/11-15)

Mr Poots: Food for Thought: Views of Patients and the Public on Hospital Meals (March 2011) has five recommendations all of which are in the process of being adopted across the Health and Social Care system .The Patient and Client Council recommendations and responses being actioned across Health and Social Care include:

Recommendation 1. The proposed “Promoting Good Nutrition – A Strategy for Good Nutritional Care for Adults in all Care Settings in Northern Ireland” should address the key messages within this report;

Action: A Promoting Good Nutrition Steering Group chaired through the Public Health Agency, is implementing an agreed action plan to realise the vision of the Promoting Good Nutrition strategy for all adults in Northern Ireland. Through this mechanism the key messages within Food for Thought: Views of Patients and the Public on Hospital Meals will be taken forward.

Recommendation 2. Patients and carers should be involved in a “Nutritional Coalition or stakeholder forum to improve feeding of people in care across Northern Ireland;

Action: A nutrition coalition was set up by the Patient and Client Council and formally launched by Minister Poots in April 2012. This is chaired by the Chief Executive of the PPC, Maeve

Hully. The coalition will raise awareness, front campaigns and build public confidence so that people will know what to expect from health and social care services

Recommendation 3. There should be adequate staffing available at meal times to ensure that patients are given the assistance they need

Action: Regarding nursing staff, the CNO is leading work through the Public Health Agency and Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council to develop a suite of tools to be used by Trusts to ensure that appropriate staff are in place across all care settings. These will take some time to be completed and these will be rolled out within specific settings as they are completed. In addition, Trusts undertake Patient Client Experience monitoring (in agreed areas) on a quarterly basis, which includes a question on whether patients gained assistance with eating and drinking (if required). Trusts will undertake local improvements as required.

Recommendation 4. Policy and procedures should be developed to enable family members and carers to assist patients with feeding if requested by the patient;

Action: Alongside the use of volunteers, where family members wish to be involved Trusts are respectful of this and facilitate family and carer involvement at mealtimes where it is appropriate to do so.

Recommendation 5. A volunteer strategy and action plan should be developed to enable volunteers to assist patients at meal times.

Action: Trusts are exploring the use of volunteers at mealtimes at present. This is at various stages of implementation. The Chief Nursing Officer and her colleagues in the Northern Ireland Nurse Leaders Network recently helped launch and promote a joint charter between the Royal College of Nursing and Volunteer Now to promote volunteering within health and social care. Facilitating and supporting the use of volunteers to assist patients at hospital mealtimes in order to promote nutrition is a key component of this strategy.

Cases of Child Abuse

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the recent publicity surrounding possible cases of child abuse, whether steps are being taken to establish if third party individuals and organisations were aware of these particular cases prior to 2012, but did not make the appropriate authorities aware.

(AQW 25868/11-15)

Mr Poots: At this stage, I have no evidence to indicate any third party individual or organisation was aware of any of the cases currently subject of the ongoing police investigation into child sexual exploitation, which was not reported to the relevant authorities. There is an obligation on any individual who suspects or knows that a child is being or has been abused to bring it to the immediate attention of both the police and/or social services.

Domiciliary and Residential Care

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what independent advocacy services are available to help older people make decisions on domiciliary and residential care.

(AQW 25870/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department provides core funding to a range of voluntary sector organisations including Age NI and the Alzheimer's Society both of whom provide independent advocacy services to older people.

In addition, older people who may require domiciliary or residential care services will first of all have their needs assessed by a social worker and other professionals as appropriate. The individual themselves and, where appropriate, their family and/or carers will be fully engaged in that process. Following assessment, each individual's keyworker should ensure that the individual is supported to make informed choices about their care package.

More widely my Department published Developing Advocacy Services – A Guide for Commissioners in May 2012 and an associated Action Plan. The Guide aims to help commissioners better understand and develop advocacy services in Northern Ireland by introducing a number of principles and standards to underpin future commissioning and delivery. Independence is one of the key principles and is also reflected in the standards. Progress against the Action Plan is being monitored by my Department.

Barnardo's Child Sexual Exploitation Report

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of his Department's, the Health and Social Care Board's and the Safeguarding Children Board's response to the recommendations of the Barnardo's Child Sexual Exploitation Report in October 2011.

(AQW 25871/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have attached a table which details the actions taken to date and ongoing work by my Department, the Health and Social Care Board, Health and Social Care Trusts and the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland relating to child sexual exploitation. All of the actions relate directly to the recommendations of the Barnardo's Child Exploitation Report "Not a World Away" the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland".

Annex A**Barnardo's Report "Not a World Away" the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland – Recommendations, action taken to date and ongoing work by DHSSPS, HSCB, HSCTs and SBNI**

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
1	When established, the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland [SBNI] should, as part of its work plan, consider the issue of child sexual exploitation and the effectiveness of current responses to it.	<p>The SBNI was established on 17 September 2012 and within 3 weeks (on 04 October 2012) wrote to Directors of Children's Services within all five HSC Trusts to seek information on prevalence of CSE, how Trusts identify it and respond to it in risk management terms and to ask Trusts to identify any particular problems experienced in connection with CSE. This information was used to inform the action plan now being taken by the SBNI.</p> <p>The SBNI draft Strategic Plan was issued for consultation in April 2013 with an end date in July 2013. This draft plan indicated that the SBNI would work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to protect and safeguard children who go missing from home and care and/or at risk of sexual exploitation.</p> <p>A range of actions is now planned by the SBNI. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Establishment of a sexual exploitation Strategic Partnership Group; ■ The identification of the scale and nature of the problem in NI; ■ The development of an awareness raising campaign for children, families and professionals (the launch of the leaflets is the start of the campaign); ■ A review of the risk assessment tools currently being used; ■ The development of an information sharing agreement for CSE; ■ A review existing procedures / guidance to establish any gaps; ■ Working with the Knowledge Transfer Hub to identify education requirements for children, parents and professionals ■ Working with the Knowledge Transfer Hub to scope and research good models of practice and how this can be translated to Northern Ireland; ■ Evaluating and/or piloting a co-located multi-disciplinary/multi-agency team focusing on children who go missing. 	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
2	<p>DHSSPS should revise existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidance to explicitly reference the complex nature and impact of sexual exploitation. This should be supported by the development of detailed inter-agency procedural guidance for practitioners to assist them to respond appropriately to instances where the sexual exploitation of children or young people is confirmed or suspected. The latter will be a matter for the SBNI to consider when established.</p>	<p>There are a number of child protection guidance documents which the department is in the process of developing. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A revision of extant Departmental guidance <i>Co-operating to Safeguard Children</i>, first produced in 2003. The revision is a Programme for Government commitment. This is due to be published by March 2015, after a period of public consultation. While this is a DHSSPS-led exercise, child safeguarding is a cross-government activity as effective safeguarding requires interdepartmental, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary support. ■ This guidance will be supplemented by operational child protection policies and procedures, which will also deal with child sexual exploitation. This is a statutory responsibility of the SBNI. ■ Departmental guidance on safeguarding children and young people who are sexually active is currently being developed by a multi-agency working group. The guidance will be issued for consultation by March 2014. <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In April 2012, the HSCB published <i>Regional Residential Child Care Policies</i> issued By Health & Social Care Board, which includes chapters on safeguarding, with a specific section on Child Sexual Exploitation, a section on misuse of substances which also assists in that it specifically addresses the relevant issues of Alcohol and Drugs counselling, and there is also a guidance chapter on Physical Restraint. ■ In May 2012, the guidance document <i>Police Involvement in Residential Care Safeguarding of Children Missing from Home and Foster Care</i> was further revised by the HSCB, directly as a result of the Barnardo's report. 	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
3	<p>The HSC Board should progress the development of a targeted and fully resourced action plan on sexual exploitation that includes, but is not limited to, consideration of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ data collection and monitoring ■ professional competency and capacity ■ best-practice models for responding to sexual exploitation, including the merits of a co-located inter-agency model of response ■ regional implementation of the sexual exploitation risk assessment tool ■ resourcing of a regional specialist support service. 	<p>A number of fully resourced actions were taken by the HSC Board and HSC Trusts which respond to the elements of the action plan identified in this recommendation in the Barnardo's report.</p> <p>1 Data collection and monitoring</p> <p>The Barnardo's report identifies a strong (although not absolute) link between children going missing and the risk of child sexual exploitation. In recognition of that fact, the Board collects data on missing children through the Delegated Statutory Functions reporting mechanism. The system of data collection was revised in April 2011 and again in April 2013. Information is now collected on the numbers of children who go missing and the number of times a child goes missing. Initially information related to periods of absence of more than 24 hours. Information is now recorded on contact between children's homes and the police relating to children who go missing for less than 24 hours, including absences of a relatively short duration.</p> <p>The Board has also introduced a Regional Untoward Events reporting mechanism which includes the provision of a report for each event where a young person is missing for more than 24 hours. These reports are collected centrally to allow for professional oversight and follow up on individual incidents and for data collation and analysis.</p> <p>Within Trusts, a range of data collection and monitoring systems have been established. By way of example, in the South Eastern Trust, a Safety, Quality and Experience project regarding missing children has been ongoing since October 2012. In the Western Trust, a Senior Management Risk Monitoring meeting takes place on a monthly basis to consider trends and patterns that come from the Team Health Checks; as a result of those meetings, corrective action is taken if necessary.</p> <p>Finally, data collection relating to identification of the scale and nature of the problem of child sexual exploitation will be taken forward under the auspices of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.</p>	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<p>2 Professional competency and capacity</p> <p>The HSCB and Trusts plan, commission and provide a wide range of training initiatives for staff working Children's Services based on identified priorities and service needs on an annual basis. The following are examples of the broad range of training which has particular relevance to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and the professional competence issues raised in the Barnardo's report. This is not an exhaustive list.</p> <p>Competence</p> <p>Child Sexual Exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specific training by Safe Choices, commissioned by the HSCB, has been provided across all Trust on signs, symptoms and preventative strategies in respect of CSE. Such training has been commissioned since 2008. In 2012/13 356 staff and carers received this training. Safe Choices also provide detailed consultations on specific cases. Since 200?, over 4000 people in the statutory and voluntary sectors have received training on CSE by Safe Choices. ■ Individual Trusts have commissioned additional training in CSE including 'Keeping Safe Training' and 'CSE and Missing from Home'. <p>Child Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A wide range of child protection training is provided within Trusts. This includes recognition of signs and symptoms of all forms of abuse, responses to abuse and neglect and specialist training in joint protocol investigations with the PSNI. <p>Missing From Home and Foster Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Training on implementation of HSC/PSNI regional guidance on Safeguarding Children Missing from Home and Foster Care. The link between children's increased vulnerability to CSE when missing is covered by the guidance. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<p>Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential care staff are trained in TCI to develop professional competence in engaging with young people, managing the environment and de-escalation of crises as well as use of physical restraint (holds). All children in care will have an Individual Crisis Management Plan which indicates if the use of TCI physical restraint should not be used (eg. Medical conditions, re-traumatising the young person). TCI should not be used as a preventative measure, for example, to stop a child leaving a children's home without permission. However, if an angry outburst were to occur as a result of such a refusal, then TCI may be a legitimate response. Staff will use their professional judgement in response to each individual and the circumstances. <p>Risk assessment, management and care planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Trusts provide training for staff on assessing and managing risk and professional judgement/decision-making. <p>Therapeutic approaches to working with children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential care staff have been trained in specific therapeutic approaches in working with children in care to develop professional competence in working with children who have experienced trauma and disadvantage and to develop understanding, skills and techniques in working with young people who present with challenging behaviour. This training was evaluated by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and QUB and findings indicated a positive impact on practice including more sensitive/appropriate use of language and improvements in managing challenging situations. A range of other training in specific therapeutic approaches and techniques including Motivational Interviewing, Model of Attachment Practice and Restorative Practice have also been provided to improve professional competence in working directly with young people. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<p>CSE Related Risk Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A range of training on factors which can increase young people's vulnerability and risk generally but to CSE in particular is also provided by all Trusts – Substance Misuse; Internet/Social Media; Mental Health; Resilience. <p>Human Trafficking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There have been a number of regional and local training initiatives to raise staff awareness about human trafficking. <p>Postgraduate Qualifications in Child Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Each year, Trusts also fund a number of staff to undertake specific accredited post-graduate training leading to post graduate Certificates, Diplomas and Masters in Child Care Practice. <p>Capacity</p> <p>Working in Children's Services, in particular in child protection and residential child care, is challenging and a number of actions have been taken to strengthen supports for all staff and improve retention of experienced staff in these areas. Such initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All newly qualified social workers (NQSW) must undertake an assessed year in practice to consolidate their professional competence. There are specific requirements including induction, training, supervision, managed workloads. Similar models for support of NQSW are now being rolled out elsewhere in the UK. ■ Appointment of senior social work practitioners to undertake more complex work and to provide mentorship/consultation to less experienced staff. There are 222 senior practitioners in Children's Services; 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appointment of 15 Principal Social Work Practitioners since 2009 in each Trust to ensure availability of expertise in specific practice areas, including with looked after children. NI is the first country in the UK to introduce a Principal Practitioner social work grade. ■ Referrals to social services have been increasing over the past number of years. Workforce data indicates a 5.8% increase in numbers of social workers employed by Trusts over the past 3 years. ■ The Department launched a Social Work Strategy in 2012 which identifies workforce capacity and employer supports as key issues for frontline social workers and team leaders. Work has commenced to review the use and deployment of senior and principal practitioners to inform future workforce planning. ■ Similar to the findings from the Munro Review of Child Protection Services in England, the compliance culture and focus on procedures and targets at the expense of child-centred service provision have been identified in the Social Work Strategy as issues in NI. There is a similar commitment in NI for the Department and associated agencies to review reporting and regulatory requirements, reduce bureaucracy and re-establish the child at the centre of the social work process and relationships at the heart of practice. Work has begun on a number of small scale initiatives to reduce bureaucracy which will increase staff capacity to engage in direct work with children, young people and families. ■ Professional supervision is an important element of support for social workers in carrying out their work. Compliance in the provision of supervision with a regional policy and standards is monitored by each Trust. There are Departmental targets for training supervisors and funding to support such training across all Trusts. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A regional caseload management model was developed and endorsed by the Department and was issued in February 2012. This model is designed to assist social workers and their managers in Children's Services in the HSC Trusts to allocate and prioritise cases and associated tasks within manageable workloads. ■ The North/South Child Protection Hub is available to social workers in all Trusts – this provides a single portal to access information, up-to-date research and developments in child protection practice to support evidence-based practice and professional decision-making. ■ There has been an increase in the funding of Barnardo's Safe Choices reflecting the rise in young people identified at risk of CSE by Trust staff. ■ Looked after Children (LAC) Therapeutic Services provide services in each Trust delivered by a range of professionals including psychologists and SPs. Their role is provide specialist wrap-a-round therapeutic services for individual young people in the care system as well as expert advice to staff. ■ A review of residential child care provision has been undertaken by the HSCB and Trusts and among its recommendations is one for smaller residential homes to accommodate no more than 4 young people. This will increase the staff/child ratio. ■ Development of Family Support Hubs and increased investment in early intervention is intended to provide non-stigmatising help to families at an earlier stage and is part of an overall strategy to improve outcomes for all children by preventing the development and/or escalation of difficulties at an earlier stage in children's lives. ■ The Children and Young Person's Strategic Partnership (established in 2011) brings together a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies and aims to maximise the investment in services to children's and their families through more effective joined up working and collaboration. This contributes to increasing capacity in the system for early intervention and services for children in need. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<p>3 Best-practice models for responding to sexual exploitation, including the merits of a co-located inter-agency model of response</p> <p>There are now a number of best practice models in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-location of police officers and social workers is one practice model for responding to cases of child abuse, including child sexual exploitation. The model has been used in the past and indeed in the present – the ongoing police investigation into child sexual exploitation is using a co-location model of practice. Social workers and police officers do not necessarily have to be co-located to work effectively together. We have a joint protocol in place which sets out how the police and social services work will together to investigate cases of child abuse and we have guidance in place which governs how the police and social services will respond to children who go missing from home and foster care. ■ There are also a number of excellent Trust-specific models of practice which are reflective of the quality of the relationship between police and social services at a locality level. For example, in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area, each residential unit has a dedicated community police officer who regularly visits the unit and completes (in conjunction with residential staff) education programmes for children and young people, for example, keeping safe, drugs awareness and respect/citizenship programmes. Also, ‘a Children Missing from Care’ Special Interest Group has been established on which the South Eastern HSC Trust, the Belfast HSC Trust, PSNI, the Safe Choices Project and VOYPIC are represented. The Group meets on a bi-monthly basis and shares trends analysis, good practice and initiatives relating to child sexual exploitation. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In the Northern Trust, residential units hold quarterly meetings with PSNI to discuss the high-risk young people and the management of their cases. This is an acknowledgement of the importance of working relationships to try and protect as best we can these vulnerable young people. Also in the Northern Trust, an intensive support outreach team provides support to young people on the edge of care. This year, two of the team worked specifically on child sexual exploitation, producing leaflets and drama production (Break the cycle) which was ran in the Waterfront Hall. <p>4 Regional implementation of the sexual exploitation risk assessment tool</p> <p>A child sexual exploitation assessment tool, the same tool which was used in the course of the 'Not a World Away' research, has been implemented across all five HSC Trust areas.</p> <p>5 Resourcing of a regional specialist support service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Between 2008 and 2011, the Department provided funding of around £222k to Missing Children's Project of the Barnardo's-run Safe Choices Service. [This is in addition to circa £142k provided to Barnardo's to undertake the 'Not a World Away' research.] The aim of the Missing Children Project is to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation of children and young people in care by reducing the number of missing episodes of children; to increase the skills and knowledge of staff in children's homes and foster carers in relation to the issue of sexual exploitation; and to develop and disseminate a risk assessment model to children's homes on the issue of young people missing from care. ■ Funding for the Safe Choices Service was picked up by the Health and Social Care Board from April 2011. The Board has committed additional resources to the project to enable it to meet additional demand, including that generated by the ongoing PSNI investigation into child sexual exploitation. The contract with the Project includes the direct provision of services to children who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="584 259 1236 696">■ In addition, the Department invests in a Regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, a Regional Secure Care Service and an Intensive Support Service, which operates across the region. A range of self harm services funded under the Protect Life Strategy are regionally available. They include Lifeline (a 24/7 regional crisis response helpline established in January 2008); Card Before You Leave bereavement support and self-harm counselling and support. This is in addition to a range of specialist supports to address alcohol and substance misuse, self-esteem issues and transitions out of care and into adulthood. <li data-bbox="584 725 1236 994">■ In the Regional Secure Care Centre a therapeutic support service with a dedicated clinical psychologist and systemic social work practitioner is in place. The HSCB had provided additional funding for the development of a therapeutic support service for all looked after children, in addition to that provided in children and young people in secure care. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
4	<p>The HSC Board should consider how best to co-ordinate and prioritise the provision of specialist drug and alcohol counselling services to young people who display signs of drug and alcohol abuse, which may make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation, in particular to children living in residential care;</p>	<p>Drug and alcohol misuse adds to the vulnerability of looked after children and further heightens their exposure to risk of sexual exploitation. There has been investment in a range of services aimed at tackling the drug and alcohol problems. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Around £1m has been invested by the HSC in One Stop Shop services providing information, support and signposting on drugs and alcohol, mental and sexual health, relationship issues, resilience, coping with school/employment. The One Stop Shop model of drop-in services was set up by PHA to provide young people with accurate, up-to-date and objective information about personal and lifestyle issues, choices, where to find help and advice, and how to access it. The model was developed by the PHA following the establishment of four pilot projects in different areas across Northern Ireland (North Down and Ards, Enniskillen, Banbridge and East Antrim) to test a range of potential models. The pilots were positively evaluated, and the PHA subsequently tendered for a range of new one-stop-shops across Northern Ireland, primarily focused on areas that have a need and / or a lack of services. A network has also been put in place to spread learning between the services. ■ £2.5m has been invested in Services for Young People, Children and their Families. This includes youth treatment, specialist drug and alcohol posts with Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, targeted education programmes for at risk young people and services for families. ■ Work is underway, led by the HSCB, to extend existing service provision to ensure ease of access to drug and alcohol services, including counselling services, by children in care (including children in residential care) who are in need of those services. 	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
5	The Public Health Agency should develop a campaign to raise public awareness of the sexual exploitation of children and young people.	<p>Barnardo's will engage in discussions with the PHA in the near future, however, In advance of those discussions, the PHA has been involved in a number of initiatives relating to improving children's sexual health. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The development of a Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan covering the period 2008-2013. The aim of the Strategy/Plan is to improve, protect and promote the sexual health and well-being of the population of Northern Ireland. The Strategy recognises that some groups are particularly vulnerable and require particular action. They include young people under 25 years and children and young people who are looked after or leaving care. ■ The establishment of a Regional Sexual Health Improvement Network in 2010. The Network has reviewed the evidence base related to reducing teenage pregnancy and the rates of STIs and HIV. ■ PHA is a key funder of the HSC Knowledge Transfer Scheme, Improving the Impact of Research, which is based on the findings of the Barnardo's Research on Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland. The proposed impact of the project is: increased awareness and understanding of CSE amongst HSC professionals; increased consistency in identification and risk assessment; increased access to practice-based CSE resources; greater awareness of risk amongst young people; increased user services engagement; and greater inter-disciplinary working. ■ With the establishment of the SBNI, on which the PHA is represented, leaflets to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation among parents, professionals and young people have been produced. Also, an NSPCC helpline is in place which will provide advice and support to parents, carers, and children and young people who have concerns relating to child sexual exploitation. ■ Awareness-raising of child sexual exploitation is a core activity of the Barnardo's Safe Choices Project, which continues to be funded by the Health and Social Care Board. Prior to funding by the HSCB, the Safe Choices Project was funded directly by the Department. The PHA also provided £5k to Barnardo's in 2012/2013 to fund a Sexual Health Group Work project. 	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
6	The NI Policing Board should incorporate child protection (including sexual exploitation) as a priority in forthcoming Policing Plans, in reflection of the critical importance of this area of work.	This is a matter for the Policing Board.	

Barnardo's Child Sexual Exploitation Report

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why a multi-agency action plan on child exploitation is only now being progressed, given that it was a recommendation in the Barnardo's Child Sexual Exploitation Report in October 2011.

(AQW 25886/11-15)

Mr Poots: The multi-agency action plan on child sexual exploitation now being progressed is a reference to the plan developed by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI), which has identified child sexual exploitation as a strategic priority of the Board, which was established in September 2012.

I have attached a table which sets out actions directly relating to the Barnardo's report, Not a World Away – the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland. For completeness, the list includes the actions currently being taken by the SBNI, in addition to actions taken by my Department, the Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency and Health and Social Care Trusts, subsequent to the publication of the Barnardo's report in 2011. The table also makes reference to some actions taken in connection with child sexual exploitation prior to the publication of the report.

Annex A**Barnardo's Report "Not a World Away" the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland – Recommendations, action taken to date and ongoing work by DHSSPS, HSCB, HSCTs and SBNI**

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
1	When established, the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland [SBNI] should, as part of its work plan, consider the issue of child sexual exploitation and the effectiveness of current responses to it.	<p>The SBNI was established on 17 September 2012 and within 3 weeks (on 04 October 2012) wrote to Directors of Children's Services within all five HSC Trusts to seek information on prevalence of CSE, how Trusts identify it and respond to it in risk management terms and to ask Trusts to identify any particular problems experienced in connection with CSE. This information was used to inform the action plan now being taken by the SBNI.</p> <p>The SBNI draft Strategic Plan was issued for consultation in April 2013 with an end date in July 2013. This draft plan indicated that the SBNI would work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to protect and safeguard children who go missing from home and care and/or at risk of sexual exploitation.</p> <p>A range of actions is now planned by the SBNI. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Establishment of a sexual exploitation Strategic Partnership Group; ■ The identification of the scale and nature of the problem in NI; ■ The development of an awareness raising campaign for children, families and professionals (the launch of the leaflets is the start of the campaign); ■ A review of the risk assessment tools currently being used; ■ The development of an information sharing agreement for CSE; ■ A review existing procedures / guidance to establish any gaps; ■ Working with the Knowledge Transfer Hub to identify education requirements for children, parents and professionals ■ Working with the Knowledge Transfer Hub to scope and research good models of practice and how this can be translated to Northern Ireland; ■ Evaluating and/or piloting a co-located multi-disciplinary/multi-agency team focusing on children who go missing. 	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
2	<p>DHSSPS should revise existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidance to explicitly reference the complex nature and impact of sexual exploitation. This should be supported by the development of detailed inter-agency procedural guidance for practitioners to assist them to respond appropriately to instances where the sexual exploitation of children or young people is confirmed or suspected. The latter will be a matter for the SBNI to consider when established.</p>	<p>There are a number of child protection guidance documents which the department is in the process of developing. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A revision of extant Departmental guidance <i>Co-operating to Safeguard Children</i>, first produced in 2003. The revision is a Programme for Government commitment. This is due to be published by March 2015, after a period of public consultation. While this is a DHSSPS-led exercise, child safeguarding is a cross-government activity as effective safeguarding requires interdepartmental, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary support. ■ This guidance will be supplemented by operational child protection policies and procedures, which will also deal with child sexual exploitation. This is a statutory responsibility of the SBNI. ■ Departmental guidance on safeguarding children and young people who are sexually active is currently being developed by a multi-agency working group. The guidance will be issued for consultation by March 2014. <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In April 2012, the HSCB published <i>Regional Residential Child Care Policies</i> issued By Health & Social Care Board, which includes chapters on safeguarding, with a specific section on Child Sexual Exploitation, a section on misuse of substances which also assists in that it specifically addresses the relevant issues of Alcohol and Drugs counselling, and there is also a guidance chapter on Physical Restraint. ■ In May 2012, the guidance document <i>Police Involvement in Residential Care Safeguarding of Children Missing from Home and Foster Care</i> was further revised by the HSCB, directly as a result of the Barnardo's report. 	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
3	<p>The HSC Board should progress the development of a targeted and fully resourced action plan on sexual exploitation that includes, but is not limited to, consideration of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ data collection and monitoring ■ professional competency and capacity ■ best-practice models for responding to sexual exploitation, including the merits of a co-located inter-agency model of response ■ regional implementation of the sexual exploitation risk assessment tool ■ resourcing of a regional specialist support service. 	<p>A number of fully resourced actions were taken by the HSC Board and HSC Trusts which respond to the elements of the action plan identified in this recommendation in the Barnardo's report.</p> <p>1 Data collection and monitoring</p> <p>The Barnardo's report identifies a strong (although not absolute) link between children going missing and the risk of child sexual exploitation. In recognition of that fact, the Board collects data on missing children through the Delegated Statutory Functions reporting mechanism. The system of data collection was revised in April 2011 and again in April 2013. Information is now collected on the numbers of children who go missing and the number of times a child goes missing. Initially information related to periods of absence of more than 24 hours. Information is now recorded on contact between children's homes and the police relating to children who go missing for less than 24 hours, including absences of a relatively short duration.</p> <p>The Board has also introduced a Regional Untoward Events reporting mechanism which includes the provision of a report for each event where a young person is missing for more than 24 hours. These reports are collected centrally to allow for professional oversight and follow up on individual incidents and for data collation and analysis.</p> <p>Within Trusts, a range of data collection and monitoring systems have been established. By way of example, in the South Eastern Trust, a Safety, Quality and Experience project regarding missing children has been ongoing since October 2012. In the Western Trust, a Senior Management Risk Monitoring meeting takes place on a monthly basis to consider trends and patterns that come from the Team Health Checks; as a result of those meetings, corrective action is taken if necessary.</p> <p>Finally, data collection relating to identification of the scale and nature of the problem of child sexual exploitation will be taken forward under the auspices of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.</p>	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<p>2 Professional competency and capacity</p> <p>The HSCB and Trusts plan, commission and provide a wide range of training initiatives for staff working Children's Services based on identified priorities and service needs on an annual basis. The following are examples of the broad range of training which has particular relevance to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and the professional competence issues raised in the Barnardo's report. This is not an exhaustive list.</p> <p>Competence</p> <p>Child Sexual Exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specific training by Safe Choices, commissioned by the HSCB, has been provided across all Trust on signs, symptoms and preventative strategies in respect of CSE. Such training has been commissioned since 2008. In 2012/13 356 staff and carers received this training. Safe Choices also provide detailed consultations on specific cases. Since 200?, over 4000 people in the statutory and voluntary sectors have received training on CSE by Safe Choices. ■ Individual Trusts have commissioned additional training in CSE including 'Keeping Safe Training' and 'CSE and Missing from Home'. <p>Child Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A wide range of child protection training is provided within Trusts. This includes recognition of signs and symptoms of all forms of abuse, responses to abuse and neglect and specialist training in joint protocol investigations with the PSNI. <p>Missing From Home and Foster Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Training on implementation of HSC/PSNI regional guidance on Safeguarding Children Missing from Home and Foster Care. The link between children's increased vulnerability to CSE when missing is covered by the guidance. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<p>Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential care staff are trained in TCI to develop professional competence in engaging with young people, managing the environment and de-escalation of crises as well as use of physical restraint (holds). All children in care will have an Individual Crisis Management Plan which indicates if the use of TCI physical restraint should not be used (eg. Medical conditions, re-traumatising the young person). TCI should not be used as a preventative measure, for example, to stop a child leaving a children's home without permission. However, if an angry outburst were to occur as a result of such a refusal, then TCI may be a legitimate response. Staff will use their professional judgement in response to each individual and the circumstances. <p>Risk assessment, management and care planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Trusts provide training for staff on assessing and managing risk and professional judgement/decision-making. <p>Therapeutic approaches to working with children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential care staff have been trained in specific therapeutic approaches in working with children in care to develop professional competence in working with children who have experienced trauma and disadvantage and to develop understanding, skills and techniques in working with young people who present with challenging behaviour. This training was evaluated by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and QUB and findings indicated a positive impact on practice including more sensitive/appropriate use of language and improvements in managing challenging situations. A range of other training in specific therapeutic approaches and techniques including Motivational Interviewing, Model of Attachment Practice and Restorative Practice have also been provided to improve professional competence in working directly with young people. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<p>CSE Related Risk Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A range of training on factors which can increase young people's vulnerability and risk generally but to CSE in particular is also provided by all Trusts – Substance Misuse; Internet/Social Media; Mental Health; Resilience. <p>Human Trafficking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There have been a number of regional and local training initiatives to raise staff awareness about human trafficking. <p>Postgraduate Qualifications in Child Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Each year, Trusts also fund a number of staff to undertake specific accredited post-graduate training leading to post graduate Certificates, Diplomas and Masters in Child Care Practice. <p>Capacity</p> <p>Working in Children's Services, in particular in child protection and residential child care, is challenging and a number of actions have been taken to strengthen supports for all staff and improve retention of experienced staff in these areas. Such initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All newly qualified social workers (NQSW) must undertake an assessed year in practice to consolidate their professional competence. There are specific requirements including induction, training, supervision, managed workloads. Similar models for support of NQSW are now being rolled out elsewhere in the UK. ■ Appointment of senior social work practitioners to undertake more complex work and to provide mentorship/consultation to less experienced staff. There are 222 senior practitioners in Children's Services; 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appointment of 15 Principal Social Work Practitioners since 2009 in each Trust to ensure availability of expertise in specific practice areas, including with looked after children. NI is the first country in the UK to introduce a Principal Practitioner social work grade. ■ Referrals to social services have been increasing over the past number of years. Workforce data indicates a 5.8% increase in numbers of social workers employed by Trusts over the past 3 years. ■ The Department launched a Social Work Strategy in 2012 which identifies workforce capacity and employer supports as key issues for frontline social workers and team leaders. Work has commenced to review the use and deployment of senior and principal practitioners to inform future workforce planning. ■ Similar to the findings from the Munro Review of Child Protection Services in England, the compliance culture and focus on procedures and targets at the expense of child-centred service provision have been identified in the Social Work Strategy as issues in NI. There is a similar commitment in NI for the Department and associated agencies to review reporting and regulatory requirements, reduce bureaucracy and re-establish the child at the centre of the social work process and relationships at the heart of practice. Work has begun on a number of small scale initiatives to reduce bureaucracy which will increase staff capacity to engage in direct work with children, young people and families. ■ Professional supervision is an important element of support for social workers in carrying out their work. Compliance in the provision of supervision with a regional policy and standards is monitored by each Trust. There are Departmental targets for training supervisors and funding to support such training across all Trusts. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A regional caseload management model was developed and endorsed by the Department and was issued in February 2012. This model is designed to assist social workers and their managers in Children's Services in the HSC Trusts to allocate and prioritise cases and associated tasks within manageable workloads. ■ The North/South Child Protection Hub is available to social workers in all Trusts – this provides a single portal to access information, up-to-date research and developments in child protection practice to support evidence-based practice and professional decision-making. ■ There has been an increase in the funding of Barnardo's Safe Choices reflecting the rise in young people identified at risk of CSE by Trust staff. ■ Looked after Children (LAC) Therapeutic Services provide services in each Trust delivered by a range of professionals including psychologists and SPs. Their role is provide specialist wrap-a-round therapeutic services for individual young people in the care system as well as expert advice to staff. ■ A review of residential child care provision has been undertaken by the HSCB and Trusts and among its recommendations is one for smaller residential homes to accommodate no more than 4 young people. This will increase the staff/child ratio. ■ Development of Family Support Hubs and increased investment in early intervention is intended to provide non-stigmatising help to families at an earlier stage and is part of an overall strategy to improve outcomes for all children by preventing the development and/or escalation of difficulties at an earlier stage in children's lives. ■ The Children and Young Person's Strategic Partnership (established in 2011) brings together a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies and aims to maximise the investment in services to children's and their families through more effective joined up working and collaboration. This contributes to increasing capacity in the system for early intervention and services for children in need. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<p>3 Best-practice models for responding to sexual exploitation, including the merits of a co-located inter-agency model of response</p> <p>There are now a number of best practice models in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-location of police officers and social workers is one practice model for responding to cases of child abuse, including child sexual exploitation. The model has been used in the past and indeed in the present – the ongoing police investigation into child sexual exploitation is using a co-location model of practice. Social workers and police officers do not necessarily have to be co-located to work effectively together. We have a joint protocol in place which sets out how the police and social services work will together to investigate cases of child abuse and we have guidance in place which governs how the police and social services will respond to children who go missing from home and foster care. ■ There are also a number of excellent Trust-specific models of practice which are reflective of the quality of the relationship between police and social services at a locality level. For example, in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area, each residential unit has a dedicated community police officer who regularly visits the unit and completes (in conjunction with residential staff) education programmes for children and young people, for example, keeping safe, drugs awareness and respect/citizenship programmes. Also, ‘a Children Missing from Care’ Special Interest Group has been established on which the South Eastern HSC Trust, the Belfast HSC Trust, PSNI, the Safe Choices Project and VOYPIC are represented. The Group meets on a bi-monthly basis and shares trends analysis, good practice and initiatives relating to child sexual exploitation. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In the Northern Trust, residential units hold quarterly meetings with PSNI to discuss the high-risk young people and the management of their cases. This is an acknowledgement of the importance of working relationships to try and protect as best we can these vulnerable young people. Also in the Northern Trust, an intensive support outreach team provides support to young people on the edge of care. This year, two of the team worked specifically on child sexual exploitation, producing leaflets and drama production (Break the cycle) which was ran in the Waterfront Hall. <p>4 Regional implementation of the sexual exploitation risk assessment tool</p> <p>A child sexual exploitation assessment tool, the same tool which was used in the course of the 'Not a World Away' research, has been implemented across all five HSC Trust areas.</p> <p>5 Resourcing of a regional specialist support service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Between 2008 and 2011, the Department provided funding of around £222k to Missing Children's Project of the Barnardo's-run Safe Choices Service. [This is in addition to circa £142k provided to Barnardo's to undertake the 'Not a World Away' research.] The aim of the Missing Children Project is to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation of children and young people in care by reducing the number of missing episodes of children; to increase the skills and knowledge of staff in children's homes and foster carers in relation to the issue of sexual exploitation; and to develop and disseminate a risk assessment model to children's homes on the issue of young people missing from care. ■ Funding for the Safe Choices Service was picked up by the Health and Social Care Board from April 2011. The Board has committed additional resources to the project to enable it to meet additional demand, including that generated by the ongoing PSNI investigation into child sexual exploitation. The contract with the Project includes the direct provision of services to children who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="584 259 1236 707">■ In addition, the Department invests in a Regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, a Regional Secure Care Service and an Intensive Support Service, which operates across the region. A range of self harm services funded under the Protect Life Strategy are regionally available. They include Lifeline (a 24/7 regional crisis response helpline established in January 2008); Card Before You Leave bereavement support and self-harm counselling and support. This is in addition to a range of specialist supports to address alcohol and substance misuse, self-esteem issues and transitions out of care and into adulthood. <li data-bbox="584 730 1236 994">■ In the Regional Secure Care Centre a therapeutic support service with a dedicated clinical psychologist and systemic social work practitioner is in place. The HSCB had provided additional funding for the development of a therapeutic support service for all looked after children, in addition to that provided in children and young people in secure care. 	

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
4	<p>The HSC Board should consider how best to co-ordinate and prioritise the provision of specialist drug and alcohol counselling services to young people who display signs of drug and alcohol abuse, which may make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation, in particular to children living in residential care;</p>	<p>Drug and alcohol misuse adds to the vulnerability of looked after children and further heightens their exposure to risk of sexual exploitation. There has been investment in a range of services aimed at tackling the drug and alcohol problems. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Around £1m has been invested by the HSC in One Stop Shop services providing information, support and signposting on drugs and alcohol, mental and sexual health, relationship issues, resilience, coping with school/employment. The One Stop Shop model of drop-in services was set up by PHA to provide young people with accurate, up-to-date and objective information about personal and lifestyle issues, choices, where to find help and advice, and how to access it. The model was developed by the PHA following the establishment of four pilot projects in different areas across Northern Ireland (North Down and Ards, Enniskillen, Banbridge and East Antrim) to test a range of potential models. The pilots were positively evaluated, and the PHA subsequently tendered for a range of new one-stop-shops across Northern Ireland, primarily focused on areas that have a need and / or a lack of services. A network has also been put in place to spread learning between the services. ■ £2.5m has been invested in Services for Young People, Children and their Families. This includes youth treatment, specialist drug and alcohol posts with Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, targeted education programmes for at risk young people and services for families. ■ Work is underway, led by the HSCB, to extend existing service provision to ensure ease of access to drug and alcohol services, including counselling services, by children in care (including children in residential care) who are in need of those services. 	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
5	The Public Health Agency should develop a campaign to raise public awareness of the sexual exploitation of children and young people.	<p>Barnardo's will engage in discussions with the PHA in the near future, however, In advance of those discussions, the PHA has been involved in a number of initiatives relating to improving children's sexual health. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The development of a Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan covering the period 2008-2013. The aim of the Strategy/Plan is to improve, protect and promote the sexual health and well-being of the population of Northern Ireland. The Strategy recognises that some groups are particularly vulnerable and require particular action. They include young people under 25 years and children and young people who are looked after or leaving care. ■ The establishment of a Regional Sexual Health Improvement Network in 2010. The Network has reviewed the evidence base related to reducing teenage pregnancy and the rates of STIs and HIV. ■ PHA is a key funder of the HSC Knowledge Transfer Scheme, Improving the Impact of Research, which is based on the findings of the Barnardo's Research on Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland. The proposed impact of the project is: increased awareness and understanding of CSE amongst HSC professionals; increased consistency in identification and risk assessment; increased access to practice-based CSE resources; greater awareness of risk amongst young people; increased user services engagement; and greater inter-disciplinary working. ■ With the establishment of the SBNI, on which the PHA is represented, leaflets to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation among parents, professionals and young people have been produced. Also, an NSPCC helpline is in place which will provide advice and support to parents, carers, and children and young people who have concerns relating to child sexual exploitation. ■ Awareness-raising of child sexual exploitation is a core activity of the Barnardo's Safe Choices Project, which continues to be funded by the Health and Social Care Board. Prior to funding by the HSCB, the Safe Choices Project was funded directly by the Department. The PHA also provided £5k to Barnardo's in 2012/2013 to fund a Sexual Health Group Work project. 	Ongoing

Rec.	Recommendation	Action taken	Current Status
6	The NI Policing Board should incorporate child protection (including sexual exploitation) as a priority in forthcoming Policing Plans, in reflection of the critical importance of this area of work.	This is a matter for the Policing Board.	

Adoption Procedures

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the number of (i) single gay or lesbian people; and (ii) unmarried heterosexual couples that have adopted a child over the last three years; and whether the current adoption procedures here allow Health and Social Care Trusts to approve gay, lesbian and unmarried people to adopt.

(AQW 25887/11-15)

Mr Poots: Single adopters are not required to declare their sexual orientation to the HSC Trust, so an accurate reflection of the position, in relation to single gay or lesbian people is not possible.

There have been no adoption orders granted in Northern Ireland to unmarried heterosexual couples over the last three years.

Following the High Court ruling on 27 June, an Information Note was issued to Health and Social Care Trusts and Adoption Agencies on 8 July setting out the legal consequences of the High Court judgment and advising that any applications to adopt received from unmarried couples (irrespective of sexual orientation) should be processed through to a decision about suitability to adopt. The final decision about whether an adoption order should be made will be a matter for the court.

Tinnitus Sufferers

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce a strategy for tinnitus sufferers which will set out treatment pathways across the statutory, private and voluntary sectors.

(AQW 25895/11-15)

Mr Poots: Currently, a diagnosis of tinnitus is generally provided by a GP who then initiates the appropriate patient pathway. This may for example include a referral to ENT, audiology services, or even perhaps to the Regional Supra-Specialist Hearing Therapy Clinic where a combination of treatments are available.

However, I am aware that Action on Hearing Loss recently launched their own "Tinnitus Strategy" for Northern Ireland which proposes a new pathway and officials are currently considering the merits of that document.

Tinnitus Sufferers

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the fact that tinnitus sufferers, who have received private ENT treatment, cannot be referred back to the Health Service for treatment.

(AQW 25896/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is not the case that tinnitus sufferers who have received private ENT treatment cannot be referred back to the health service for treatment. I am advised by Health and Social Care Trusts that

they receive referrals for tinnitus treatment from GPs and other consultants and these are all managed in the same fashion. If treatment for tinnitus is required then the patient will be assessed and treated within the health service as per the Integrated Elective Access Protocol guidelines.

Skeagh House

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 25206/11-15, and given the Southern Health and Social Care Trust's decision to cease permanent admissions to statutory residential homes and the stated position that there are no plans to recommence permanent admissions, how many residents will be admitted upon the reopening of Skeagh House.

(AQW 25912/11-15)

Mr Poots: Skeagh House was evacuated on 27 March 2013 as a result of a landslip and associated risk. The site is subject to an ongoing engineering assessment; consequently, it is not possible to be definitive regarding timescales for reopening at this stage.

In the event of a decision being made to reopen Skeagh House, the Southern HSC Trust has advised me that the number of permanent residents from Skeagh House who currently reside in Crozier House is eight.

Life Expectancy: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the life expectancy of people in North Down, broken down by ward.

(AQW 25919/11-15)

Mr Poots: The average Life Expectancy at birth for North Down District Council (2008-2010) is 79.0 years for males and 82.2 years for females. Due to the small numbers involved, life expectancy estimates are not available for individual electoral wards.

Autism Services

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust currently does not have the capacity to meet the demand for autism services, such as multi-disciplinary autism assessments.

(AQW 25921/11-15)

Mr Poots: The accepted referral rate for autism multi-disciplinary assessments in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCCT) has increased over the last 2 years from approximately 350 to 560 children and young people per year. The HSC Board, in partnership with the BHSCCT, completed a demand capacity review in August 2013. As a result of this review, the HSCB has estimated that the Trust will need a minimum of three new staff to address this increase in demand.

Whilst at present no recurrent source of funding has been identified to address this gap in service provision, the Health and Social Care Board is currently seeking to identify non-recurrent funding to assist the Trust in addressing some of the pressures associated with the current increase in referrals. The Health and Social Care Board has also logged this gap in service as a cost pressure for 2014/15 funding.

Autism Services

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans his Department has to improve waiting times for autism services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 25923/11-15)

Mr Poots: The accepted referral rate for autism multi-disciplinary assessments in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) has increased over the last 2 years from approximately 350 to 560 children and young people per year. The HSC Board, in partnership with the BHSCT, completed a demand capacity review in August 2013. As a result of this review, the HSCB has estimated that the Trust will need a minimum of three new staff to address this increase in demand.

Whilst at present no recurrent source of funding has been identified to address this gap in service provision, the Health and Social Care Board is currently seeking to identify non-recurrent funding to assist the Trust in addressing some of the pressures associated with the current increase in referrals. The Health and Social Care Board has also logged this gap in service as a cost pressure for 2014/15 funding.

Autism Services

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps his Department is taking to maximise the number of multi-disciplinary autism assessments that can be provided in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 25924/11-15)

Mr Poots: The accepted referral rate for autism multi-disciplinary assessments in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) has increased over the last 2 years from approximately 350 to 560 children and young people per year. The HSC Board, in partnership with the BHSCT, completed a demand capacity review in August 2013. As a result of this review, the HSCB has estimated that the Trust will need a minimum of three new staff to address this increase in demand.

Whilst at present no recurrent source of funding has been identified to address this gap in service provision, the Health and Social Care Board is currently seeking to identify non-recurrent funding to assist the Trust in addressing some of the pressures associated with the current increase in referrals. The Health and Social Care Board has also logged this gap in service as a cost pressure for 2014/15 funding.

Autism Services

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans his Department has to provide additional resources and alternative methods of delivering assessments, such as multi-disciplinary autism assessments, in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 25925/11-15)

Mr Poots: The accepted referral rate for autism multi-disciplinary assessments in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) has increased over the last 2 years from approximately 350 to 560 children and young people per year. The HSC Board, in partnership with the BHSCT, completed a demand capacity review in August 2013. As a result of this review, the HSCB has estimated that the Trust will need a minimum of three new staff to address this increase in demand.

Whilst at present no recurrent source of funding has been identified to address this gap in service provision, the Health and Social Care Board is currently seeking to identify non-recurrent funding to assist the Trust in addressing some of the pressures associated with the current increase in referrals. The Health and Social Care Board has also logged this gap in service as a cost pressure for 2014/15 funding.

Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why local patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease have only one third of the specialist nurses recommended to provide their care compared to the rest of the UK; and when his Department will address this situation.

(AQW 25938/11-15)

Mr Poots: All Trusts in Northern Ireland have a specialist Nurse in place to deal with Inflammatory Bowel Disease and are in dialogue with HSCB for additional funding.

The position in each Trust is as follows:

The Southern Trust had secured funding for 0.5 whole time equivalent of an Inflammatory Bowel Disease nurse and further funding has just been confirmed which will increase the post holder's hours to 0.9 whole time equivalent.

The Western Trust currently employs 0.5 whole time equivalent Inflammatory Bowel Disease Nurse.

South Eastern Trust has received funding for a 0.5 whole time equivalent specialist nurse which has limited the service the Trust can provide. The Trust is in dialogue with HSCB to provide funding for a 1.0 whole time equivalent specialist nurse.

Belfast Trust has one whole time equivalent Inflammatory Bowel Disease nurse.

The Northern Trust employs 0.62 whole time equivalent specialist nurses for Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

In addition, many more nurses would have received training as part of a wider course, such as Stoma Therapy or, less commonly, would have undertaken a specialist IBD course. Information on the total number of nurses who have received some degree of training in IBD is not available centrally and could only be collected at disproportionate cost.

Maintenance Anti-TNF Biologic Therapies

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why outpatients with chronic Ulcerative Colitis are not considered appropriate candidates for maintenance anti-TNF biologic therapies compared to their counterparts elsewhere in the UK.

(AQW 25939/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised that the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board commissions biologic therapies for patients with ulcerative colitis in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance. This link with NICE ensures that Northern Ireland has up-to-date, independent professional, evidence-based best practice guidance on the value of health care interventions. Current NICE guidance does not recommend maintenance treatment of this condition with biologics. Specifically for treatment of this condition the HSC Board complies with: NICE Technical Appraisal (TA) 163 available at <http://publications.nice.org.uk/infliximab-for-acute-exacerbations-of-ulcerative-colitis-ta163>; and, NICE Technical Appraisal (TA) 140, available at <http://publications.nice.org.uk/infliximab-for-subacute-manifestations-of-ulcerative-colitis-ta140>

Residential Care Homes

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) private residential care homes and places available; (ii) statutory residential care homes and places available, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 25947/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of statutory and independent residential care homes and the places available in these homes is published annually in the 'Statistics on Community Care for Adults in Northern Ireland' bulletin. Publications for the past fourteen years are available to download from the DHSSPS internet site at:

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

For the five years requested, the information can be found as follows:

- 2011/12 – Table 1.16, page 61

- 2010/11 – Table 1.17, page 45
- 2009/10 – Table 1.16, page 24
- 2008/09 – Table 1.18, page 25
- 2007/08 – Table 1.18, page 25

Residential Care Homes

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail every statutory residential care home, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area, including the number of (i) beds; and (ii) residents in each, as of 1 September for each year since 2005.

(AQW 25949/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information is not held centrally and was requested from the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. Table 1 below details the number of beds and residents in each statutory residential care home which caters for the elderly.

Table 1: Beds and Residents in Statutory Residential Care Homes

Residential Home		01/09/2005	01/09/2006	01/09/2007	01/09/2008	01/09/2009	01/09/2010	01/09/2011	01/09/2012	01/09/2013
Belfast HSC Trust										
Pine Lodge*	Beds	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
	Residents	31	29	33	30	26	20	20	24	36
Killynure	Beds	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
	Residents	22	31	36	36	37	37	28	32	21
Orchardville	Beds	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Residents	16	19	24	28	27	27	27	27	27
Brae Valley	Beds	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Residents	22	24	27	27	29	25	21	22	20
Ballyowen	Beds	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
	Residents	6	10	18	23	27	22	24	26	20
Bruce House	Beds	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
	Residents	4	6	11	21	28	28	28	27	20
Chestnut*	Beds	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
	Residents	13	15	22	28	39	32	22	28	21
Grovetree*	Beds	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
	Residents	15	16	18	24	38	24	23	0	0
Shankill	Beds	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
	Residents	15	21	30	31	33	24	23	7	0

* Belfast HSC Trust ceased permanent admissions to non EMI homes in 2009, therefore, figures after that time to Grovetree, Pine Lodge and Chestnut Grove refer only to temporary residents, i.e. respite or step-down.

Residential Home		01/09/2005	01/09/2006	01/09/2007	01/09/2008	01/09/2009	01/09/2010	01/09/2011	01/09/2012	01/09/2013
Northern HSC Trust										
Roddens	Beds	-	-	-	29	29	29	29	29	-
	Residents	-	-	-	29	29	20	26	27	-
Rathmoyle	Beds	-	-	-	39	39	39	39	39	-
	Residents	-	-	-	29	29	37	30	29	-
Pinewood	Beds	-	-	-	36	36	36	36	36	-
	Residents	-	-	-	33	34	31	32	27	-
Rosedale	Beds	-	-	-	38	38	38	36	36	-
	Residents	-	-	-	34	35	32	30	28	-
Greenisland	Beds	-	-	-	31	31	31	30	30	-
	Residents	-	-	-	30	31	29	28	23	-
Clonmore	Beds	-	-	-	42	42	42	40	40	-
	Residents	-	-	-	41	41	38	38	35	-
Lisgarel	Beds	-	-	-	41	41	41	40	40	-
	Residents	-	-	-	37	37	30	39	27	-
Westlands	Beds	-	-	-	29	29	29	29	29	-
	Residents	-	-	-	27	27	27	28	26	-
Joymount	Beds	-	-	-	44	44	44	40	40	-
	Residents	-	-	-	43	40	42	39	37	-

Residential Home		01/09/2005	01/09/2006	01/09/2007	01/09/2008	01/09/2009	01/09/2010	01/09/2011	01/09/2012	01/09/2013
South Eastern HSC Trust										
Ardview House	Beds	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
	Residents	30	30	31	33	31	36	36	27	21
Drumlough House	Beds	40	40	40	39	39	39	39	39	39
	Residents	29	24	25	25	35	38	33	33	30
Grove House	Beds	34	34	34	34	34	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Residents	29	21	30	24	18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Laurelhill House	Beds	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Residents	30	28	30	29	30	29	30	28	27

Residential Home		01/09/2005	01/09/2006	01/09/2007	01/09/2008	01/09/2009	01/09/2010	01/09/2011	01/09/2012	01/09/2013
Loch Cuan	Beds	32	32	32	32	32	16	16	N/A	N/A
	Residents	24	25	22	16	15	14	8	N/A	N/A
Mount Alexander	Beds	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	37	37
	Residents	23	28	31	35	35	35	32	32	34
Newcroft Lodge	Beds	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
	Residents	20	24	27	30	28	31	31	29	24
Northfield House	Beds	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
	Residents	27	28	28	29	22	35	18	19	20
Ravara	Beds	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	N/A
	Residents	21	28	37	35	28	32	33	23	N/A
Seymour House	Beds	51	51	51	51	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Residents	47	41	44	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
St John's House	Beds	34	34	34	34	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Residents	28	28	25	17	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Residential Home		01/09/2005	01/09/2006	01/09/2007	01/09/2008	01/09/2009	01/09/2010	01/09/2011	01/09/2012	01/09/2013
Southern HSC Trust										
Slieve Roe House	Beds	-	-	-	-	17	17	17	17	17
	Residents	-	-	-	-	16	17	14	14	11
Cloughreagh house	Beds	-	-	-	-	23	23	23	23	23
	Residents	-	-	-	-	17	21	20	21	20
Roxborough House	Beds	-	-	-	-	38	30	30	30	30
	Residents	-	-	-	-	28	22	24	22	20
Skeagh House	Beds	34	34	34	34	34	24	24	24	*
	Residents	29	31	28	22	29	20	21	12	*
Crozier House	Beds	35	35	35	35	~	27	27	27	27
	Residents	29	32	27	29	15#	22	20	24	22^

Systems were not in place for data collection of this nature prior to 2009 in three residential homes * Skeagh House was temporarily evacuated in 2013 ~ Reduced capacity due to renovations at Crozier House between November 2008 and November 2009 # 9 residents were temporarily located to Skeagh House due to renovations ^ Includes 8 residents relocated from Skeagh House

Residential Home		01/09/2005	01/09/2006	01/09/2007	01/09/2008	01/09/2009	01/09/2010	01/09/2011	01/09/2012	01/09/2013
Western HSC Trust										
Thackeray Place	Beds	-	-	-	32	32	32	32	32	32
	Residents	-	-	-	32	30	32	30	32	32
Rectory Field	Beds	-	-	-	35	35	35	35	35	35
	Residents	-	-	-	24	25	32	27	25	24
William Street	Beds	-	-	-	27	27	27	27	27	27
	Residents	-	-	-	22	20	25	26	22	22
Greenfield	Beds	-	-	-	34	34	34	34	34	34
	Residents	-	-	-	27	32	26	32	27	24

Information prior to 2008 is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost

Residential Care Homes

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of permanent admissions to (i) private residential care homes; and (ii) statutory residential care homes, broken down by Health and Social Care trust, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 25950/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not held centrally. Information on the number of permanent admissions to residential homes which cater for elderly clients was provided by the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts and is detailed in the tables below.

Table 1: Permanent Admissions to Private Elderly Residential Homes

HSC Trust	Permanent Admissions				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast	108	127	121	71	104
Northern	-	-	-	206	244
South Eastern	-	-	-	-	-
Southern	-	-	-	-	-
Western	-	-	-	-	-

Information could not be obtained

Table 2: Permanent Admissions to Statutory Elderly Residential Homes

HSC Trust	Permanent Admissions				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast	34	35	26	31	8
Northern	85	67	61	39	0

HSC Trust	Permanent Admissions				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
South Eastern	67	54	43	44	41
Southern	24	7	22	30	22
Western	28	18	22	23	17

Training College at Desertcreat

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he expects work to begin on the new Training College at Desertcreat.

(AQW 25964/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following approval of the business case in 2011, work commenced on the design element of this project.

As you will be aware the costs for this project have increased considerably, since initial approval. This has necessitated an addendum to the business case to be developed and approved by all parties (the Departments and the three services) as well as the Department of Finance and Personnel. This process is currently ongoing and only when it is complete will it be possible to confirm timings.

Research into Prostate Cancer

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department will increase the budget for research into prostate cancer.

(AQW 25975/11-15)

Mr Poots: The 5-year period from 2008-09 to 2013-14 saw more than a doubling of the amount of money allocated for prostate cancer research through the regional Health and Social Care Research & Development (HSC R&D) Fund. The precise increase is 112%. This is against a backdrop of a steady-state in the total size of our HSC R&D Fund over the same period.

Prostate cancer is an area of particular focus and expertise among research scientists and clinicians in Northern Ireland and they are attracting funds and undertaking collaborative work jointly with world-leaders. This ability to attract funds from other, larger funding pots throughout the UK or internationally is essential. Very importantly, our HSC R&D funds have been used to build up and sustain an efficient, co-ordinated health research infrastructure across the province so that patients can participate in clinical trials of potentially beneficial new diagnostics or treatments. Research is also underway on the best care for people who have a diagnosis of prostate cancer and for the many people who now survive and have fulfilling lives following prostate cancer.

Special Education Sector: Speech Therapists

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department can take to address the shortage of speech therapists in the Special Education sector.

(AQW 25976/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Public Health Agency is carrying out a review of Allied Health Professions (AHP) support for children with statements of special educational needs. Speech and language therapy provision is part of this review. The 1st phase of this review is focusing on scoping AHP provision and support for children in special schools. It is envisaged that this scoping exercise will be completed by March 2014. Common themes and issues will be identified throughout and the scoping exercise will end with recommendations for further action.

I will consider the need for any action by my Department following the completion of this review.

Fire Fighters

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of wholetime fire fighters appointed to the retained service.

(AQW 25987/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is currently a total of 81 Wholetime Firefighters in NIFRS appointed to the Retained Service.

Cost of Legal Cases

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 24824/11-15, to detail (i) why his Department is unable to provide the details on parts (i) and (ii); (ii) the cost of all legal cases for each year since 2007; (iii) the cost of the most expensive legal case the Department lost during this time; and (iv) why his Department does not disaggregate the costs of successful and unsuccessful legal cases.

(AQW 26001/11-15)

Mr Poots: In relation to parts (i), (iii) and (iv), the Departmental Solicitor's Office has advised that the volume of legal cases in which the Department has been involved since 2007 make the keeping of statistics in relation to cost and outcome a task which would not make the resources required to undertake it a productive use of public money.

In relation to part (ii), the Department holds information centrally in relation to the total spend on legal costs from 2008-2009. This is set out below and is exclusive of VAT:

- 2008-09 - £387,819
- 2009-10 - £386,775
- 2010-11 - £288,537
- 2011-12 - £106,330
- 2012-13 - £222,191

Children in Care

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, to detail (i) how many investigations were carried out involving a claim of sexual abuse against a child in care; (ii) how many of these investigations proved that an offence was committed; (iii) how many of these cases are ongoing; and (iv) how many criminal investigations were carried out as a result of the initial investigations, for each year since 2009.

(AQW 26023/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not centrally available and could only be provided at disproportionate costs.

Daytime Opportunities and Training Services Programmes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why young people with learning disabilities leaving special education at nineteen are only able to access the Southern Health and Social Care Trust's Daytime Opportunities and Training Services programmes following referral by a social worker; and, given some young people may not have or want contact with a social worker, whether he has any plans to broaden the referral criteria to include other healthcare professionals, such as GPs and community nurses.

(AQW 26025/11-15)

Mr Poots: Day Opportunities is a direct service which is provided by the Southern Trust to meet assessed need. Assessments are carried out by the Trust's multi disciplinary Community Learning Disability Team of which only social workers, nurses and care managers have Key Worker responsibility

and, therefore, are the only staff able to make referrals. Young people can also access information about community options from careers' advisors, Further Education Colleges and Training Organisations independently.

At present the Southern Trust has no plans in place to broaden the referral criteria to include other healthcare professionals such as GPs and community nurses.

Health Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 19437/11-15, to detail (i) whether the Health Protection Agency has set a date for the release of the report into the health impacts of shale gas extraction; and (ii) whether the report also investigates shale oil and coal bed methane extraction.

(AQW 26039/11-15)

Mr Poots: Public Health England, which took over the functions of the Health Protection Agency on 1 April 2013, is currently finalising its review of the potential public health impacts of exposures to chemical and radioactive pollutants from shale gas extraction. No date is currently set for publication but it is expected shortly.

This report looks at the evidence for the potential public health effects of chemical and radiological emissions associated with shale gas extraction. It does not review either coal bed methane extraction or shale oil extraction, which are different processes.

Pinewood Residential Care Home

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 25617/11-15, when the last consultation in relation to Pinewood Residential Care Home (i) commenced; and (ii) was completed.

(AQW 26042/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Trust commenced its consultation on the Future of Statutory of Residential Care for Older People, which included Pinewood, on 26th April. On 3rd May I stopped all Trust consultation processes with regard to statutory residential homes for older people. The Northern Trust's consultation was not, therefore, completed.

The Northern Trust previously carried out the consultation entitled Reprovision of the Trust's Residential Homes for Older People, which commenced in January 2009 and finished in March 2009. This consultation document included Pinewood Residential Care Home.

Barnardo's Report on 'The Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People in Northern Ireland'

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the Barnardo's Report 'The sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland', did he refer the report to (i) The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland; (ii) The Regional Child Protection Committee, and if so, when.

(AQW 26051/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) was not established at the time of the publication of the Barnardo's report, Not a World Away, in 2011. The SBNI became operational on 17 September 2012. My Department referred the recommendations of the report to the Chair Designate of the SBNI in September 2011 for comment. Since its establishment, the SBNI has identified working with member agencies to develop a co-ordinated strategy and working model to protect and safeguard children who go missing from home and care and/or at risk of sexual exploitation as a strategic priority and, as part of the business planning process has developed a multi-agency action plan specifically linked to child sexual exploitation.

In addition, HSCB staff delivered a presentation to the members of the RCPC on the Barnardo's report Not a World Away in March 2012. The Chair Designate of the SBNI and the SBNI Director of Operations (Designate) both attended the RCPC presentation as part of a transitional arrangement.

Barnardo's Report on 'The Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People in Northern Ireland'

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the agencies his Department contacted, including dates, following the receipt of the Barnardo's Report 'The sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland'.

(AQW 26052/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following receipt of the Barnardo's report, Not a World Away, my Department did not refer the report to any organisation or individual, with the exception of the Chair Designate of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

My officials agreed with Barnardo's staff that the recommendations contained within the report would be brought to the attention of those agencies/bodies at whom they were directed and in advance of the publication of the report.

The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland was not established until September 2012, given that The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act was passed in February 2011.

(AQW 26053/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following the passing of the Safeguarding Board (NI) Act 2011 (the Act) the Department using the powers conferred by the Act, commenced the drafting of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (Membership, Procedure, Functions and Committee) Regulations which were necessary to give effect to the operation of the SBNI. The SBNI Regulations were subject to the negative resolution procedure. Their development included liaising with Departmental Solicitors Office on various drafts; consulting on and amending the Regulations following a consultation process; seeking the approval of the Executive and the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety to make the Regulations; attending and providing briefing papers for evidence sessions to the Committee; proofing, validating, and laying of the Regulations and drafting of a Commencement Order to bring them into operation.

In parallel with the development of the Regulatory Framework, preparations were being made to establish a new body. These included: the recruitment of the SBNI Chair, lay members, officers of the Board and voluntary sector representation on the Board; the drafting of substantial SBNI guidance, which was also subject to consultation. Following a recruitment exercise, the SBNI Chair was appointed as Chair designate from 1 July 2011, to assist in the preparations for establishment of the SBNI.

Pinewood Residential Care Home

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail, including a breakdown of, the current funding arrangements for Residential Care, Respite and Rehabilitation at Pinewood Residential Care Home.

(AQW 26081/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Trust has advised that the funding allocation for Pinewood Residential Care Home is not split by Residential Care, Respite and Rehabilitation. The total allocation for 2013/14 is £939,145.

Young People with Learning Difficulties

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances he can give that every young person with learning difficulties, who is approaching transition from special needs education in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area, will be given automatic access to a social worker in advance of transmission, to ensure that all available options are explored and utilised.

(AQW 26083/11-15)

Mr Poots: All children who are in special needs education within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area and meet the criteria for social services involvement would be encouraged to, and given information on, accessing a social worker by the school annual review systems. This information would be given verbally, and by leaflets, and delivered by SELB personnel, school information events for parents, Allied Health Professionals and the Trust's Transition Co-ordinators.

Those young people who are referred to the Trust's Children's Services have direct access to a social worker and the Transition Co-ordinator who, in conjunction with schools and parents/carers, plan their transition to adult services. The Transition Co-ordinators work with children and young people aged 14-25yrs.

The Transition Co-ordinators have the responsibility to act as a conduit to provide information, signpost and support young adults with a diagnosis of learning disability to appropriate services to meet their assessed need.

Barnardo's Report on 'The Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People in Northern Ireland'

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has taken as a result of the Barnardo's report into 'The sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland'.

(AQW 26085/11-15)

Mr Poots: A numbers of actions have been undertaken by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI), since it was established in September 2012, to address the issue of child sexual exploitation and which also address the recommendations contained in the 2011 Barnardo's report Not a World Away.

These include:

- writing to all Health and Social Care Trust Directors of Children's Services to attempt to establish the scale of child sexual exploitation on Northern Ireland and to assess the ongoing arrangements for responding to it. This took place within three weeks of the establishment of the SBNI in September 2012;
- the development of a Strategic Plan, which indicates that the SBNI will work with member agencies to develop a co-ordinated strategy and working model to protect and safeguard children who go missing from home and care and/or at risk of sexual exploitation.
- The development of a child sexual exploitation action plan, which sets out a number of actions to be taken by the membership of the SBNI to tackle child sexual exploitation, including:
 - the establishment of a sexual exploitation Strategic Partnership Group;
 - the identification of the scale and nature of the problem in Northern Ireland;
 - the development of an awareness raising campaign for children, families and professionals;
 - a review of the risk assessment tools currently being used;
 - the development an information sharing agreement for Child Sexual Exploitation;
 - a review existing procedures/guidance to establish any gaps;
 - working with the Knowledge Transfer Hub to identify education requirements for children, parents and professionals;

- working with the Knowledge Transfer Hub to scope and research good models of practice and how this can be translated to Northern Ireland; and
- evaluating and/or piloting a co-located multi-disciplinary/multi-agency team focusing on children who go missing.

The SBNI has already engaged in awareness-raising activity. In September 2013, it published and launched a number of child sexual exploitation awareness-raising leaflets for children, parents/carers and professionals in contact with children and young people. At the same time, a Child Sexual Exploitation Helpline was established. The helpline is run by the NSPCC on behalf of the Health and Social Care Board. It is dedicated to responding to concerns about child sexual exploitation from children, parents and carers.

Working Time Directive

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what procedures allow compliance with the Working Time Directive in respect of private work undertaken by Health Service consultants.

(AQW 26086/11-15)

Mr Poots: Employers are not obliged to monitor private practice hours unless these fall within those identified in the individual Consultant's job plan. Any activity outside of working hours is the responsibility of the consultant, who must ensure that any private commitments do not impinge on their ability to carry out their HSC work.

Consultants who wish to undertake private work which will result in working more than 48 hours per week over a reference period can voluntarily opt-out of EWTD. This must be agreed in writing and HSC Employers must keep a record of all employees who have exercised their right to 'opt-out'. Where a consultant has agreed in writing to work additional hours there is no breach of the EWTD.

Consultants however are required to disclose information to their clinical manager of any regular commitments in respect of private professional services or fee paying services. The onus is on the consultant under 'Good Medical Practice' to ensure that they are 'fit to work'. There are no mechanisms at present to record external hours worked for consultants.

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the last recruitment to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service took place.

(AQW 26119/11-15)

Mr Poots:

NIAS Frontline Operational Recruitment

	Year
Patient Client Service	2012
Paramedics in Training	2010
Emergency Medical Technician	2006
Paramedics	2012

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust has no plans for further frontline operational recruitment.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust does not accept staff on transfer from other ambulance services within the United Kingdom.

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any plans for further recruitment to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

(AQW 26120/11-15)

Mr Poots:

NIAS Frontline Operational Recruitment

	Year
Patient Client Service	2012
Paramedics in Training	2010
Emergency Medical Technician	2006
Paramedics	2012

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust has no plans for further frontline operational recruitment.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust does not accept staff on transfer from other ambulance services within the United Kingdom.

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether it is practice for the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to accept staff on transfer from other ambulance services within the United Kingdom.

(AQW 26121/11-15)

Mr Poots:

NIAS Frontline Operational Recruitment

	Year
Patient Client Service	2012
Paramedics in Training	2010
Emergency Medical Technician	2006
Paramedics	2012

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust has no plans for further frontline operational recruitment.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust does not accept staff on transfer from other ambulance services within the United Kingdom.

Premature Deaths

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22654/11-15, for his assessment of the annual number of premature deaths since 2003 as a result of air pollution.

(AQW 26130/11-15)

Mr Poots: Estimates have not been made on a year-by-year basis. The Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) report 'The Mortality Effects of Long-Term Exposure to Particulate Air Pollution in the United Kingdom', published in 2010, estimated the mortality burden of long-term

exposure to man-made particulate air pollution in 2008 in the UK as equivalent to nearly 29,000 deaths. The mortality burden in 2008 in Northern Ireland was estimated as equivalent to 502 deaths. The COMEAP report is available on-line at: <http://www.comeap.org.uk/documents/reports>.

Slievemore Nursing Unit, Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the future of the Slievemore Nursing Unit, Derry.

(AQW 26154/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Trust has advised that, in the context of no new demand for Slievemore Nursing Unit and the expansion of community based services such as the Challenging Behaviour Service, the Trust foresees no future need for Slievemore.

I am aware, however, of the concerns of the families of the remaining patients in Slievemore regarding their future care. To that end, I have asked the Commissioner for Older People to liaise between the Trust and the remaining patients in Slievemore, and their families, to discuss the way forward.

Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast: Parking

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what actions are being taken to provide adequate car parking spaces at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 26164/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Trust has created a temporary car park with some 300 spaces on the Broadway Towers site. This car park is utilised as an overflow car park where there is pressure on existing spaces on the main Royal Hospitals site. In addition, the Trust has brought a number of car park areas into its control to help ease congestion and improve visitor capacity on site. This included releasing an additional 60 spaces in the main visitors' car park.

The Belfast Trust is planning to provide a long term, sustainable, affordable and accessible car parking solution for patients, staff and visitors. This will be subject to business case approval and availability of funding.

To help reduce demand for car parking spaces, a number of measures have been promoted e.g.

- cycle to work schemes
- use of park and ride facilities
- use of cross site bus service
- walking to work

South West Acute Hospital

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any sub contractors remain unpaid following the building of the South West Acute Hospital.

(AQW 26166/11-15)

Mr Poots: The main contractor on the South West Acute Hospital, FCC Elliott, has confirmed that no monies are due to any of the sub-contractors who worked on the project.

Acute Mental Health Facility

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the second phase of the new local Enhanced Hospital in Omagh for the Acute Mental Health Facility.

(AQW 26171/11-15)

Mr Poots: Phase 2 of the local hospital in Omagh was previously planned to be a second mental health in-patient unit for the Western Trust area.

In my statement to the Assembly on 19 March 2013, I confirmed that the business case for the second acute mental health unit in the Western Trust area will examine options for the location of the unit. In line with this, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) is currently undertaking an appraisal of the two suggested locations for the unit.

Consultation has taken place with local clinicians, and further consultation is planned with the Western Local Commissioning Group which includes representation from local council, health professionals and the community and voluntary sector. The HSCB are due to report to me with their advice before the end of December 2013.

Budget Deficit

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he will take to ensure that front line services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust are not affected by the Trust addressing its budget deficit.

(AQW 26173/11-15)

Mr Poots: A key objective for my Department and HSC organisations is to live within the resources allocated by the Executive, and in that context, the Western Trust, like other Trusts, is currently developing plans to ensure that it achieves financial breakeven in 2013/14. At the same time all Trusts must continue to protect and improve the safety and quality of their services.

At this stage, the Western Trust's plans are in draft form and there is ongoing engagement between the Health and Social Care Board and the Trust in order to finalise them for my consideration.

Ulster Hospital

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the planned development of the Ulster Hospital.

(AQW 26197/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is currently a major programme of redevelopment work ongoing at the Ulster Hospital. Work has already commenced on the new generic ward block on the site. Construction of the new ward block is expected to take 3 years to complete and will provide 12 generic wards, a new day surgery department, an endoscopy suite and a new pharmacy department. It is due to be completed in 2016 and open to patients in early 2017.

The next major stage of redevelopment is the construction of a new acute services block. Work on this is due to start on site in September 2014. The acute block will provide a new emergency department, assessment unit, imaging, and acute wards and is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

A new mental health unit and, in the longer term, a further redevelopment phase, is planned, subject to budgetary availability and business case approval.

Ulster Hospital

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what further modernisation and improvements have yet to be carried out at the Ulster Hospital.

(AQW 26199/11-15)

Mr Poots: Significant investment of some £232m, in the redevelopment of the generic ward and acute services blocks, is currently ongoing on the Ulster Hospital site.

There is no timeframe agreed at present for any further significant upgrade or replacement work, beyond the completion of these works, at the Ulster Hospital. Future plans will include replacement of children's department and acute treatment centre. Also planned is a new in-patient psychiatric unit on the site.

Any future works will, of course, be subject to business case approval and the identification of appropriate funding.

Greenisland House

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what form the replacement facility will take on the site of Greenisland House.

(AQW 26201/11-15)

Mr Poots: The redevelopment of the site of Greenisland House will provide supported living accommodation for older people. The Northern Trust anticipates that the supported living scheme will be completed by 2015.

Rare Diseases

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients are diagnosed with a rare disease.

(AQW 26204/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of patients diagnosed with a rare disease is not available.

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how many meetings have been held (i) at ministerial level; and (ii) at official level with counterparts in the (a) rest of the UK; and (b) Republic of Ireland, since May 2007, including under the aegis of the north/south or east/west arrangements.

(AQW 26223/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since 2007 there have been 16 North South Ministerial Council meetings attended by Ministers for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 10 of which were in Health and Food Safety sectoral format, 4 in Plenary format and 2 in Agriculture sectoral format.

In the period in question, Ministers for Health, Social Services and Public Safety have also attended 4 meetings with UK Ministers and 10 meetings with Republic of Ireland Ministers.

My Department does not collate centrally information on bi-lateral meetings which have taken place at official level.

Arc Project

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the Southern Health and Social Care Trusts Arc project; and what plans or discussions are underway to provide more projects like this across the Trust area.

(AQW 26237/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern HSC Trust has advised that the ARC (Animal Rehoming Centre) project has proved very successful as a base for day opportunities which include animal husbandry, horticulture and an environmental project. Some clients have moved into work placement as a direct result of their attendance.

The Trust has advised however, that it has no plans to roll this project out to other areas of the Trust at present.

The HSC Board is currently consulting on a new regional day opportunities model for adults with a learning disability. The proposed model sets out a way forward to promote the improvement of day time support activities across the region on an equitable basis.

Fires on Rathlin Island

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any lessons to be learned as to how the Fire and Rescue Service deals with gorse fires, particularly in relation to the fires on Rathlin Island in early 2013.

(AQW 26253/11-15)

Mr Poots: NIFRS has conducted a post incident review of the Rathlin Island gorse fires in May 2013, and has identified a number of matters which will be brought forward before the next wildfire season (Spring 2014). These matters include:

- Establishing key stakeholder partnerships to provide fire prevention advice to residents and visitors to the island;
- Identifying best practice in terms of pre-planning and response options to make effective use of limited resources;
- Improving arrangements for allocation and management of resources; and,
- In the longer term, embarking on a research and development project to identify equipment suited to using sea water as an extinguishing agent.

Additionally, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) has invested significant time, equipment and finance to deal with gorse fires including the purchase of specialised equipment. NIFRS' personnel have attended wildfire training courses and a Standard Operating Procedure for Wildfires has been produced.

Evish Facility, Grangewood

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the nursing staff requirements at the Evish facility, Grangewood; and whether these requirements are being met.

(AQW 26267/11-15)

Mr Poots: The funded staff establishment for the Evish Ward at Grangewood Hospital is for 25 staff, comprised of 18 first level Registered Mental Health Nurses and 7 Health Care Assistants. There have been no significant vacancy factors since the unit opened. The staff rota is managed and overseen by the Charge Nurse who, when unplanned absences occur, ensures there is adequate staff cover within the unit to provide safe and effective care to all inpatients on the ward at the time.

Altnagelvin Hospital: Surgical Procedures

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current waiting time for each orthopedic surgical procedure at Altnagelvin Hospital.

(AQW 26270/11-15)

Mr Poots: The waiting times for each procedure in the Trauma and Orthopaedic (T & O) Surgery specialty at Altnagelvin Hospital, as at the 30th June 2013, the most recent information for which official statistics are available, are detailed in the table below.

Number of patients for inpatient admission in the T & O Specialty at Altnagelvin Hospital, at 30th June 2013, by Intended Primary Procedure

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
A60.8	Destruction Of Peripheral Nerve - Other Specified	*	0	0	0	0	0	*

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
A65.1	Release Of Entrapment Of Peripheral Nerve At Wrist - Carpal Tunnel Release	32	27	9	*	*	*	77
A65.8	Release Of Entrapment Of Peripheral Nerve At Wrist - Other Specified	7	*	*	0	0	*	13
A67.1	Release Of Entrapment Of Peripheral Nerve At Other Site - Cubital Tunnel Release	0	5	*	*	0	*	9
A68.3	Other Release Of Peripheral Nerve - Neurolysis Of Peripheral Nerve And Transposition Of Peripheral Nerve	0	0	0	*	0	0	*
O10.8	Complex Reconstruction Of Shoulder - Other Specified	0	0	*	*	0	0	*
O21.8	Total Prosthetic Replacement Elbow Joint Using Cement - Other Specified	0	*	0	*	0	*	5
S06.8	Other Excision Of Lesion Of Skin - Other Specified	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
S06.9	Other Excision Of Lesion Of Skin - Unspecified	*	*	0	0	0	0	*
S43.4	Removal Of Repair Material From Skin - Removal Of Suture From Skin Nec	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
S45.6	Removal Of Other Substance From Skin - Removal Of Foreign Body From Skin Nec	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
S64.1	Extirpation Of Nail Bed - Excision Of Nail Bed	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
T51.2	Excision Of Fascia Of Abdomen - Excision Of Fascia Of Pelvis	0	0	0	0	*	0	*
T52.1	Excision Of Other Fascia - Palmar Fasciectomy	18	11	8	8	*	*	50
T59.1	Excision Of Ganglion - Excision Of Ganglion Of Wrist	*	*	0	0	0	0	*
T59.2	Excision Of Ganglion - Excision Of Ganglion Of Hand Nec	*	*	0	0	*	*	7
T59.3	Excision Of Ganglion - Excision Of Ganglion Of Knee	0	*	0	0	0	0	*

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
T59.4	Excision Of Ganglion - Excision Of Ganglion Of Foot	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
T62.2	Operations On Bursa - Excision Of Bursa Nec	0	0	0	0	*	*	*
T62.5	Operations On Bursa - Injection Into Bursa	*	*	0	0	0	0	*
T62.8	Operations On Bursa - Other Specified	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
T64.1	Transposition Of Tendon - Multiple Transfer Of Tendon To Tendon	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
T64.2	Transposition Of Tendon - Transfer Of Tendon To Tendon Nec	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
T64.9	Transposition Of Tendon - Unspecified	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
T69.1	Freeing Of Tendon - Primary Tenolysis	0	0	0	0	*	0	*
T69.9	Freeing Of Tendon - Unspecified	*	*	0	*	0	0	5
T70.2	Adjustment To Length Of Tendon - Tenotomy Nec	*	0	0	*	0	0	*
T70.5	Adjustment To Length Of Tendon - Lengthening Of Tendon	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
T72.3	Other Operations On Sheath Of Tendon - Release Of Constriction Of Sheath Of Tendon	9	*	5	*	*	0	21
T72.9	Other Operations On Sheath Of Tendon - Unspecified	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
T74.3	Other Operations On Tendon - Exploration Of Tendon Nec	*	0	0	0	0	*	*
T74.8	Other Operations On Tendon - Other Specified	*	0	0	*	0	0	5
T79.8	Repair Of Muscle - Other Specified	0	0	*	0	0	0	*
T80.9	Release Of Contracture Of Muscle - Unspecified	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
T96.2	Other Operations On Soft Tissue - Excision Of Lesion Of Soft Tissue Nec	*	*	*	*	*	*	17

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
W03.1	Complex Reconstruction Of Forefoot - Excision Of Heads Of Multiple Lesser Metatarsals	0	0	0	*	0	0	*
W03.5	Complex Reconstruction Of Forefoot - Localised Fusion Of Joints Of Midfoot And Forefoot	0	*	0	0	0	*	*
W03.6	Complex Reconstruction Of Forefoot - Osteotomy Of Multiple Metatarsals And Fixation Hfq	0	0	0	*	0	0	*
W03.8	Complex Reconstruction Of Forefoot - Other Specified	0	0	*	0	0	0	*
W03.9	Complex Reconstruction Of Forefoot - Unspecified	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
W04.2	Complex Reconstruction Of Hindfoot - Triple Fusion Of Joints Of Hindfoot	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W06.8	Total Excision Of Bone - Other Specified	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W06.9	Total Excision Of Bone - Unspecified	5	*	*	*	*	*	17
W08.3	Other Excision Of Bone - Excision Of Excrecence Of Bone	*	*	0	*	0	*	9
W08.5	Other Excision Of Bone - Partial Excision Of Bone Nec	0	0	*	*	0	0	*
W08.8	Other Excision Of Bone - Other Specified	*	0	*	*	0	0	*
W09.1	Extirpation Of Lesion Of Bone - Excision Of Lesion Of Bone Nec	*	*	*	*	0	0	7
W15.3	Division Of Bone Of Foot - Osteotomy Of First Metatarsal Bone Nec	*	*	*	*	*	0	9
W15.5	Division Of Bone Of Foot - Osteotomy Of Midfoot Tarsal Bone	*	0	0	0	*	0	*
W15.8	Division Of Bone Of Foot - Other Specified	5	*	*	0	0	0	7
W16.9	Other Division Of Bone - Unspecified	5	*	*	*	0	0	11

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
W20.1	Primary Open Reduction Of Fracture Of Bone And Extramed - Primary Open Reduct/Fracture/ Long Bone/Extramed/Fix Using	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W20.3	Primary Open Reduction Of Fracture Of Bone And Extramed - Primary Open Reduct/Fracture/ Long Bone/Extramed/Fix Using	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W20.9	Primary Open Reduction Of Fracture Of Bone And Extramed - Unspecified	*	6	*	0	*	*	14
W23.8	Secondary Open Reduction Of Fracture Of Bone - Other Specified	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W28.1	Other Internal Fixation Of Bone - Application Of Internal Fixation To Bone Nec	*	0	*	*	*	*	8
W28.2	Other Internal Fixation Of Bone - Adjustment To Internal Fixation Of Bone Nec	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W28.3	Other Internal Fixation Of Bone - Removal Of Internal Fixation From Bone Nec	7	9	7	6	*	8	40
W28.8	Other Internal Fixation Of Bone - Other Specified	0	*	0	*	0	0	*
W30.3	Other External Fixation Of Bone - Removal Of External Fixation From Bone Nec	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
W32.9	Other Graft Of Bone - Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W36.2	Diagnostic Puncture Of Bone - Needle Biopsy Of Lesion Of Bone Nec	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W37		0	0	*	0	0	0	*
W37.1	Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint Using Cement - Primary Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint Using Cem	58	66	64	44	28	98	358

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
W38.1	Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint Not Using Cem - Primary Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint Not Usin	0	*	*	0	0	0	*
W39.1	Other Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint - Primary Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint Nec	0	0	0	0	*	*	*
W39.3	Other Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint - Revision Of Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint Nec	*	*	*	*	*	9	20
W39.4	Other Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint - Attention To Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint Nec	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W39.6	Other Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Hip Joint - Closed Reduction Of Dislocated Total Prosthetic Replacement	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W40.1	Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint Using Cement - Primary Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint Using C	48	55	45	36	16	109	309
W40.3	Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint Using Cement - Revision Of Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint Usi	0	*	*	*	0	*	8
W40.9	Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint Using Cement - Unspecified	0	0	0	*	0	0	*
W42.1	Other Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint - Primary Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint Nec	*	*	*	*	*	*	16
W42.3	Other Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint - Revision Of Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Knee Joint Nec	*	0	0	0	0	0	*

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
W45.1	Other Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Other Joint - Primary Total Prosthetic Replacement Of Joint Nec	*	*	0	0	*	*	7
W48.3	Other Prosthetic Replacement Of Head Of Femur - Revision Of Prosthetic Replacement Of Head Of Femur Nec	0	*	0	0	*	*	*
W48.8	Other Prosthetic Replacement Of Head Of Femur - Other Specified	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W49.4	Prosthetic Replacement Of Head Of Humerus Using Cement - Resurfacing Hemiarthroplasty Of Head Of Humerus Using Cemen	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W51.1	Other Prosthetic Replacement Of Head Of Humerus - Primary Prosthetic Replacement Of Head Of Humerus Nec	*	5	0	*	*	5	13
W51.5	Other Prosthetic Replacement Of Head Of Humerus - Resurfacing Hemiarthroplasty Of Head Of Humerus Nec	0	0	0	0	*	*	*
W56.2	Other Interposition Reconstruction Of Joint - Primary Interposition Arthroplasty Of Joint Nec	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W57.2	Excision Reconstruction Of Joint - Primary Excision Arthroplasty Of Joint Nec	0	0	*	*	0	0	*
W57.3	Excision Reconstruction Of Joint - Revision Of Excision Arthroplasty Of Joint	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W58.1	Other Reconstruction Of Joint - Primary Resurfacing Arthroplasty Of Joint	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W59.3	Fusion Of Joint Of Toe - Fusion Of First Metatarsophalangeal Joint Nec	*	*	*	0	0	*	9
W59.5	Fusion Of Joint Of Toe - Fusion Of Interphalangeal Joint Of Toe Nec	11	5	5	*	0	7	30
W62.9	Other Primary Fusion Of Other Joint - Unspecified	10	8	6	5	0	10	39

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
W72.4	Prosthetic Replacement Of Ligament - Prosthetic Replacement Of Intra-Articular Ligament Nec	5	*	*	*	*	*	12
W74.3	Other Reconstruction Of Ligament - Reconstruction Of Extra-Articular Ligament Nec	*	0	*	0	*	*	6
W74.8	Other Reconstruction Of Ligament - Other Specified	*	*	*	0	0	0	*
W74.9	Other Reconstruction Of Ligament - Unspecified	0	0	0	*	0	0	*
W77.1	Stabilising Operations On Joint - Repair Of Capsule Of Joint For Stabilisation Of Joint Nec	*	5	*	*	*	*	23
W77.2	Stabilising Operations On Joint - Transposition Of Muscle For Stabilisation Of Joint	0	0	*	0	0	0	*
W77.9	Stabilising Operations On Joint - Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W78.4	Release Of Contracture Of Joint - Limited Release Of Contracture Of Capsule Of Joint	5	*	0	*	0	*	8
W78.5	Release Of Contracture Of Joint - Release Of Contracture Of Elbow Joint	0	0	*	0	*	0	*
W78.9	Release Of Contracture Of Joint - Unspecified	*	0	*	0	0	0	*
W79.2	Soft Tissue Operations On Joint Of Toe - Excision Of Bunion Nec	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
W81.1	Other Open Operations On Joint - Excision Of Lesion Of Joint Nec	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W81.5	Other Open Operations On Joint - Exploration Of Joint Nec	*	*	0	0	0	*	5
W81.8	Other Open Operations On Joint - Other Specified	8	*	0	0	0	*	13
W82.2	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Semilunar Cartilag - Endoscopic Resection Of Semilunar Cartilage Nec	*	14	7	6	0	*	35

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
W82.3	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Semilunar Cartilag - Endoscopic Repair Of Semilunar Cartilage	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W84.1	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Other Joint Struct - Endoscopic Repair Of Intra-Articular Ligament	8	8	6	*	*	5	30
W84.4	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Other Joint Struct - Endoscopic Decompression Of Joint	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
W84.8	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Other Joint Struct - Other Specified	31	30	12	21	6	24	124
W85.1	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Cavity Of Knee Joi - Endoscopic Removal Of Loose Body From Knee Joint	*	0	0	*	0	*	*
W85.2	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Cavity Of Knee Joi - Endoscopic Irrigation Of Knee Joint	*	*	0	0	0	*	6
W85.8	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Cavity Of Knee Joi - Other Specified	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W86.8	Therapeutic Endoscopic Operations On Cavity Of Other Jo - Other Specified	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
W87.1	Diagnostic Endoscopic Examination Of Knee Joint - Diagnostic Endoscopic Examination Of Knee Joint And Biopsy	44	53	19	6	*	16	139
W87.8	Diagnostic Endoscopic Examination Of Knee Joint - Other Specified	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
W87.9	Diagnostic Endoscopic Examination Of Knee Joint - Unspecified	31	12	*	*	*	*	52
W88		0	0	0	0	*	0	*

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
W88.1	Diagnostic Endoscopic Examination Of Other Joint - Diagnostic Endoscopic Examination Of Joint And Biopsy Of Les	5	*	*	*	*	*	15
W88.8	Diagnostic Endoscopic Examination Of Other Joint - Other Specified	*	*	0	*	0	0	8
W88.9	Diagnostic Endoscopic Examination Of Other Joint - Unspecified	*	0	*	0	0	*	*
W89.1	Other Therapeutic End. Operations On Other Art. Cartilage - Endoscopic Chondroplasty Nec	0	*	0	0	0	0	*
W90.1	Puncture Of Joint - Aspiration Of Joint	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
W90.3	Puncture Of Joint - Injection Of Therapeutic Substance Into Joint	15	7	16	9	*	*	52
W91.9	Other Manipulation Of Joint - Unspecified	0	*	0	0	*	*	5
X09.5	Amputation Of Leg - Amputation Of Leg Below Knee	0	0	*	0	0	0	*
X11.2	Amputation Of Toe - Amputation Of Phalanx Of Toe	0	0	*	0	0	0	*
X23.8	Correction Of Congenital Deformity Of Leg - Other Specified	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
X27.9	Correction Of Minor Congenital Deformity Of Foot - Unspecified	0	0	*	0	0	0	*
Y06.4	Excision Of Lesion Of Organ Noc - Excision Of Scar Tissue Noc	0	0	0	*	0	0	*
Z09.4	Peripheral Nerve Of Arm - Ulna Nerve	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
Z09.5	Peripheral Nerve Of Arm - Posterior Interosseous Nerve	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
Z72.2	Other Bone Of Arm Or Wrist - Scaphoid Bone	0	0	*	0	0	0	*
Z81.2	Joint Of Shoulder Girdle Or Arm - Acromioclavicular Joint	*	*	*	*	0	0	*

Intended Primary Procedure Code	Intended Primary Procedure Description	Patients Waiting for Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
		0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
Z81.4	Joint Of Shoulder Girdle Or Arm - Shoulder Joint	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
Total		445	417	267	203	98	373	1,803

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

*Cells containing less than five have been masked to protect patient confidentiality

Waringstown Branch Surgery: Temporary Closure

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 23631/11-15, why the closure of Waringstown Branch Surgery was described as temporary; and to outline why it has taken more than a year to provide options for the future of GP Service provision for the people of Donaghcloney and Waringstown.

(AQW 26322/11-15)

Mr Poots: The closure of Waringstown branch surgery was described as temporary because the viability of re-opening the surgery was the subject of an options appraisal developed by Donaghcloney surgery which examined all potential proposals for the future provision of general medical services for the patients in the Donaghcloney and Waringstown area.

The process of developing the options appraisal has required significant consultation with the Health and Social Care Board, the landlord of the Waringstown property, patients and other stakeholders. The primary aim of this work is to ensure that the options appraisal delivers better outcomes for patients in the medium to long term through the provision of safe, modern and sustainable quality services.

Throughout this time the Donaghcloney Practice has worked hard to ensure that the day to day work and delivery of patient services has been maintained and developed.

Donaghcloney Surgery

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, following the recent public meeting convened by the Health and Social Care Board regarding the future of Donaghcloney Surgery, whether he will expedite the funding for a new surgery for Donaghcloney and Waringstown, given the impact of the continued temporary closure of Waringstown Branch Surgery on 28 August 2012.

(AQW 26323/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Donaghcloney practice is seeking the views of patients, until the end of October, on an option appraisal for the future development of services within the area, following which it will submit a final option appraisal to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) for consideration.

The HSCB, through its Local Commissioning Groups, has been asked to ascertain appropriate service models to deliver against the challenges set out in Transforming Your Care and identify the priorities across Northern Ireland for the associated primary care infrastructure requirements.

The HSCB will commence meetings in October with GP practices in the Lurgan area, including Donaghcloney surgery, to discuss the potential service model and associated primary care infrastructure requirements to deliver Transforming Your Care in this area.

The HSCB will be prioritising further tranches of 'hub' and 'spoke' infrastructure developments from this point forward with a view to having a fifth and final tranche of developments commissioned by 2015.

Donaghcloney Surgery

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, following the recent public meeting convened by the Health and Social Care Board on the future of Donaghcloney Surgery, at which a new surgery for Donaghcloney and Waringstown was discussed, when such a facility will (i) receive the necessary funding; and (ii) open to patients.

(AQW 26324/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am not in a position to advise when such a facility will receive the necessary funding or when it will be open to patients.

I refer the Member to my written response to AQW 26323/11-15.

Ambulance Locations

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the locations where ambulances are stationed, in the North Down area.

(AQW 26344/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) has ambulances stationed at:

Bangor Ambulance Station, 92 Newtownards Road, Bangor, BT19 1SZ;

Bregenz House, Bangor Marino, BT20 5ED (deployment point); and

2A Sullivan Place, Holywood (deployment point)

Prescription Drugs

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total monetary value of prescription drugs for patients who suffer from mental health difficulties.

(AQW 26366/11-15)

Mr Poots: Most drugs used in the treatment of people with mental health problems fall into 3 broad categories – anti-anxiety drugs, anti-depressants and anti-psychotics and mood stabilisers. In 2012 the total costs of drugs dispensed in these categories was £30.5 million.

A breakdown of these costs is shown in the table below:

Category	Ingredient Cost Before Discount
Hypnotics and anxiolytics	£4,754,697.33
drugs associated with psychoses and related disorders	£12,378,318.29
Antidepressant drugs	£13,368,983.86
Total	£30,501,999.48

Source: Prescription Cost Analysis NI 2012

Youth Obesity

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what steps his Department is taking to reduce youth obesity; and (ii) what discussions he has had with the Minister of Education on addressing the issue of obesity amongst young people.

(AQW 26383/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) My Department is taking forward a number of steps to reduce obesity in children and young people through the obesity prevention framework, A Fitter Future for All (launched 12 March 2013), which seeks to prevent and address obesity across the life course.

In supporting the delivery of the Framework, the Public Health Agency, along with other key stakeholders, are taking forward a range of programmes and initiatives aimed at encouraging participation in physical activity, promoting healthy eating, and preventing and addressing obesity with a particular focus on children and young people.

- (ii) In taking forward A Fitter Future for All, my Department continues to work closely with the Department of Education in tackling this issue. In particular, the two Departments worked together to develop the new Food in Schools Policy, which was launched on 17 September 2013. This is an overarching policy advocating a 'whole school approach' to all food provided in schools, and to the development of the necessary knowledge and skills in relation to healthy eating and lifestyles. My Department continues to be represented on the Food in Schools Forum. Furthermore, my Department is supportive of the continued delivery of the Curriculum Sports Programme.

GPs in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average (i) GP to patient ratio; and (ii) waiting time for an appointment with a GP, in the North Down constituency.

(AQW 26451/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Figures provided by the Family Practitioner Services Information and Registration Unit in the HSC Business Services Organisation show that as at July 2013, the average GP to patient ratio was 1:1650 for North Down Westminster Parliamentary Constituency (WPC) area.

The ratio was calculated using the headcount of principal and salaried GPs working at practices located in North Down WPC, as whole time equivalent figures are not available. Locums were not included.

The patient population used in the calculation was the number of patients registered with practices located within North Down WPC; it should be noted that patients may not reside in the WPC in which they are registered.

- (ii) The information requested is not available.

Department of Justice**Managing Serious Self Harm and Deaths in Custody Policy**

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24239/11-15, whether he wishes to review his answer given that the Director General stated in May 2013 that the new Managing Serious Self Harm and Deaths in Custody Policy is currently being drafted.

(AQW 25729/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): I do not wish to revise my answer to AQW/24239/11-15.

The current Northern Ireland Prison Service Suicide and Self Harm Prevention policy remains valid. A review of the policy will be taken forward as part of the wider reform programme.

National Crime Agency

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the implementation of the National Crime Agency.

(AQW 25808/11-15)

Mr Ford: The National Crime Agency (NCA) will come into operation on 7 October 2013. Its role here, while still important, will be significantly limited compared to that in the rest of the United Kingdom. That is because, in spite of proposals I have tabled setting out how it should fit with our local arrangements, agreement has not been reached on these. As a result NCA officers will not be able to conduct investigations on devolved matters and the NCA's role in respect of civil recovery will be considerably hampered.

Efforts are being made to minimise the impact of the deficit, but I remain firmly of the view that we need to reach agreement on a model which, while respecting local policing architecture, will enable us to benefit from the full range of the NCA's skills and expertise in our fight against serious and organised crime. I will continue to press for that agreement.

Managing Serious Self-Harm and Deaths in Custody Policy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24919/11-15 and given the primary difference between the formal and informal review process, together with the Director General's statement of May 2013 when she stated that the new Managing Serious Self-Harm and Deaths in Custody Policy is currently being drafted, in response to the Prisoner Ombudsman's Report into the near Death In Custody of Mr Lavery at Maghaberry in which the Ombudsman articulated the clear need for review of how vulnerable prisoners are dealt with, whether this new policy of such high importance is being drafted without recourse to a proper formal review.

(AQW 25816/11-15)

Mr Ford: The comments attributed to the Director General were made in response to the Prisoner Ombudsman's report on the death in custody of Mr Joseph Abraham who died whilst in the custody of Magilligan Prison. One issue of concern had been identified for the Prison Service and the Director General wrote to the Prisoner Ombudsman indicating that work was being taken forward to address the issue in relation to the support and aftercare for staff following such incidents.

As part of the informal review process, lessons learned from this report and other external inspection reports were incorporated in internal operational working papers to help inform the future development of safer custody policies and procedures and to identify areas where further guidance on the interpretation of the current Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Policy would be required.

This operational work is ongoing and does not constitute a formal review of the Prison Service's Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Policy.

Suicide prevention continues to be a key priority for the Prison Service and the current policy remains valid. As previously advised in AQW/25729/11-15, a formal review of the Prison Service's Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Policy will be taken forward in due course, in consultation with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

Union Flags on Government Buildings

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice what security precautions are in place for staff who are involved in the flying and removal of Union Flags on Government buildings during designated days.

(AQW 25872/11-15)

Mr Ford: The raising and lowering of the Union flag on designated days is carried out under contract by G4S Secure Solutions (UK) Limited (G4S). The security of G4S staff is a matter for their employer. Prior to the commencement of the contract G4S carried out risk assessments and site surveys across all courthouses, no issues regarding staff security were raised with the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service. If required, G4S staff liaise with PSNI on any security concerns.

Temporary Release of Noel Parker

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the temporary release of Noel Parker to attend a wedding, whether this featured in the redacted report into the operational running and closure of the Prisoner Assessment Unit, and if so, why it was necessary to redact.

(AQW 25876/11-15)

Mr Ford: Mr Parker's temporary release did not feature in the report into the operational running and closure of the Prisoner Assessment Unit.

Dungannon Magistrates Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to case number 13/078784 at Dungannon Magistrates Court, what monitoring was carried out on the dates between 28 September 2012 and 24 July 2013, including the number of visits by the designated risk manager.

(AQW 25878/11-15)

Mr Ford: The monitoring of sexual offences orders is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

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

Northern Ireland Prison Service Target Operating Model

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to details how the Northern Ireland Prison Service Target Operating Model differs from the superseded system.

(AQW 25879/11-15)

Mr Ford: The new operating model for NIPS encompasses four key elements: the Staff Deployment Agreement, the staffing structure, the staffing profile and the shift patterns. In combination this will deliver a sustainable model for NIPS to deliver efficiently and effectively.

The Staff Deployment Agreement was developed to replace the Framework Agreement following negotiations between NIPS and the POA. It sets out working practices that can support a progressive and purposeful regime that is focussed on rehabilitation and has been in operation since July 2012.

The new operating model has allowed NIPS, in agreement with the POA, to develop a flatter, leaner management structure, moving to three non-uniform Management grades as opposed to five and to one uniform supervisor grade instead of two.

New staffing profiles and shift systems were introduced on 15 October 2012. Key elements include reduced non effective time and jurisdictionally comparable staff-prisoner ratios. Ongoing reviews and updating of the shift patterns and profiles are a normal part of prison operations and reflect changing needs and the requirements for regime delivery.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1634/11-15, why the Northern Ireland Prison Service have not referred allegations of fraud and assault to the PSNI for investigation, given that upon conviction, offenders may be sentenced to imprisonment.

(AQW 25972/11-15)

Mr Ford: None of the cases alluded to in the response to AQW/1634/11-15 were considered appropriate for referral to the PSNI. They were properly dealt with under the internal disciplinary processes.

However, since the response to AQW/1634/11-15 was given the Northern Ireland Prison Service has referred some new cases of alleged misconduct to the PSNI for investigation.

Legally Aided Defendants

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how he will ensure that legally aided defendants, who plead not guilty to a charge requiring the expense of preparation for a contest, but subsequently change their plea on the day of hearing, are made financially liable for costs incurred in preparing for the case.

(AQW 25977/11-15)

Mr Ford: Criminal legal aid is granted by the court under the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 ("the 1981 Order"). Where a grant is made, the defendant is entitled to free legal aid in the preparation and conduct of his defence. Under the 1981 Order there is no provision for the defendant to make a contribution to the costs of his defence. At present, I have no plans to change this position.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts 2009/10

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24598/11-15, whether the information provided by the then Director General in the Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts 2009/10 was incorrect, and if so, to outline how inaccurate information was published.

(AQW 25979/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since my answer to AQW24598/11-15 the Northern Ireland Prison Service has continued to look into the basis for the statement made in the 2009/10 NIPS Annual Report, and has located the central record of self-harm incidents dating from April 2009 which is referred to in that Report. Prior to 2010 the Prison Record Information System (PRISM) did not support the electronic recording of self-harm incidents. This information was recorded manually until PRISM was developed to initiate the recording of all incidents of self-harm.

The Rowan Assault Referral Centre

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice whether funding has been secured for an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor for The Rowan Assault Referral Centre; and if this role will include a therapeutic intervention.

(AQW 26003/11-15)

Mr Ford: The opening of the Rowan, Northern Ireland's regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre, is a significant step forward in supporting all victims of sexual violence and abuse and it is very much welcomed. It is an excellent example of partnership working between all of the relevant Departments and Agencies.

The Rowan opened in May 2013, initially for PSNI referrals only. Since the beginning of September The Rowan has extended its services to self-referrals and third party referrals.

Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) are intended to be specialist support workers who assist and help victims of sexual assault and abuse in the weeks and months after an assault. Work is ongoing between my officials and key stakeholders to define the role of ISVAs and a clear specification for an ISVA service in Northern Ireland will be developed as the work of The Rowan evolves.

In order to secure funding for the ISVA service, my Department is required to produce a robust business case. An agreed specification in conjunction with operational data, which will continue to be collected over the forthcoming months, will be fundamental to inform this work.

In the interim, The Rowan will refer victims to the appropriate support services with their consent, and into statutory services where this is mandatory.

Cost of Legal Cases

Mr Agnew asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24826/11-15, to detail (i) why his Department is unable to provide the information for section (i); (ii) the total cost of all legal cases in each year since

his Department was established; (iii) the cost of the most expensive case his Department lost during this time; and (iv) why his Department does not disaggregate legal case costs.

(AQW 26037/11-15)

Mr Ford: As previously stated with regard to AQ 24826/11-15 the data is held in a format from which the information requested could only be provided by undertaking additional work at disproportionate cost.

There is currently no accounting or business requirement for the Department to record the information required to specifically answer this AQ. Neither Internal Audit nor the Northern Ireland Audit Office request these details for audit purposes. Additionally there is no requirement to submit a return to DFP as would be the case with External Consultancy costs and for which systems are in place to capture the information.

Training College at Desertcreat

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice when work will begin on the new Training College at Desertcreat.

(AQW 26044/11-15)

Mr Ford: As I stated in the Assembly on 24 September I have already approved the business case and sought Executive approval for the Desertcreat project by way of an urgent procedure. Assuming that it is approved in the immediate future, on-site works could begin in February 2014.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21771/11-15, (i) why such statistical information is being withheld given he provided similar information in the answer to AQW 8438/11-15; and (a) there is no general identifier of any person; (b) no breach of the Data Protection Principles (c) the legislative rights of access to information; and (d) the inconsistency of the Northern Ireland Prison Service in applying the basis for refusal; and (ii) to outline the reason for this change.

(AQW 26068/11-15)

Mr Ford: There has been no change in my approach to answering questions. AQW/21771/11-15 did not ask for statistical information. It asked for an overview of how all disciplinary cases have been managed since January 2012 and the response explained that until the new Professional Standards Unit was established all disciplinary cases would be managed under the existing disciplinary system.

Since January 2012 the Northern Ireland Prison Service has dealt with and concluded 57 disciplinary cases. There are currently ten disciplinary cases. As these cases all happened before the launch of the new disciplinary system they are all being managed under the previous Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Managing Serious Self Harm and Deaths in Custody Policy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24760/11-15, to detail (i) when the drafting of the new Northern Ireland Prison Service policy on Managing Serious Self Harm and Deaths in Custody commenced; (ii) the proposed date of implementation; and (iii) the current status of the policy.

(AQW 26069/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the member to the answers I provided to AQW 25729/11-15 and AQW 25816/11-15.

Managing Serious Self Harm and Deaths in Custody Policy

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24432/11-15, whether he will review his answer given the acceptance by the Director General of the Prisoner Ombudsman's 'Issue of Concern Requiring Action No (2)' in relation to the lack of adequate support to staff and available evidence that management were not clear about what action should be taken to support staff affected by deaths in custody, coupled with the Director General's response when she stated, "The importance of firstly

advising staff of the range of support available, and secondly, the proper provision of support and after care will be specifically mentioned in the new Managing Serious Self Harm and Deaths In Custody policy which is currently being drafted”.

(AQW 26093/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have reviewed the previous response to AQW/24432/11-15 and I am satisfied that the information provided by Magilligan officials was accurate. Policies and procedures are in place and the Governor of Magilligan Prison did speak personally to the staff involved.

The response provided by the Director General of the Prison Service was an acknowledgement that more needs to be done to ensure staff are made fully aware of the support services available to them. The support services available to staff will be specifically mentioned in the new Serious Self Harm and Deaths in Custody Policy.

Risk of Sexual Harm Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of applications that have been made for Risk of Sexual Harm Orders (RoSHO), in each of the last two years; and of these, how many were granted, broken down per court division.

(AQW 26094/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information on the number of applications for Risk of Sexual Harm Orders (RoSHO) made and orders granted in the last two years in each County Court division is given in the tables below. An interim RoSHO was granted in all cases prior to the granting of the full RoSHO order, dismissal or the withdrawal of the application.

Number of applications received for a Risk of Sexual Harm Order

County Court Division	Number of applications for a Risk of Sexual Harm Order		Number of applications resulting in a Risk of Sexual Harm Order being made	
	2011	2012	2011	2012
Londonderry	5	1	0	0
Armagh and South Down	1	1	0	1
Total	6	2	0	1

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many successful convictions have been made under Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

(AQW 26096/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 was added to the statute by the Policing and Crime Act 2009 and was commenced on 1 April 2010.

The most recent year for which information on convictions is available is 2009, and therefore it is not possible to provide the answer to the question.

I have already announced my intention to bring forward legislative proposals to remove the statutory time bar for prosecutions for this offence, which currently have to be made within six months. I am proposing this change as a result of advice from the Public Prosecution Service and the PSNI, that the current time bar may be a barrier to successful prosecutions.

Injury of Duty Awards

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Justice how many Police Officers are awaiting Injury of Duty Awards, and of these, how many are waiting for Medical Assessments by Blackwell Associates.

(AQW 26105/11-15)

Mr Ford: The administration of the Injury Benefit Scheme is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the independence of the Policing Board therefore you may wish to direct your question to its Chief Executive.

Flags on Courthouses

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice whether he is aware of any designated days when the Union Flag was not flown on all courthouses in the last twelve months.

(AQW 26185/11-15)

Mr Ford: In the last twelve months the Union flag was not flown at Newtownards Courthouse on Sunday 11 November 2012 as G4S Secure Solutions (UK) Limited (G4S), the security and ancillary services provider to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), could not access the flagpole as contractors had inadvertently sealed a window during repairs. NICTS subsequently rectified this issue and reinstated access to the flagpole.

Also, on 6 February 2013 the Union flag was not flown at Ballymena, Enniskillen, Londonderry and Dungannon Courthouses due to an oversight by G4S. This was addressed through contract management mechanisms.

Governor at Magilligan

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24432/11-15, for an explanation as to the inconsistency in his answer in terms of the actions purported to have been taken by the Governor at Magilligan, which conflict with the investigation, findings and recommendations by the Prisoner Ombudsman and the subsequent response of the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service .

(AQW 26191/11-15)

Mr Ford: The inconsistency occurred because the Governor of Magilligan Prison was not interviewed or asked to provide the information he held during the Ombudsman's investigation. As the Ombudsman was not aware of the Governing Governor's Journal entries they were not included in the findings of the investigation.

The response provided by the Director General of the Prison Service was an acknowledgement that more needs to be done to ensure staff are made fully aware of the support services available to them. The support services available to staff will be specifically mentioned in the new Serious Self Harm and Deaths in Custody Policy.

Reducing Offending in Partnership Pilot Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, to detail the re-offending rate since following the conclusion, in September 2012, of the Reducing Offending in Partnership pilot scheme in Ballymena.

(AQW 26210/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PSNI measured reoffending among 25 persons identified as priority offenders through Reducing Offending in Partnership (ROP) in Ballymena. Their offending for the period September 2011 to September 2012 was compared against their offending for the same period 2012/2013: 68% of the priority offenders showed a reduction in their offending; 28% increased their offending; and 4% showed no change.

Convictions for Sexual Offences

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many successful convictions have been made under Articles 59, 60 and 61 respectively of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

(AQW 26218/11-15)

Mr Ford: Offences under Articles 59, 60 and 61 of the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 came into effect on 2 February 2009. Articles 60 and 61 were subsequently amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2009. Those amendments commenced on 1 April 2010.

There were no convictions for offences under these Articles in 2009, the most recent year for which information on convictions is available.

Note:

- 1 Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

The Case of Nikki Toland

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice whether he will intervene in the case of Nikki Toland who suffers from systemic scleroderma as a result of spending time as a baby in a prison cell used in protests in Armagh Jail.

(AQW 26429/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have received no correspondence from Ms Toland on this matter.

Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the Criminal Justice Inspection's Reports into Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre, in particular the issue of excessive strip searching being undertaken in Ash House.

(AQW 26550/11-15)

Mr Ford: Women in Ash House are not routinely subject to full strip searching arrangements. This measure is only adopted in individual cases, and in response to specific intelligence which indicates that these procedures should be adopted. Such action has only taken place on a limited number of occasions over the course of the present year.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently halfway through a programme of reform that will run until April 2015. The senior management team has set out a clear direction of travel for the Prison Service based on the 40 recommendations of the Prison Review Team Report. To date nine of these have been fully implemented, with the remaining recommendations due to be completed at various stages over the next 18 months. I am satisfied that this is on track. The inspection at Hydebank Wood was carried out less than a year into this reform programme. Since then a new Director of Offender Policy and Operations has been appointed, and last month the first Director of Rehabilitation for the Northern Ireland Prison Service took up his post.

At the time of the inspection there was no permanent occupancy of either the post of Governor or Deputy Governor at Hydebank Wood. These posts have now been filled and a new senior management team is in place at the establishment.

I am confident that the senior administration of the Prison Service, together with both established members of staff and those individuals who have recently joined, will collectively bring about the change necessary to move the Service forward.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: New Recruits

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Justice to detail the training arrangements for new recruits to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 26559/11-15)

Mr Ford: Custody Prison Officers are required to gain an accredited Certificate of Competence within two years of appointment.

On entering the Northern Ireland Prison Service, new recruits complete an intensive eight week induction training programme at the Prison Service College. This is followed by a further two weeks Establishment familiarisation. New recruits then begin their permanent posting where they complete a further phase of development which includes completion of a portfolio of learning, directed learning booklet, assignment and assessments before being considered for the Certificate of Competence.

Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the performance of the senior administration of the Northern Ireland Prison Service following the significant concerns that the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland outlined in two reports into Ash House and the Young Offenders Centre at Hydebank Wood Prison.

(AQW 26572/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently halfway through a programme of reform that will run until April 2015. The senior management team has set out a clear direction of travel for the Prison Service based on the 40 recommendations of the Prison Review Team Report. To date nine of these have been fully implemented, with the remaining recommendations due to be completed at various stages over the next 18 months. I am satisfied that this is on track. The inspection at Hydebank Wood was carried out less than a year into this reform programme. Since then a new Director of Offender Policy and Operations has been appointed, and last month the first Director of Rehabilitation for the Northern Ireland Prison Service took up his post.

At the time of the inspection there was no permanent occupancy of either the post of Governor or Deputy Governor at Hydebank Wood. These posts have now been filled and a new senior management team is in place at the establishment.

I am confident that the senior administration of the Prison Service, together with both established members of staff and those individuals who have recently joined, will collectively bring about the change necessary to move the Service forward.

Department for Regional Development

WiFi Provision

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are plans to extend WiFi provision to all buses.

(AQW 25319/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): WiFi is currently available on all rail services and Goldline coach services. These are generally longer journeys where the use of WiFi is most in demand, of practical use and passenger numbers per vehicle are high. Translink have advised it has no existing plans at present to extend Wi-Fi provision to other bus services, such as Metro in Belfast, where the journey are generally significantly shorter.

Northern Ireland Railways

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development the detail the cost of the subsidy provided to Northern Ireland Railways, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 25321/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The cost of the subsidy provided to Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) is measured in terms of the amount of Public Service Obligation (PSO) that has been paid. PSO is the grant that is provided to NIR by the Department to enable it to fully discharge its obligations in respect of the provision of a Public Transport Railway Service on the Northern Ireland rail network. The figures for PSO do not provide for depreciation of assets. Virtually all assets in NIR have been funded by the Department and the accounting treatment reflects this.

The amount of PSO that has been paid to NIR in each of the last five years is provided in the table below. Passenger journeys are also included: -

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
PSO	£21.2m	£23.0m	£21.7m	£23.9m	£24.3m
Passenger Journeys	10.2m	10.0m	10.4m	10.7m	11.5m
Total services	110,929	110,040	110,262	109,867	112,859

Cyclist Safety

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development if his Department has had any discussions with cycling clubs regarding the use of public highways and road safety.

(AQW 25392/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service Road Safety Policy Manager has had frequent meetings with representatives from Cycling Touring Clubs and Sustrans on road safety and 20 mph speed limit issues. That official also meets with cycling representatives at meetings of the Road Safety Forum which was established 2 years ago by the DOE Minister. This forum still meets twice a year.

Seapark Road, Hollywood

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to Seapark Road, Hollywood, whether consideration has been given to (i) installing speed bumps; and (ii) placing parking restrictions on one side of the road, to prevent the road being reduced to single lane traffic at busy periods.

(AQW 25512/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department carried out a traffic survey and assessment of the traffic calming measures at Seapark Road, Hollywood in late 2010.

Officials subsequently reviewed their assessment recently, taking account of factors such as the speed and volume of traffic; the most recent three year personal injury collision statistics; and environmental factors, such as the presence of schools, playgrounds, hospitals, clinics, shops, and public buildings.

The outcome of this review, when compared against other similar requests, was that there are a number of other areas competing for inclusion within the traffic calming programme, deemed to be of greater priority.

With regard to waiting restrictions, officials recently assessed the need for additional restrictions within Seapark Road and provided a section of double yellow lines along both sides of the road, in the vicinity of the railway bridge.

Cyclists Killed in Road Accidents

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps his Department is taking to address the rise in cyclists killed or seriously injured.

(AQW 25536/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is committed to providing safer roads for vulnerable road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, by utilising a range of measures, such as road safety engineering, traffic calming and enhancement of the pedestrian and cycling network. Particular measures such as dedicated cycle lanes, toucan crossings and advance stop lines at traffic signal controlled junctions are widely used to help improve safety for cyclists.

My Department also works closely with the Department of the Environment and the Police Service of Northern Ireland in the promotion of Road Safety to all road users through its Travelwise initiative. This initiative aims to increase the number of commuters who choose to cycle to work, and as part of its promotion of cycling, encourages all road users to consider the needs and safety of others.

In addition, my Department has issued a leaflet entitled 'Sharing Space on the Road' to encourage safe behaviour among road users. The leaflet sets out tips for motorists and cyclists on sharing the roads with others. The leaflet was distributed to 120,000 motorists with motor tax renewal forms in March 2012 and has been made available at various government and local government locations, as well as cycling outlets. A copy of the leaflet can be found online at http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sharing_space_on_the_road.pdf or can be obtained from Travelwise NI (telephone 0845 378 0908).

These measures demonstrate my Department's commitment to cycling through engineering, education and consultation with other external bodies.

As the Member will be aware, I have recently instructed officials in my Department to give increased and focussed priority to the needs of cyclists, to encourage greater participation in this healthy and sustainable form of transport. I have also asked for a new cycling unit to be established, to ensure the effective progress of a range of cycling initiatives.

Bicycle Use

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department estimates future levels of bicycle use when predicting spending on roads.

(AQW 25544/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's objectives for future cycle use are set out in the Active Travel Strategy for Northern Ireland. The specific long-term objectives for cycling are to:

- increase the average distance cycled to be in line with our UK counterparts by 2020; and
- increase the percentage of trips taken by cycling to be in line with our UK counterparts.

The allocation of funds to cycling is tailored to meet these objectives.

Detailed budgets have yet to be agreed for future years and so it is not possible to predict spend.

I am, however, fully committed to these objectives, and cycling and pedestrian schemes will continue to be identified. It is my intention to invest in and improve the cycling infrastructure as far as available resources permit.

As the Member will be aware, I have recently instructed officials in my Department to give increased and focussed priority to the needs of cyclists, to encourage greater participation in this healthy and sustainable form of transport. I have also asked for a new cycling unit to be established, to ensure the effective progress of a range of cycling initiatives.

Road Infrastructure

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how much money is required to bring all road infrastructure up to the required standard.

(AQW 25605/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It has been independently established that some £129 million, at 2013 prices, is needed annually to maintain the road network in its current condition. If this level of funding is not met in full, expenditure on less cost effective reactive patching will continue to increase and road conditions will continue to deteriorate.

It should be noted that the majority of the motorway network and some of the trunk road network is maintained by private companies and, as a result, the figure quoted above does not include maintenance of that part of the network.

Underinvestment during previous spending periods has had a negative effect because as pavements deteriorate through a lack of planned maintenance, they require in relative terms more expensive patching to avoid public liability claims and maintain road safety, which draws further funds away from better value resurfacing and surface dressing. As a result of the historic period of underinvestment, the maintenance backlog exceeded £850 million in 2012.

Connswater Community Greenway Project

Mr Douglas asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to Phase 2 of the Connswater Community Greenway Project, to detail (i) the support his Department is providing to the design team; and (ii) the financial contribution his Department is making to the provision of additional crossings and upgrades.

(AQW 25648/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department liaises with the Connswater Community Greenway team where their works interface with the public road. Officials have provided design details of an indicative improved layout for the A55 Upper Knockbreda Road/Cregagh Road junction, which seeks to better cater for pedestrians and cyclists. As my Department is not taking this scheme forward, there is no financial contribution towards the provision of additional crossings and upgrades.

Get Britain Cycling Report

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the Get Britain Cycling Report which recommends that a minimum of £10 per head is spent annually by the Government on cycling.

(AQW 25650/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am committed to promoting and supporting safer cycling for cyclists of all ages. There have been significant developments in the provision of cycling facilities across Northern Ireland and this report and any reports from the NI Assembly will be important context. At the beginning of August I published an Action Plan for Active Travel that will take forward the proposals of the Active Travel Strategy which I launched in January of this year. It brings together walking and cycling initiatives to be delivered by Government Departments, local authorities and interested stakeholders during the period 2012-2015.

I have asked my officials to ensure that there is a greater focus and priority on measures to assist cyclists in future and am establishing a cycling unit in my Department to ensure that this is achieved. I also intend to bid for additional in-year funding for cycling infrastructure, when opportunities arise.

As part of the New Approach to Regional Transportation my Department is currently developing transport spending proposals which will feed into the next Programme for Government budget process. This is being undertaken through a policy fit process which will identify those transport schemes which will best achieve the strategic objectives of the Northern Ireland Executive. This will be a mechanism for assessing how much is to be spent going forward.

Cycling Initiatives

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to increase spending on cycling initiatives.

(AQW 25651/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have asked my officials to ensure that there is a greater focus and priority on measures to assist cyclists in the future and am establishing a cycling unit in my Department to ensure that this is achieved. I also intend to bid for additional in-year funding for cycling infrastructure, when opportunities arise.

As part of the New Approach to Regional Transportation my Department is currently developing transport spending proposals which will feed into the next Programme for Government budget. This is being undertaken through a policy fit process which will identify those transport schemes which will best achieve the strategic objectives of the Northern Ireland Executive. As such future budgets for transport initiatives have yet to be agreed for the forthcoming years.

My Department is providing £4.3m to fund active travel Demonstration projects in Belfast, Londonderry, Craigavon and Strabane. I have also more recently committed £50k for my Department to undertake a Feasibility Study into a cycle / pedestrian footbridge over the River Lagan close to the gasworks site. Furthermore, my Department's Roads Service plans to implement around 4.5km of new cycle lanes.

A26: Local Businesses

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development what infrastructure will be put in place to assist local businesses along the proposed A26.

(AQW 25673/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The A26 Dualling scheme would provide an all-purpose dual carriageway between Glarryford and the A44 Drones Road Junction. This will ensure significant improvements in journey times for users of this route and thus promote economic development through the improved road connections between Belfast and the North coast.

The junction strategy for the proposed scheme has rationalised the number of direct accesses onto the route, making it more appropriate for a dual carriageway. To maximise road safety, there will be no at-grade cross-over facilities along the scheme. A central reserve with safety barrier will run along its full length.

Access onto the dual carriageway, for businesses and other landowners along the scheme, will either be from left in – left out junctions or one of the adjacent full movement side road junctions. This provides a balance between the local diversions, the improved safety and good economic performance, linked to the proposed scheme.

The full movement junctions will be in the form of three compact grade separated junctions located at the B64 Glarryford junction, the C61 Lisnasoo Road junction and the B94 Drumadoon Road. There will also be one roundabout at the end of the scheme, at the A44 Drones Road junction.

A26

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amount spent to date on the preparation of the A26.

(AQW 25674/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: At the end of August 2013, my Department had spent £2.94m on the preparation of the A26 Dualling scheme – Glarryford to A44 (Drones Road) Junction.

New Housing Developments

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of roads awaiting adoption by his Department in new housing developments in (i) Ballymena; (ii) Ballymoney; and (iii) Moyle.

(AQW 25676/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number roads awaiting adoption in housing developments in the Council areas requested are set out in the table below:

Council Area	Number of Roads Awaiting Adoption
Ballymena	41
Ballymoney	14
Moyle	17

Cycle Safety Strategy

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to produce a cycle safety strategy.

(AQW 25680/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Road Safety is primarily a matter for the Department of the Environment and that Department already has a Road Safety Strategy, which includes issues relating to cycling. My Department works closely with the Department of the Environment on matters of road safety, including in the Delivery Board for the Road Safety Strategy and on a number of joint activities such as the development of the Cycling Skills and Cycling Safety leaflet.

I am, however, aware that cyclists are particularly vulnerable road users and that their safety needs to be treated as a high priority. I am also aware that the perception of danger is a key factor that discourages greater use of cycling, as a mode of transport. I have therefore asked my officials to ensure the new cycling unit, which is being established in my Department, ensures greater priority and increased focus is given to safety issues, relating to cycling.

NW 200 and Ulster GP Road Races

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has consulted with the Manx Government in regard to best practice for the development of the NW 200 and Ulster GP road races; and if his proposals for flexible road closure will be in place for 2014.

(AQW 25685/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The development of the North West 200 or the Ulster Grand Prix motor cycle races is a sporting matter and responsibility would lie with the Minister for Culture Arts and Leisure. My responsibility is to facilitate those races by ensuring road closure orders are in place.

A Bill to introduce more flexibility into road racing arrangements is presently the subject of consultation. On the assumption that it will receive broad support, I intend to seek the agreement of the House for it to proceed by accelerated passage through its Assembly stages. If accelerated passage is granted, I am confident the new procedures will be in place for the 2014 racing season.

Water Treatment Plant at Clay Lake

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the new Water Treatment Plant at Clay Lake, South Armagh (i) to detail the cost to construct the plant; (ii) how long the site has been in operation; and (iii) for his assessment of the effectiveness of the site.

(AQW 25694/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that (i) the construction contract for Clay Lake Water Treatment Works was awarded to Lagan Enpure Joint Venture at a cost of £2.7 million. (ii) The Works became operational on 7 August 2013 and is due for completion in October 2013. Following completion, a formal 30 day testing period will take place before the Works transfers from the contractor to NIW. (iii) The Works is operating satisfactorily and complies with the statutory drinking water quality standards.

Water Treatment Plant at Clay Lake

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether all pressurized water tanks at Clay Lake Water Treatment site, South Armagh, require certification prior to usage; and if so, if all certificates are in place.

(AQW 25695/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it was necessary to obtain certification for all pressurised water tanks at Clay Lake Water Treatment Works. All pressurised water tanks at the Works were inspected prior to use and appropriate certificates are in place.

Cycle Training for Pupils

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he or his officials have had discussions with the Department of Education regarding cycle training for all primary and secondary school-age pupils.

(AQW 25714/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Responsibility for the provision of Cycling Proficiency Training rests with the Department of the Environment Road Safety Branch as part of its statutory duty to road safety, to give children the basic skills and confidence to cycle safely.

Neither I nor my officials have had discussions with the Department of Education regarding cycle training for all primary and secondary school-age pupils.

However my officials have written to that Department seeking its support to the Active School Travel programme which aims to deliver cycling and walking skills training to a limited number of schools over a three year period. The response received indicated that whilst it was supportive it was unable to actively engage in the programme.

Cycle to Work Scheme

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he is taking to encourage Departments and Local Authorities to work together to ensure that the Cycle to Work scheme assists in implementing sustainable transport objectives.

(AQW 25716/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My officials engage with Departments and Local Authorities to develop and implement workplace Travel Plans promoting sustainable travel and to promote cycling especially during Bike Week in June each year. The Travel Plans encourage workplaces to make the scheme available to their employees and to support them in using their cycles for the journey to work while Bike Week partnerships with Local Authorities encourage them to promote cycling to work.

I launched the Active Travel Strategy in January 2013 and I undertook then to publish an action plan which sets out measures that will be taken by government departments, local authorities and voluntary bodies to encourage more cycling and walking and less dependency on private cars. In preparing the Active travel strategy representatives from local authorities and other departments were consulted.

The Action Plan which was published at the beginning of August lists all of the initiatives planned between 2012 to 2015.

Cycling Unit

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development how many staff will be employed in his Department's cycling unit.

(AQW 25753/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member will be aware, I have recently instructed officials in my Department to give increased and focussed priority to the needs of cyclists, to encourage greater participation in this healthy and sustainable form of transport. I have also asked for a new cycling unit to be established, to ensure the effective progress of a range of cycling initiatives.

At present, cycling issues are dealt with in different parts of my Department. Senior officials are now considering how the new cycling unit could ensure all cycling issues are progressed in a more coherent and coordinated manner and are given an increased focus and priority.

I have asked for this consideration to be completed as a matter of urgency, so I can then consider what additional staff resources need to be allocated to the new unit.

New Lamp Posts: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of providing new lamp posts in the North Down area, in the last three financial years.

(AQW 25755/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not maintain a separate analysis of the cost of providing new lamp posts in the North Down area, however, it does maintain analysis of Capital Street Lighting spend which includes the provision of new lanterns, lamp posts and cabling. This expenditure is recorded by District Council area and not by Constituency area.

Details of expenditure of this type in the North Down Council Area during the last three years, are set out in the table below:

	Spend £k		
Council Area	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
North Down	91	433	12

However, it should be noted that whilst the actual spend on Capital Street Lighting may be within one district council area, the benefits are not confined to the district council in which the work was completed.

Additional detail on specific schemes progressed in the North Down area, over the past three years, can be viewed in Council Reports for North Down which are available on my Department's website. Details of the relevant links are included for your convenience:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/doc-details.htm?docid=8946

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/doc-details.htm?docid=8202

Investment for Cycling

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his plans following the recent announcement by H.M. Government on additional investment for cycling.

(AQW 25791/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have recently directed the establishment of a Cycle Policy Unit, in my Department, tasked with better co-ordinating all cycle issues and working with other interested stakeholders to develop robust and sustainable strategies.

During the incoming year, my Department is providing £4.3m to fund active travel Demonstration projects in Belfast, Londonderry, Craigavon and Strabane. I have also more recently committed £50k for my Department to undertake a Feasibility Study into a cycle / pedestrian footbridge over the River Lagan close to the gasworks site. Furthermore, my Department's Roads Service plans to implement around 4.5km of new cycle lanes.

Another very recent initiative is The Active School Travel Programme which will provide a programme of cycle and walking skills training to pupils in 60 schools across Northern Ireland over a three year period. The objective of this programme is to encourage school pupils to adopt cycling and walking as their main mode of transport to and from school. We may need to support this programme with investment in infrastructure (often safety measures at schools) to encourage participation. I aim to bid for £2m in October Monitoring to kick start this programme and I am keen to develop a long term marketing campaign to develop behavioural change.

Cycling Initiatives

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline any new departmental initiatives to encourage cycling.

(AQW 25793/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Action Plan for Active Travel which I published at the beginning of August lists many new cycling initiatives to be delivered by Government Departments including my Department, local authorities and interested stakeholders during the period 2012 -2015.

Another very recent initiative undertaken by my Department is The Active School Travel Programme. This will provide a programme of cycle and walking skills training to pupils in 180 schools across Northern Ireland over a three year period. The objective of this programme is to encourage school pupils to adopt cycling and walking as their main mode of transport to and from school.

I have established a new cycling unit within my Department, which will be tasked to identify and suggest possible new cycling infrastructure schemes along with supporting cycling events to complement the existing National Cycle Network in line with the Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy.

Cycling Initiatives

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to increase spending on cycling initiatives, shown as a proportion of total departmental spend.

(AQW 25794/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Budgets have yet to be agreed for future years and as such it is not possible to predict spend as a proportion to total departmental spend. My Department is providing £4.3m to fund active travel demonstration projects in Belfast, Londonderry, Craigavon and Strabane. I have also more recently committed £50k for my Department to undertake a Feasibility Study into a cycle / pedestrian footbridge over the River Lagan.

I have asked my officials to ensure that there is a greater focus and priority on measures to assist cyclists in the future and am establishing a cycling unit in my Department to ensure that this is achieved. I also intend to bid for additional in-year funding for cycling infrastructure, when opportunities arise.

As part of the New Approach to Regional Transportation my Department is currently developing transport spending proposals which will feed into the next Programme for Government budget. This is being undertaken through a policy fit process which will identify those transport schemes which will best achieve the strategic objectives of the Northern Ireland Executive.

Residents Parking Permits

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update in the provision of Residents Parking Permits in (i) Holywood; and (ii) Bangor town centres.

(AQW 25795/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My officials are working towards the introduction of residents' parking schemes within all areas of parking restraint identified in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015 (BMTP). They are presently concentrating their efforts on schemes in inner Belfast and it is hoped that, in due course, residents' parking schemes could also be progressed in Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn. The timing of schemes outside Belfast will be dependent upon the progress of those being developed at present and a future prioritisation of remaining areas.

Although Holywood is not specifically identified within the BMTP in this respect, a number of requests have been received for the provision of residents' parking in residential areas of the town centre, including Spencer Street. Accordingly, my officials have added these locations to its list of areas for future consideration, once all the areas identified within the BMTP have been addressed.

Silent Valley Reservoir, Kilkeel

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Regional Development why events organised by Northern Ireland Water at the Silent Valley Reservoir, Kilkeel, always take place on a Sunday.

(AQW 25797/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that events held at the Silent Valley do not always take place on a Sunday.

A wide variety of events have been held at Silent Valley on days other than a Sunday, including a highly successful concert on Friday 21 June this year and partner events such as the Great Outdoors Weekend run in conjunction with RSPB held on Saturday 21 September. In addition, a range of educational visits and community group visits take place on various days of the week.

Cycle Lane: Tillysburn Roundabout to Holywood Exchange

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any plans to complete the cycle lane between Tillysburn Roundabout and Holywood Exchange on the seaward side of the road.

(AQW 25810/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member there are cycle facilities along the A2 between Tillysburn Roundabout and the start of the slip road that leads to Holywood Exchange, although there are breaks in current provision for both pedestrians and cyclists along the full route to Holywood Exchange.

I have asked my officials to investigate the feasibility of providing a complete link for pedestrians and cyclists to Holywood Exchange.

Progress of the A2

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update in the progress of the A2.

(AQW 25812/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member work is now well underway on the A2 Shore Road scheme at Greenisland. The contract is approximately 30 weeks into a very tight 120 week programme which involves upgrading, to dual carriageway standard, some 3.5 kilometres of the A2 between Jordanstown Road and Seapark. Improvements will also include four new roundabouts at Shore Avenue; Shorelands; Station Road, Greenisland; and Seapark.

I visited the site on 29 August 2013 and I was very impressed with the progress to date. The site has been cleared, excavation of earthworks carried out and construction of accommodation works is ongoing at many adjacent properties. An extensive programme of works within the Belfast High

School grounds was completed within their summer holiday periods. Works were also carried out at the University of Ulster access during this period.

Traffic management from the outset has been extremely well planned and co-ordinated. Both the Contractor, Graham Construction, and my Department have received complimentary correspondence from both residents and road users.

The scheme is on schedule for completion in summer 2015.

Railway Network

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of upgrading the railway network, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 25927/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the cost of upgrading the railway network in each of the last three financial years.

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
£18,204,147	£36,590,478	£38,883,245

The figures include: Platform Extensions; track safety improvements; safety and compliance work; and station improvements.

Translink Bus Drivers

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many bus drivers are employed by Translink.

(AQW 25931/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The following table provides the information requested which has been provided by Translink.

Total number of full-time bus drivers (36 hours)	1,513
Total number of part-time bus drivers (less than 36 hours)	244
Grand total number of bus drivers	1,757

Road Safety for Cyclists

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps are being taken to improve road safety for cyclists.

(AQW 25942/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is committed to providing safer roads for vulnerable road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, by utilising a range of measures, such as road safety engineering, traffic calming and enhancement of the pedestrian and cycling network. Particular measures such as dedicated cycle lanes, toucan crossings and advance stop lines at traffic signal controlled junctions are widely used to help improve safety for cyclists.

My Department also works closely with the Department of the Environment and the Police Service of Northern Ireland in the promotion of Road Safety to all road users through its Travelwise initiative. This initiative aims to increase the number of commuters who choose to cycle to work, and as part of its promotion of cycling, encourages all road users to consider the needs and safety of others.

In addition, my Department has issued a leaflet entitled 'Sharing Space on the Road' to encourage safe behaviour among road users. The leaflet sets out tips for motorists and cyclists on sharing the roads with others. The leaflet was distributed to 120,000 motorists with motor tax renewal forms in March 2012 and has been made available at various government and local government locations, as

well as cycling outlets. A copy of the leaflet can be found online at http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sharing_space_on_the_road.pdf or can be obtained from Travelwise NI (telephone 0845 378 0908).

These measures demonstrate my Department's commitment to cycling through engineering, education and consultation with other external bodies.

In addition, I have recently instructed officials in my Department to give increased and focussed priority to the needs of cyclists, to encourage greater participation in this healthy and sustainable form of transport. I have also asked for a new cycling unit to be established, to ensure the effective progress of a range of cycling initiatives.

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how many meetings have been held (i) at ministerial level; and (ii) at official level with counterparts in the (a) rest of the UK; and (b) Republic of Ireland, since May 2007, including under the aegis of the north/south or east/west arrangements.

(AQW 25962/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Since 2007 there have been one hundred and forty six North South Ministerial Council meetings, including twelve in Plenary and seven in Institutional format, which have been attended by Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive.

There have been twenty eight meetings under the aegis of the British Irish Council attended by Ministers, including twelve at Summit level.

We do not collate information on other bi-lateral meetings which have taken place outside the remit of the NSMC or BIC involving individual Ministers or officials.

Cycle/Pedestrian Footbridge

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development when the feasibility study for a cycle/pedestrian footbridge over the River Lagan, close to the Gasworks site, will be completed.

(AQW 25970/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The feasibility study for a cycle/pedestrian footbridge over the River Lagan will be completed in mid-February 2014.

Road Surety Bond

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development to list the residential developments in East Antrim that have a road surety bond; and how long each bond has been outstanding.

(AQW 25973/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of bonds held for residential developments in East Antrim and the length of time the agreement has been in place are set out in the following table:

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)
Beechwood Avenue, Newtownabbey	01/Nov/2012	1
Beechwood Avenue, Newtownabbey	07/Nov/2012	1
Brackenridge, Sloefield Road, Carrickfergus	21/Sep/2001	12
Bridewell Drive, Carrickfergus	29/Oct/2004	9
Brooklands Gardens, Carrickfergus	22/Mar/2005	8
Cambridge Close, Carrickfergus	27/Aug/1996	17

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)
Circular Road, Jordanstown	10/Aug/2006	7
Craiglands, Carrickfergus	12/Mar/1997	16
Edenvale Avenue, Carrickfergus	04/Apr/2012	1
Farm Lodge Park, Greenisland	02/Apr/2012	1
Farm Lodge, Greenisland	04/Jul/2000	13
Farm Lodge, Greenisland	06/Feb/2006	7
Glenavna, Shore Road, Newtownabbey	10/Sep/2009	4
Glenavna, Shore Road, Newtownabbey	06/Sep/2013	0
Glenisland Terrace, Greenisland	31/Oct/2011	2
Glenview Park, Newtownabbey	09/Oct/2002	11
Glenview Park, Newtownabbey	19/Jan/2009	4
Glenville Road, Newtownabbey	14/May/2008	5
Jordanstown Road, Newtownabbey	14/Jun/2010	3
Larne Road, Carrickfergus	07/Sep/2009	4
Larne Road, Carrickfergus	17/Dec/2009	4
Longpark, Farm Lodge, Greenisland	06/Feb/2006	7
Loughshore Courtyard, Shore Road, Jordanstown	04/Jan/2011	2
Meadowbank Farm, Jordanstown	09/Mar/2007	6
Mountpleasant View Mountpleasant Road, Jordanstown	14/Jun/2010	3
North Lodge Court, Carrickfergus	11/Mar/2002	11
Old Shore Court, Carrickfergus	22/Aug/2005	8
Rhanbuoy Close, Carrickfergus	21/Feb/2013	0
Riverbrook, Brooklands Drive, Carrickfergus	10/Jun/1998	5
Riverforde, Slaughterford Road, Whitehead	02/Mar/2005	8
Riverforde, Slaughterford Road, Whitehead	02/Aug/2006	7
Shorelands, Shore Road, Greenisland	20/Jan/2011	2
Shorelands, Shore Road, Greenisland	25/Jan/2013	0
The Cairns, Upper Station Road, Greenisland	13/Jan/2012	1
Thralcot Link, Carrickfergus	22/Feb/2013	0
Trailcock Road, Carrickfergus	02/Apr/2012	1
Trailcock Road, Carrickfergus	15/May/2013	0
Tudor Road, Carrickfergus	22/Jan/2013	0
Upper Road, Greenisland	13/Nov/2007	6

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)
Windmill Park, Carrickfergus	23/Nov/2011	2
Whinfield, Larne	27/Apr/1990	23
Whinfield, Larne	04/Feb/1997	16
Inver Heights, Larne	29/Oct/1991	22
Inver Heights, Larne	18/Sep/1992	21
Oakdene, Larne	03/Sep/2007	6
Ballyloran Manor, Larne	11/Sep/2000	13
Hampton Manor, Larne	04/Oct/2002	11
Lindara, Larne	14/Dec/2001	12
Lindara, Larne	14/Aug/2003	10
Lindara, Larne	17/Nov/2004	9
Lindara, Larne	27/Apr/2006	7
Lindara, Larne	27/Apr/2006	7
Lindara, Larne	27/Apr/2006	7
Lindara, Larne	24/Jan/2007	6
Lindara, Larne	28/Nov/2007	6
Lindara, Larne	28/Nov/2007	6
Lindara, Larne	28/Nov/2007	6
Lindara, Larne	12/Apr/2002	11
Mullaghboy Heights, Islandmagee	03/Oct/2007	6
Mullaghboy Heights, Islandmagee	27/Jan/2010	3
Drumahoe Manor, Larne	29/Apr/2004	9
Drumahoe Manor, Larne	10/Aug/2006	7
Leafield, Ballycarry	14/Aug/2006	7
Leafield, Ballycarry	12/Aug/2010	3
Bayfields, Carnlough	02/Nov/2006	7
Bayfields, Carnlough	10/May/2007	6
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	08/Sep/2005	8
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	27/Sep/2005	8
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	08/Sep/2005	8
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	08/Sep/2005	8
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	22/Sep/2005	8
Blackthorn Hollow, Larne	22/Sep/2005	8

Site	Date Bonded	Time outstanding (Years)
The Hamptons, Larne	22/Sep/2005	8
Lislaynan, Ballycarry	10/Jan/2006	7
Lislaynan, Ballycarry	10/Jan/2006	7
Seven Springs, Larne	10/Jan/2006	7
Porter Green, Larne	10/Jan/2006	7
Logans Loanen, Larne	17/Oct/2006	7
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	16/Jan/2007	6
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	17/Oct/2011	2
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	02/Nov/2006	7
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	02/Nov/2006	7
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	02/Nov/2006	7
Larne West Distributor Road, Larne	23/Jan/2007	6
Ballyhampton Road, Larne	12/Aug/2013	0
Rose Place, Islandmagee	12/Aug/2013	0
Rose Place, Islandmagee	10/Sep/2009	4
Redlands Road, Larne	02/Aug/2011	2
Curran Road, Larne	26/Oct/2012	1
Curran Road, Larne	03/Mar/2010	3
Gorse Meadow, Larne	03/Mar/2010	3

Local Authorities Closing Roads

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed legislation that will allow local authorities to close roads for local events.

(AQW 25990/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Roads (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 was enacted, under the previous administration, on 13 August 2010.

However, the provisions of the Act aimed specifically at restricting or prohibiting traffic from using a road for special events have yet to be commenced, and I am not minded to commence these provisions at this time. I may review the position next year.

Train Delays: Belfast to Londonderry and Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development how many times have trains, which departed from Belfast, been delayed by more than ten minutes upon arrival at (i) Coleraine; and (ii) Londonderry, since the recommencement of the service in 2013.

(AQW 25998/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise you that Translink have confirmed since recommencement of services between Coleraine and Londonderry on 24 March 2013, the majority of services from Belfast operated via Coleraine to either Portrush or Londonderry. NI Railways only record punctuality of arrival at

destination stations and therefore cannot advise punctuality of all arrivals at Coleraine, where Coleraine is en-route, i.e. not a destination station.

The table below provides detail on the number of services operated by NI Railways in the period from 24 March 2013 to 14 September 2013, along with the percentage of punctuality achieved. As shown the level punctuality achieved is well in excess of the 90% target set out in the Passenger's Charter for the Londonderry and Portrush line.

	Services	Services delayed (10 minutes) (% of all Services)	% Punctuality Achieved on all Services
Belfast-Londonderry (via Coleraine)	1,475	20 (1.36%)	98.64%
Belfast-Portrush (via Coleraine)	1,050	17 (1.62%)	98.38%
Belfast-Coleraine (terminated in Coleraine)	425	6 (1.41%)	98.59%
Total	2,950	43 (1.46%)	98.54%

Note: Trains arriving at Portrush or Londonderry 10 minutes or more late could reasonably be assumed to be 10 minutes late through Coleraine on that journey.

Contingency Plans

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the contingency plans in place for severe winter weather in relation to roads and railway links.

(AQW 26010/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is well prepared for the incoming winter season and will be able to provide a high standard of service delivery for the gritting of roads.

Prior to the start of each winter service period, Roads Service carries out a significant amount of planning to ensure a state of readiness for the coming season. In addition to a number of routine pre-season checks, planning includes ensuring that adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, and ensuring all winter service equipment is in working order. Every night, from the end of October 2013 until the middle of April 2014, Roads Service will have almost 300 people on standby ready to salt main roads, helping drivers across Northern Ireland cope with the wintry conditions. Contracts are also in place to enable contractors and farmers to help clear roads during periods of prolonged snow.

All Roads Service salt barns are at full capacity with stocks in excess of 70,000 tonnes with additional salt stock resilience held at six strategic locations totalling 38,100 tonnes. The current Winter Service salt contract also provides for the supply of a further 15,000 tonnes per month from October 2013 to April 2014, if required.

In addition, My Department has agreements in place with 24 of the 26 District Councils, to salt city and town centre footways during times of prolonged ice and snow. I will be writing to the Chief Executives of the remaining two councils to encourage them to come on board.

Translink has provided me with the following update:

Bus Operations

- The winter preparedness action plan was re-issued on 1 October 2013 following updates in relation to winter materials stocks;
- The bus fleet winterisation programme commenced on 1 October 2013 and is planned to be completed by the end of November 2013; and

- Individual information relating to winter driving techniques for bus drivers will be issued at the same time as the winter preparedness action plan.

Rail Operations

- Additional rail staff will receive training on auxiliary competencies to deal with equipment failures during extreme weather, e.g. points and level crossings;
- Further review of previous action plan arising from previous winter preparedness report; and
- Review of cross-company weather preparedness arrangements.

Infrastructure

- Sandite teams have been mobilised to deal with difficulties associated with low rail adhesion;
- A reserve stock of salt is in place;
- Additional points heaters have been commissioned and are being rolled out across the rail network;
- Heating elements have been installed in high risk railway crossing barriers;
- All Infrastructure vans are supplied with Snow Socks to enable staff to access the network, as far as is reasonably safe/practical, in poor road conditions;
- Rail engineers and supervisors are chainsaw trained and possess the required equipment to tackle fallen trees/branches, within reason. A call-out contract for tackling larger fallen trees has been awarded; and
- Our structures maintenance contract has emergency call-out arrangements for any form of civil engineering support that may be required.

Communications

- The 'cloud-based' telephone system is in place in the Contact Centre, providing greater resilience and business continuity/disaster recovery. This also provides for access to the phone system in the event of a Contact Centre communications failure;
- A new server has been installed in the Contact Centre;
- Technical disaster recovery arrangements (with off-site back up) have been implemented for Contact Centre business applications;
- The Internet bandwidth on the main Translink website has been increased by 300%, with scope to increase further at very short notice if necessary;
- It is planned that a Contact Centre Supervisor will be on duty from 06:00 over the days when snow is forecast to 'tweet' the latest travel news;
- Passengers will be kept apprised of the latest travel news in the Europa bus centre by means of LED screens. These can be updated by Inspectors to provide real time information and white boards also available; and
- A mobile phone specific version of the website has been introduced to drive reduction in the number of 'regular' calls to Contact Centre, therefore, freeing up resources.

Stocks of Sandbags

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has a suitable stock of sandbags available in local depots; and to detail the contact details to be used by householders, including 24 hour helplines, to access sandbags in the event of flooding or flood risk warnings.

(AQW 26011/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has suitable stocks of sandbags available in local depots to deal with inclement weather.

Northern Ireland Water (NIW) also holds sufficient stocks of sandbags, which it deems necessary for the protection of locations/infrastructure falling under its statutory responsibility. These can be made available for distribution to the public, where property is in imminent danger. In addition, NIW and DARD Rivers Agency have entered into a temporary Sand Bag Protocol agreement with Belfast City Council where they will, on request, supply sandbags to the Council, who will store and distribute them when required.

During periods of inclement weather, the primary objective of Roads Service is to deal with the impact of roads related flooding that is caused by blocked or overwhelmed infrastructure, such as gullies or other road drainage systems, for which it has responsibility. Roads Service does have a sufficient supply of sandbags in store for emergency purposes and, in line with current policy, will continue to assist other agencies/bodies deal with flooding incidents. This includes the prompt deployment of sandbags, particularly in cases where properties are at risk of flooding, if requested and as resources permit.

Members of the public who have concerns about flooding should contact the Flooding Incident Line on 0300 2000 100. This service provides a single number to report serious flooding, available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Roads Service: Sandbags

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development whether Roads Service will issue sandbags to residents who have previously experienced flooding in the event of a weather warning from the Met Office.

(AQW 26012/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: With regard to the issue of sandbags to residents who have previously experienced flooding, in the event of a weather warning, I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question, AQW 26011/11-15.

Morston Avenue Area of Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are plans to resurface the roads and footpaths in the Morston Avenue area of Bangor.

(AQW 26015/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and so it is not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Giro Italia 2014

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what improvements to cycling provision he aims to have in place before the start of the Giro Italia 2014.

(AQW 26026/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Whilst there are no specific improvements planned for cycle provision in relation to the Giro Italia 2014 other than minor maintenance issues associated with the route, officials from my Department are fully engaged with officials in DETI to ensure the event is a success and its legacy will help to further promote cycling in Northern Ireland.

During 2013/14, my Department plans to provide around 4.5km of new cycle lanes.

Bicycles on Trains

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development how many bicycles were carried on trains, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26027/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There is no ticket issued separately for bicycles carried, therefore Translink has no data on the number of bicycles carried on trains in each of the last five years.

Translink do, however, monitor utilization of cycle parking spaces at rail stations. Translink's intention is to expand cycle storage capacity where utilization rates justify this.

Bicycles on Buses

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development how many bicycles were carried on buses, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26028/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that as no ticket issued for bicycles it therefore has no data on the number of bicycles carried.

Free Parking Provision

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to introduce additional free parking provision in Ballymoney, Ballymena and Moyle council areas.

(AQW 26031/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I announced a freeze on any further increase to car parking charges in early November 2012, for the remainder of the current budget period, that is, up until 2015. This announcement also provided for a freeze on the introduction of charges in existing Roads Service operated car parks during this period.

In each of the council areas you refer to, provision has been made for free parking. This is specifically within the main towns and larger villages and is in addition to the availability of many opportunities to park on-street, where charges do not apply. In overall terms, it is considered the present mix of off-street and on-street free space availability supports commercial activity and contributes to the vitality of towns and villages.

As you are aware, a Park and Ride facility is to be provided as part of the proposed dualling of the A26, between the A44 Drone's Road and Glarryford. When provided, this car park will be free.

Reservoirs at Conlig

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what the timescale is for the sale of the reservoirs at Conlig.

(AQW 26057/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my recent answer to AQW 25712/11-15.

Reservoir at Portavoe

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what the timescale is for the sale of the reservoir at Portavoe.

(AQW 26058/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that Portavoe Reservoir is surplus to its requirements and will be disposed of at some time in the future. Under NIW's licence to operate, it has a legal obligation to dispose of property no longer of use. However, there are many issues which need to be resolved before the Reservoir can be offered for sale, including ownership, council interest,

private interests and the other legalities. NIW is continuing to address these issues and has assured me that all interested parties will be informed when they are resolved and before the property is offered for sale or transfer.

Speed Humps

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many claims have been made against his Department for damage to cars caused by speed humps.

(AQW 26061/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of such claims, in each of the past 3 years, are set out in the table below:

Year	Claims for damage caused by speed humps on the carriageway
2010/11	4
2011/12	8
2012/13	6

Monument Location

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 24127/11-15, to detail the location of the monument that is listed as blank; and whether any writing has been added to this monument.

(AQW 26064/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The monument listed as blank was at the junction of B73 Battery Road and B161 Drumenny Road, Ardboe near Cookstown, however, I understand it has recently been removed.

Disposal of Reservoirs

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the policy on the disposal of reservoirs.

(AQW 26065/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The disposal of assets, including reservoirs, is a matter for Northern Ireland Water, subject to the legislative and governance framework. The Company is authorised to dispose of land in accordance with the General Authorisation in respect of the Disposal of Protected Land issued by DRD in 2007 under Article 217 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006 (the 2006 Order). It must adhere to the requirements of that authorisation.

Northern Ireland Water is required to dispose of any assets which are no longer required by the company for the purposes of providing water and sewerage services. It must achieve best value, as set out in the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum between DRD and the Company. This reflects central, public sector guidance contained within the Disposal of Surplus Public Sector Property in Northern Ireland and Managing Public Money Northern Ireland. The company must also meet the requirements of Condition K of its Instrument of Appointment (Licence) issued under the 2006 Order which sets out its obligations to report to and seek approval from the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation on matters concerning the disposal of land.

Larne Railway Line

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of passengers using the Larne Railway Line since the introduction of the 2013 timetable compared to the comparable period under the previous timetable.

(AQW 26072/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The current railway timetable on the Larne line commenced on 24 March 2013. Translink advise 1,008,075 passenger journeys have been recorded on the Larne line from April to September 2013 compared to 849,243 in the corresponding period in 2012.

Larne Railway Line

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development when six-carriage trains will be fully deployed on the Larne Railway Line.

(AQW 26073/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: At present NI Railways regularly operate one 6-carriage train during both the morning and evening peaks on the Larne Line.

Deployment of 6-carriage trains is based on need across the network and NI Railways continue to monitor passenger loadings on all peak services.

Larne Railway Line

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of recorded breakdowns and delays on the Larne Railway Line since the introduction of the 2013 timetable.

(AQW 26074/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has confirmed that for the Larne line over 9,600 services there were 6 breakdowns resulting in the cancellation of services and 157 delays since the introduction of the 2013 timetable.

Punctuality on the Larne Line since the introduction of the new timetable has been excellent, with 98.3% of all trains arriving at their destination within 5 minutes of their scheduled arrival time. This is above the Passenger Charter standards agreed with the Department and Consumer Council.

Ballycarry Railway Station

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans Translink have to provide a park and ride facility, including safe pick-up and drop-off facilities, at Ballycarry Railway Station,

(AQW 26076/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: NI Railways have no current plans to develop a Park and Ride facility at Ballycarry. Translink have been liaising with Road Services in respect of traffic management and pedestrian access issues at Ballycarry.

Passenger Complaints

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department addresses complaints concerning delays caused by train or railway line defects.

(AQW 26150/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink is responsible for operational matters such as delays caused by train or railway line defects. In the event of a complaint being received by the Department on such a matter it is immediately passed on to senior Translink officials asking them to respond directly to the complainant while copying me into their reply. Clearly my Department monitors relevant performance measures. The Translink Passenger Charter, drawn up in consultation with the Consumer Council and my Department, sets reliability and punctuality targets which are independently monitored and the results published twice a year.

Translink has in place a Complaint Handling Policy whereby complaints are consistently handled as detailed in the Passenger's Charter.

If a rail service is delayed or cancelled for any reason within NI Railways control, a passenger may be entitled to compensation vouchers, or a refund based on the fare paid. Detailed information pertaining to Translink's Delay-Repay Compensation Scheme can be accessed on the Translink website at:

<http://www.translink.co.uk/Corporate/About-Us/Publications/Delay-Repay-Compensation-Scheme/>

Disability Action Transport Scheme

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the interim Disability Action Transport Scheme; and to outline the plans for this scheme.

(AQW 26151/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Disability Action continues to provide Disability Action Transport Services, on an interim basis, in partnership with a number of other voluntary and community organisations in 29 urban areas across Northern Ireland. For the period 01 April 2013 to 31 August 2013, there have been in excess of 54,000 passenger trips delivered. Disability Action has also recently procured a number of new modern vehicles and will soon establish a user forum where users will have an active role to ensure their views about the service are taken on board.

Going forward the Department has established a project to identify and deliver a long term replacement for the Door-2-Door scheme which ended on 31 March 2013. The first part of this project is to undertake an evaluation of the policy and associated schemes initiated by the Department to promote social inclusion.

The outcome of the evaluation will assist the Department to better understand the barriers to the use of public transport and to identify what measures can be taken to overcome these barriers. This will also enable the Department to develop a detailed programme for the delivery of a transport scheme to replace Door-2-Door.

Rathlin Ferry Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the Rathlin Ferry contract.

(AQW 26258/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Rathlin Ferry contract continues to operate. The current contract ends on 30 June 2014 and the Department are currently considering the options to ensure a continued service from 1 July 2014.

Rathlin Ferry Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the passenger numbers for the Rathlin Ferry service in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26259/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The service provider records the number of passenger journeys and not the actual number of passengers. The table below details the passenger journeys for the Rathlin Ferry service in each of the last three calendar years from 2010. Passenger journeys to the end of September 2013 are 74,003. This is a 10% increase on the equivalent figure at the end of September 2012.

Year	Passenger journeys
2010	85,889
2011	79,623
2012	74,225

Train Halts and Stations

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has considered displaying up to date ticket fares at train halts and stations.

(AQW 26311/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have advised me rail fares are available on their website, www.translink.co.uk, and its Contact Centre staff can also provide information on all fares.

With the increasing use of smart devices by passengers focus has been geared to providing fare information by these means.

To publish all possible fares at stations and halts would not be practical, however, Translink do from time to time advertise promotional fares at stations and elsewhere around the network.

Bicycle Racks on Buses

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 26029/11-15, when Translink will be able to provide bicycle racks on either the inside or the exterior of a bus.

(AQW 26367/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised my officials that it has investigated the suitability of exterior mounted cycle racks as used by bus operators in North America and Canada. However most buses in Translink have larger windscreens and tests showed that the cycle racks obscured vision for the driver. Translink deemed this to be an unacceptable safety risk. Rear-mounted cycle rack appliances would also present a safety risk, due to their restricting access to the engine compartment.

In relation to the interior of the buses, Translink endeavour to keep as much of the unseated area of the bus as possible free for wheelchairs and mobility equipment and for families travelling with young children. Relinquishing this space to the disadvantage of these passenger groups is not, in Translink's opinion, the best use of the space.

Translink is aware of the need to provide space for bicycles on its vehicles. I have asked it to explore options going forward taking account of value for money, safety and impact on its overall passenger base.

Rail Passengers: Antrim

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the number of rail passengers using Antrim station.

(AQO 4665/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: When I came to office passenger flows at Antrim Railway station were almost 279,000 per annum. This had increased by 24,000 by the end of March 2013. So far this year passenger flow is up a further 36% on the same period last year.

Park and Ride: Ballymoney

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the extension of the park and ride facility at Ballymoney Railway Station.

(AQO 4662/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In November 2012, I officially opened the extended Park and Ride facilities at Ballymoney Railway station. Translink had enhanced the car parking provision at the station from 27 spaces to 59 spaces at that time.

Translink's current project to extend Park & Ride facilities at this station aims to provide up to 46 additional spaces. This will increase it to 105 spaces. It is subject to the completion of an Economic Appraisal and the necessary Departmental approval. The estimated completion date for the project is the end of 2014/15.

Winter Weather

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department plans to deal with any adverse weather conditions this winter.

(AQO 4669/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is well prepared for the coming winter. Staffing arrangements are being finalised, pre-season checks on winter service equipment are complete and salt stocks have been replenished. From the end of October, Roads Service will have over 300 people on standby ready to salt main roads. Contracts are also in place to enable contractors and farmers to help to clear roads during periods of prolonged snow.

Following the two snow events last winter, I commissioned an independent review of the performance of Roads Service over the period. The National Winter Service Research Group carried out a comprehensive review, examining every aspect of the winter service programme. The outcome of the review was positive and concluded that our winter service policies were well-considered and consistent. I am still considering the report and will place a copy in the Assembly Library.

One of the key recommendations from the review was that the winter service fleet replacement programme continues to be prioritised in order to reduce the unreliability of gritters and other equipment. I am committed to investing in the winter service fleet and to that end, will continue to seek funding to ensure the fleet we have is fit for purpose and capable of dealing with the long winter period. I hope Members will support bids for this additional funding.

A further recommendation highlighted the need for consistency of service in relation to the salting of footways. My Department has agreements with 24 of the 26 District Councils to salt city and town centre footways during times of prolonged ice and snow. I propose to write to the Chief Executives of the remaining two councils to encourage them to come on board.

Northern Ireland Water will continue with the range of measures within the Winter Contingency Plan, in order that it can be well placed to respond to anticipated increases in burst mains, corresponding loss of supply and increased demand in the weeks ahead and the remainder of the winter.

Roads: Armagh

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress of the Armagh West and East Link Roads, including when he intends to announce a preferred route for the two projects.
(AQO 4670/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Selection of the preferred alignment and junction options for the Armagh East Link proposal was completed after an assessment of several corridor options. This "Preferred Line", which reflects the corridor indicated in the Armagh Area Plan 2004, was announced at a public exhibition in Armagh in March 2007. An information event to bring the public up to date with the proposals will take place next year.

The projected length of the proposed new road is approximately 2.5 kilometres, between the A28 Markethill Road and the A3 Portadown Road, around the eastern outskirts of the City of Armagh. The cost of the A28 East Link is estimated to be in the range £12 to £20 million.

With regard to the Armagh North and West Link, consideration of options for a preferred line and junction strategy based on the 'out of town' corridor, published in July 2008, is continuing. There have been ongoing discussions with elected representatives and Armagh City and District Council. This consultation has included an initial meeting with Deloitte, who have been appointed by Armagh City and District Council to develop a Masterplan for the Mullinure Area. It would not be appropriate to make a decision on the preferred route, pending development of the Masterplan. This corridor extends approximately 6.9 kilometres around the Western and Northern outskirts of Armagh City, from the A3 Monaghan Road on the south western outskirts of the city to the A3 Portadown Road, north east of the city. The current estimate for the cost of this scheme is in the range £55 to £75 million.

In common with other Strategic Road Improvement schemes, progress of the design and development of these schemes will be dependent upon the completion of the statutory procedures, the scheme having a satisfactory economic appraisal and the availability of funding in future budget settlements.

A1: Proposed Closure

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed closure of all right turns on the A1 from Hillsborough to Newry, including the construction of four new grade separated junctions as replacements.

(AQO 4671/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Work on the closure of right turns on the A1 between Hillsborough and Loughbrickland is currently being progressed and it is anticipated a preferred option will be identified by Spring 2014.

This scheme involves the construction of four new grade separated junctions and a new northbound on-slip at Castlewellan Road, Banbridge. It also includes the installation of a continuous central safety barrier between Hillsborough Roundabout and Loughbrickland.

Following completion of this scheme, the only stretch on the A1 where right turning manoeuvres will still be permitted (side roads only) will be between Loughbrickland and Beech Hill.

As funding becomes available, consideration will be given to further junction upgrades and the provision of associated continuous safety barrier along this stretch of the A1.

Blue Badge Scheme

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he is taking to address the delay in the renewals process for the Blue Badge Scheme.

(AQO 4672/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has a target to inform 95% of applicants for Blue Badges of our decision within 15 working days of receipt of their valid applications. Given that in excess of 35,000 applications are received each year, this is a challenging target.

As of 29 August 2013, there were approximately 3500 Blue Badge applications waiting to be processed. The Blue Badge Unit is currently working approximately six to seven days behind the 15-day target due to a number of short-term resourcing issues that are being addressed. Two additional posts in the unit were created earlier in the year following a review of workloads. Pending recruitment of permanent staff, casual staff have been employed and weekend overtime arranged to address the backlog. Until the unit is up to full complement, it is expected that delays may persist during September. Departmental staff are working to fill all vacancies as soon as possible.

I have instructed officials to extend the grace period for expired Blue Badges to one calendar month. This is in line with car tax expiry dates.

Drumclay Crannog

Mr Attwood asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department will contribute funding to take forward the post excavation work in relation to the Drumclay crannog in County Fermanagh.

(AQO 4673/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will recall that prior to his standing down as Minister for the Environment in July 2013, he wrote to me seeking confirmation regarding the funding my Department will be contributing to the post-excavation work associated with Drumclay crannog. I responded to your successor, Minister Durkan, and can confirm, in line with the levels of costs as indicated by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) officials during the excavation period, that my Department has committed to contributing a total of £500,000 towards the post-excavation process across three years, including this current financial year.

I am aware the NIEA is considering expanding the post-excavation process to a project, which could include several post graduate studies, public exhibitions etc. Such additional activities within an extended project would exceed that which my Department would, under normal circumstances, be liable towards. These additional activities would be for NIEA to justify and fund. A detailed programme and breakdown of anticipated costs associated with the proposed overall project has yet to be set before my officials for their consideration, however, I am pleased to confirm my Department's commitment to making £500,000 available to the post excavation project.

Given the potential for this project to generate considerable tourism in Northern Ireland in the future, you may wish to consider an approach to the Tourism Minister for a contribution towards the additional funding requirement.

Water and Sewerage Charges

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of NI Water's average water and sewerage charges to businesses for 2013/14.

(AQO 4674/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that from 1 April this year it has reduced all water and sewerage charges by an average of 2.7%. Given the difficult economic climate this decrease in the amount that all non-domestic customers pay for water and sewerage services is particularly welcome news and it will benefit all sectors of our economy.

The reductions have been made possible by, amongst other things, the significant sustainable cost efficiencies which have been delivered by NIW over the Price Control 10 period spanning 2010/2013 and its commitment to endeavour to deliver further savings in 2013/14.

Department for Social Development

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Mrs Dobson asked Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive points system, to detail the links which exist between the Housing Executive and the PSNI.

(AQW 25744/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive has advised that when an applicant applies for housing they are assessed and awarded points according to their housing need. Points are awarded in accordance with the Rules of the Housing Selection Scheme (HSS) and the level of points awarded will determine their position on the Waiting List.

An applicant may qualify for the award of points under four categories, namely;

- 1 Intimidation (200 points)
- 2 Insecurity of Tenure (50 or 70 points) – (Homeless / Threatened with Homelessness – Full Duty Applicant (F.D.A.))
- 3 Housing Conditions (a cumulative range of points (from 2 – 10) for Sharing/Overcrowding/Disrepair and Time in Housing Need.
- 4 Health and Social Well-Being Assessment (a cumulative range of points (from 2 – 20) for Functionality/Primary and Social Needs/Complex Needs

If there is a security issue (risk/threats) being investigated as part of the housing need assessment, staff in the Housing Executive's local offices may contact the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI). The Housing Executive has an Information Sharing Protocol in place with the PSNI and information may be requested through an agreed pro-forma to establish if any risks/ threats exist.

Information received from the PSNI assists the Housing Executive to determine if there is a risk and the level of the risk and to decide whether an applicant should be awarded intimidation points, subject to the criteria detailed in Rule 23 of the HSS. A police report may also assist the Housing Executive in determining if an applicant has a priority need in relation to an applicant's homelessness assessment.

Consultant Contracts

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQO 4498/11-15, to whom were the consultancy contracts awarded; and how they were selected for the new multi-discipline consultant contracts for maintenance.

(AQW 25788/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the consultancy contracts were awarded off the framework to the following:

- JCP Consulting Ltd;
- Patrick F Corr (Consortium);
- Moore MacDonald & Partners Ltd;
- URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd (Consortium);
- V B Evans & Company.

These contracts were awarded in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended). The awarding procedure was that of Most Economically Advantageous Tender.

Appeals Service

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to Statements of Reason from the Appeals Service, to detail (i) how many requests are outstanding; and (ii) from what date.

(AQW 25985/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At 25 September 2013 there were 484 requests for Statement of Reasons outstanding within the The Appeal Service. The numbers of requests for Statement of Reasons include where a request for a Record of Proceedings is also made. The oldest outstanding request was received on 27 February 2012.

Appeals Service

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development why there is a delay in supplying Statements of Reason from the Appeals Service.

(AQW 25986/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The writing of a Statement of Reason is a judicial matter and not something on which I can comment. However the Department has recently introduced new arrangements to support the judicial members and help reduce delays in providing Statements of Reasons.

Cost of Legal Cases

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 24827/11-15, to detail (i) why his Department is unable to provide the information for sections (i) and (ii); (ii) the cost of all legal cases for each year since 2007; (iii) the cost of the most expensive legal case his Department lost during this time; and (iv) why his Department does not disaggregate the costs of judicial cases.

(AQW 26002/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I would refer the Member to my response to AQW 24827/11-15. As the Department does not hold the information in the format requested, it is therefore not possible to provide the Member with an answer to the questions.

Work Capability Assessment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the proportion of applications for (a) employment and support allowance; and (b) incapacity benefit reassessment that were rejected on the basis of the findings of a work capability assessment in both the latest period for which figures are available and the preceding period; and (ii) the proportion of such decisions that were (a) reversed; and (b) upheld on appeal.

(AQW 26009/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Employment and Support Allowance was introduced in October 2008 to replace Incapacity Benefit.

In February 2011 work commenced 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. The final cases will commence reassessment in early March 2014.

The information requested is detailed in this table

Year	Employment and Support Allowance disallowance rate	Incapacity Benefit reassessment disallowance rate *	Appeals upheld in claimant favour**	Appeals upheld in Department's favour**
2012-13	34%	17% (February 2012)	35%	65%
2013-Aug 2013	15%	30% (February 2013)	35%	65%

* The figures reported reflect the cumulative disallowance rate from the start of reassessment in February 2011.

** Figures include the outcomes of appeals against Incapacity Benefit Reassessment decisions, which, as the appeal is against the Work Capability Assessment outcome, are treated as an Employment and Support Allowance appeals.

Public Realms Works in Holywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the timetable for the start of the public realms works in Holywood.

(AQW 26018/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Over the past 18 months my Department has been working with representatives from North Down Borough Council, town centre management and the local community to develop a major public realm scheme for Holywood. The works will address all aspects of street design including paving, kerbstones, street furniture, lighting and planting. The total value of the works is estimated to be £2.4 million, with my Department investing £1.4 million and Council investing £1 million. A contractor is due to be appointed in December 2013, onsite construction work will start in late March early April 2014 and the scheme will take one year to complete.

Homes in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what is the timetable for the completion of the installation of double glazing in homes across North Down.

(AQW 26060/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they have two phases of double glazing still to go on site in the North Down area. In the current financial year a scheme for 244 dwellings in Bloomfield/Rathgill, Groomsport and Kilcooley is programmed to start in March 2014. However, the start date is subject to resolving the current delays with the tendering process.

In 2014/15 a scheme for 196 dwellings in Holywood and Conlig is currently programmed to start in April 2014 but it is likely to slip to later in 2014. These schemes should address any remaining double glazing for Housing Executive homes in the North Down area.

Vacant Domestic Dwellings

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of vacant domestic dwellings in the social housing sector in each of Dungannon and South Tyrone Council's district electoral areas; and what plans he has to replace or to bring these dwellings up to a level fit for human habitation. **(AQW 26067/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: In relation to Housing Executive dwellings, the information is not available in the format requested as they do not collate information by Council's electoral ward. However, they have advised that they currently have 37 void properties throughout the Dungannon and South Tyrone area. Two of these properties are Orlits situated in areas where demand has been met and therefore they may be sold on the open market, subject to an economic appraisal.

Another Housing Executive void is a Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwelling in the Ballygawley Estate, an area of low demand, and this may be taken back into Housing Executive stock. The remaining 34 are made up of void properties awaiting change of tenancy repairs under the Housing Executive's response maintenance contract or are difficult to let properties located in areas such as Fivemiletown and Caledon where demand has been met.

There are also two vacant Housing Association dwellings, both of which are in the Dungannon electoral ward.

Tackling the issue of empty homes is one of my major priorities. I recently launched my Department's Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan, which will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders, including the Housing Executive, Housing Associations and local Councils. The Strategy will bring empty homes in every tenure back into use.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development when he was first supplied with a draft answer to AQW 1004/11-15. **(AQW 26088/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The answer to AQW 1004/11-15 was provided to the Member on 17th June 2013.

Keeping our Housing Public Report

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the Northern Ireland Public Services Association commissioned Keeping our Housing Public report; and what consideration has been given to its three alternative proposals for the future of social housing provision. **(AQW 26129/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: I have said that I want to engage widely with all stakeholders in exploring and developing proposals for housing reform, and therefore welcome the report commissioned by NIPSA and will consider what new learning and insights it can bring.

However, it is important to highlight the facts on some of the issues raised.

Across the studies looking at housing structures in Northern Ireland including the most recent 2011 PwC report, there was a consensus that the current structures no longer support optimal delivery and it was a time for change.

In relation to local councils and borrowing powers, the Treasury rules for non departmental public bodies like the NIHE, are different. Over £5 billion investment will be required over the next 30 years to maintain and improve the current Housing Executive stock. Northern Ireland simply cannot meet this

bill from public funds alone. I share the report's focus on investing in the future; this is exactly what my proposals aim to achieve.

In relation to rent levels, annual rent increases have been a feature of social housing over many years and are necessary to maintain standards. However, I am clear that tenants should be protected from any excessive or unaffordable rent increases. With this in mind I have proposed that an independent rent advisory panel will be established to agree annual rent levels. The policy on rent will be established by my Department and subject to Assembly scrutiny.

Delivering Social Change

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his commitment to the principle of tackling dereliction and community eyesores as part of the rollout of social enterprise incubation hubs via the Delivering Social Change signature programmes.

(AQW 26143/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A key aim of the Delivering Social Change Pilot Programme – Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs is to address street-level vacancy in town centres and the more deprived areas, by bringing back into use vacant commercial units within those areas. I remain committed to the principles of this signature project to address dereliction and reduce street level vacancy and can advise that every hub location currently under consideration includes a number of vacant commercial premises. This two year pilot programme will help to address community eyesores by bringing buildings back into everyday use.

Job Seekers Allowance

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the current penalties for individuals who receive Job Seekers Allowance when in full time employment.

(AQW 26152/11-15)

Mr McCausland: An individual is not entitled to receive Jobseekers Allowance whilst in remunerative employment which involves work for, on average, 16 hours or more (24 hours for partners of people receiving income based Jobseekers Allowance).

Where a claimant engages in remunerative work while receiving Jobseekers Allowance and does not report it, it constitutes benefit fraud and they will lose their entitlement to benefit and will be expected to refund any money overpaid to them. The Social Security Agency also applies a range of penalties to those who commit such offences. At the lower end of the scale a caution or an administrative penalty (30% of the overpayment) may be offered and in more serious cases a recommendation is made to the Public Prosecution Service to prosecute the case through the Courts. In addition, where benefit entitlement continues, payment may be reduced or cease altogether. In every case the Social Security Agency will seek to recover any losses to the Agency as a result of the overpayment of benefit.

Greenisland House

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development what progress has been made to secure funding commitments and obtain planning permission for new accommodation and services on the site of Greenisland House.

(AQW 26200/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A scheme at this location to provide accommodation for 32 frail elderly people is included in my Department's Social Housing Development Programme for 2013/14. The scheme is being taken forward by Trinity Housing Association.

Provisional funding has been set aside for 2013/14 and will be confirmed on receipt of an approvable application from Trinity. Trinity expects to make that application in November. At that point, the scheme detail will be assessed and provided all is in order, funding will be confirmed.

Trinity made its planning application on 29 August 2013 and anticipates planning permission being granted in time to start construction work in February 2014.

North/South and East/West Arrangements

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to detail how many meetings have been held (i) at ministerial level; and (ii) at official level with counterparts in the (a) rest of the UK; and (b) Republic of Ireland, since May 2007, including under the aegis of the north/south or east/west arrangements.

(AQW 26221/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Since 2007 there have been one hundred and forty six North South Ministerial Council meetings, including twelve in Plenary and seven in Institutional format, which have been attended by Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive.

There have been twenty eight meetings under the aegis of the British Irish Council attended by Ministers, including twelve at Summit level.

My Department does not collate information on other bi-lateral meetings which have taken place outside the remit of the NSMC or BIC involving myself or DSD officials. For example, because of the close working relationship between the Social Security Agency and Child Maintenance Service in DSD and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), including the running of GB services from Northern Ireland, there are extensive meetings taking place, both face to face and via video and teleconferencing with DWP.

Tenancy Fraud

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the recent Audit Office Report on Tenancy Fraud which indicated that up to 2,400 homes may be occupied fraudulently, what the estimated annual loss is to the public purse on the basis of this figure.

(AQW 26251/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The report that was published by the Audit Office on Tenancy Fraud addresses what the tenancy fraud potentially could be costing the taxpayer in Northern Ireland.

The report has estimated that every 100 additional properties recovered through a proactive detection programme would have potential to save around £800,000 in costs for private rented accommodation.

The report further provides an alternative method of quantifying the cost to the public purse of unlawful tenancies by calculating the replacement building cost for properties that are no longer available for social housing. This is estimated at £200 million.

Full details of these calculations can be found at Page 8 of the report.

The Housing Executive at the present time has not calculated any potential annual loss to the public purse based on the estimated figures produced in this report.

Empty Homes in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many of the 32000 empty homes identified by his Department are in North Down.

(AQW 26254/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am informed by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Land and Property Services that the most recent figures (as at 31 August 2013) indicate a total of 30,186 empty residential properties, of which, 815 are in the North Down Borough Council area. DFP have advised these figures should be treated with caution as there is no requirement for ratepayers to inform Land & Property Services that their property is vacant.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Bungalows in Ballyree Drive, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the next stage of the transfer of pensioners bungalows to a housing association for the residents of Ballyree Drive, Bloomfield Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 26345/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As the tenants in Bloomfield bungalows have overwhelmingly voted in favour of transfer, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Oaklee Housing Association will be drawing up and signing the legal transfer agreement; this process will take a couple of months.

Once the legal transfer agreement is in place, and Oaklee have secured a contractor to undertake the refurbishments, the upgrading works will commence. It is currently envisaged that the contractor will be on site in March 2014, with the works advancing in 10 or 11 phases over a period of 22 to 24 months.

Social Fund and Crisis Loan Helpline

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of missed calls to the Social Fund and Crisis Loan helpline in 2012/13, broken down by each Jobs and Benefits office.

(AQW 26352/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are two separate Freephone numbers available for claimants to contact the Social Security Agency in relation to Social Fund Enquiries and Crisis Loan applications. The Social Fund Enquiry number is dedicated to handling enquiries about Social Fund while the Crisis Loan Claims number is used by claimants wanting to make a claim to a Crisis Loan. Not all Jobs & Benefits offices deal with these calls. The following tables set out the available information in respect of each number:

Social Fund Enquiries – 2012/13

Site	Calls Offered	Calls Answered	Calls Not Answered
Antrim	54685	53669	1016
Lisburn	59148	58290	858
Totals	113833	111959	1874

Crisis Loans Tele Claims Service - 2012/13

Site	Calls Offered	Calls Answered	Calls Not Answered
ntrim	188166	180605	7561
Andersonstown	13606	13164	442
Banbridge	773	684	89
Downpatrick	32978	4430	28548
Dungannon	633	421	212
Enniskillen	1547	51	1496
Falls Road	53563	21468	32095
Foye	15187	2881	12306
Knockbreda	6591	1527	5064
Lisburn	2660	294	2366
Lisnagelvin	1078	815	263

Site	Calls Offered	Calls Answered	Calls Not Answered
Lurgan	2034	444	1590
Newry	712	656	56
Omagh	962	935	27
Portadown	1729	1523	206
Shaftsbury Square	4512	83	4429
Strabane	2008	401	1607
Totals	328739	230382	98357

Lower North Belfast Community Council

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail each chairperson of the Lower North Belfast Community Council from 1995 to 2007.

(AQW 26354/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Department records in respect of the Lower North Belfast Community Council are only available from 2005. The chairperson from 2005 to 2007 is recorded as a Mrs Catherine McCarten.

Belfast Partnership Boards

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail which body is accountable for the five Belfast Partnership Boards.

(AQW 26357/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The five Belfast Area Partnerships are independent community led regeneration agencies established in the mid to late nineties under the Making Belfast Work Initiative. The organisations are companies limited by guarantee and are registered charities. The Board of each Partnership brings together community, voluntary, elected and private sector representatives, along with public sector officials to promote the regeneration of their areas. Public sector representatives have observer status on Partnership Boards.

My Department currently provides grant funding to the Belfast Area Partnerships through the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund. This funding is typically for some core costs and associated overheads. The Partnerships are accountable to the Department for their appropriate use of that funding.

Long-Term Unemployment Claimants

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what effect the reported changes in the way long-term unemployment claimants report for availability for work will have on resources within his Department and its relevant agencies.

(AQW 26470/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At this point in time, as I have not seen any detailed proposals relating to the Help-to-Work scheme as announced by the Chancellor, or any further emerging proposals from the Department for Work and Pensions, it is not possible to predict the effect on resources within my Department and associated Agencies.

As I have previously stated in relation to Welfare Reform, I will seek to ensure that any changes to the entitlement rules for Jobseekers Allowance take account of Northern Ireland's particular circumstances and that the focus should be on helping people back into the workplace.

Social security is a devolved matter and therefore any changes would be subject to the Northern Ireland legislative process through the Assembly.

Help to Buy Scheme

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development by what means will local people be able to access the Help to Buy scheme.

(AQW 26502/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to Housing Executive dwellings, the information is not available in the format requested as they do not collate information by Council's electoral ward. However, they have advised that they currently have 37 void properties throughout the Dungannon and South Tyrone area. Two of these properties are Orlits situated in areas where demand has been met and therefore they may be sold on the open market, subject to an economic appraisal.

Another Housing Executive void is a Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwelling in the Ballygawley Estate, an area of low demand, and this may be taken back into Housing Executive stock. The remaining 34 are made up of void properties awaiting change of tenancy repairs under the Housing Executive's response maintenance contract or are difficult to let properties located in areas such as Fivemiletown and Caledon where demand has been met.

There are also two vacant Housing Association dwellings, both of which are in the Dungannon electoral ward.

Tackling the issue of empty homes is one of my major priorities. I recently launched my Department's Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan, which will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders, including the Housing Executive, Housing Associations and local Councils. The Strategy will bring empty homes in every tenure back into use.

Oil: Pay as You Go Scheme

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has explored further the option of using the Pay as You Go for Oil Scheme in Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties.

(AQO 4678/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department undertook a pilot with Kingspan Renewables and Carillion Energy Services for a Pay as You Go for Oil system. The pilot commenced in February 2012 and the participants included Housing Executive tenants, householders who had been assisted through the Warm Homes Scheme and private referrals. The homes were in Dungannon, Coalisland, Newcastle and Camlough. The technology was installed in 17 low income households with the aim of testing the technology and the process. Carillion and the Housing Executive both completed separate evaluations of the pilot. The convenience of using the Pay as You Go for Oil system was highlighted as a major benefit. However, the results of the pilot survey were disappointing regarding the proportion of participants benefiting from lower oil costs.

Whilst Departmental economists have serious concerns about the feasibility of the Pay as You Go Oil scheme from a cost/benefit perspective, I have asked officials to continue engagement with Kingspan and Carillion as they develop their proposal for a Pay as You Go oil system.

Personal Independence Payments

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Social Development what flexibility exists to introduce assessment criteria for Personal Independence Payments different from those in Great Britain.

(AQO 4676/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As you are aware, proposals to introduce Personal Independence Payment are contained in the Welfare Reform Bill which is currently under consideration by this Assembly. The main entitlement rules for the new benefit, including the assessment criteria, will be set out in secondary legislation.

I fully accept that it is essential to get the Personal Independence Payment assessment criteria right and with that in mind:

- The development of the assessment has been carried out in collaboration with an advisory group of independent specialists in health, social care and disability, which included people with disabilities;
- The criteria have been revised throughout the development process taking into account the testing of current Disability Living Allowance claimants, including people from Northern Ireland, and consultation with disabled people and disability organisations in Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- Drafts of the criteria have also been shared throughout the development process in order to gain views and opinions at the earliest opportunities and to feed them into the design of the criteria; and
- Since 2010 there have been four formal consultations on the introduction of Personal Independence Payment, including the draft assessment criteria.

Members are aware that there are many beneficial and practical reasons for maintaining a single system of social security across the UK, not least the financial considerations. I do not need to remind you of the issues if we were to consider deviating from this.

I continue to work with Executive colleagues and the Department for Work and Pensions' Ministers to ensure that in bringing forward Welfare Reform in Northern Ireland we take account of local circumstances and take action where possible to protect those most in need. I recognise the importance of ensuring that what is in place in Northern Ireland delivers a positive experience for claimants and I am committed to having a transparent and empathetic claims and assessment process for Personal Independence Payment.

I understand and appreciate that people are anxious and concerned about the introduction of Personal Independence Payment and my Department, through the Social Security Agency, will be working to fully support people as they encounter the new benefit.

Ultimately, decisions relating to the introduction of Personal Independence Payment in Northern Ireland will fall to the Assembly.

Housing Executive

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the double glazing schemes for Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties.

(AQO 4683/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Within a short time of coming into office, I quickly recognised that whilst the previous focus had been on the new build programme, it was also essential I ensured that the upkeep of existing homes and the need for Housing Executive maintenance work to continue was also a priority.

When I looked at the need for a double glazing programme, I was astounded to learn that initially it was estimated that 48,000 homes required double glazing. I was even more concerned about the apparent lack of haste in dealing with this, as the Housing Executive originally planned to have this work completed by 2021.

That is why I ensured that in the Programme for Government, the Northern Ireland Executive gave a commitment that the thermal efficiency of all Housing Executive properties would be improved by 2014/15 through the provision of double glazing.

The Housing Executive has advised that the double glazing procurement process is currently subject to a court injunction which has prevented them from proceeding. Work is underway to have the injunction lifted and the Housing Executive is hopeful that this will occur in the next week or so. If the Housing Executive is successful in having the injunction lifted they will proceed with the appointment to the Framework and in turn commence secondary competitions to award contracts as soon as possible. This should allow the programme to recommence during 2013/14.

It is still my intention to make sure that the commitment given in the Programme for Government to have double glazing installed in all Housing Executive properties by 2015 is achieved.

Insulation

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has considered introducing any pilot schemes to help private homeowners to bring their homes up to current standards of insulation.

(AQO 4684/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Warm Homes Scheme is my Department's main fuel poverty scheme which helps privately owned and privately rented low income households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The Warm Homes Scheme has an annual target of installing energy efficiency improvements in 9,000 homes and we have been meeting the target consistently since 2009. The Warm Homes Scheme provides a range of measures, including insulation of lofts and cavity walls, to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient.

In addition, the boiler replacement scheme which is available in Northern Ireland only, helps owner occupiers to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. To date 7,320 replacement boilers have been installed (3,790 of which have been installed this financial year alone). The scheme is open to owner occupiers whose household income is less than £40,000 and who have a boiler which is at least 15 years old.

The Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland manages a range of energy efficiency improvement schemes for low income households in fuel poverty through the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme. Householders who just miss out on the qualification criteria for the Warm Homes Scheme can still get help with improving the energy efficiency of their homes through grant from the NISEP schemes.

I have also asked the Housing Executive to urgently develop a programme to carry out much needed work on over 5000 "No Fines" houses across Northern Ireland. "No Fines" houses were constructed using a type of single skin concrete wall with no cavity and I believe that these properties would benefit from a programme of specialist external insulation.

Fort George

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on progress of the planned science park at the Fort George site.

(AQO 4685/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Work began on the construction of the North West Regional Science Park on 29 July 2013. Heron Bros Ltd of Draperstown has been appointed by NWRSP as the main contractor for the project which is due to be completed by 28 July 2014. When completed, the building will comprise four floors with cafe and meeting spaces on the ground floor.

Millar's Lane Day Centre

Mr Douglas asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the potential for redevelopment of the Millar's Lane Day Centre in Ballybeen.

(AQO 4686/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Millar's Lane Day Care Centre in Ballybeen has been closed for some time and remains in the ownership of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. I understand some community led redevelopment proposals are currently being explored and that my officials have been engaged in some preliminary discussions with local elected representatives and the Public Health Agency with a view to facilitating further consideration. I am content that my officials remain engaged in this process in the interests of the local and wider East Belfast community.

Welfare Reform Act

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development what lessons he is learning from the implementation of the Welfare Reform Act in England.

(AQO 4687/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A number of Welfare Reform initiatives have been implemented in Great Britain since April 2013 and my officials are working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that the lessons learnt help shape the way that Welfare Reform is implemented in Northern Ireland.

Whilst it is too early to fully assess the impact of the measures which have been introduced, there is some evidence starting to emerge that would support my concerns about the negative impacts of the cost cutting elements of Welfare Reform for example, the introduction of the social sector size criteria resulting in increasing levels of rent arrears and increased pressure on Housing Associations and Local Authorities to find smaller homes for families to downsize as a consequence of the introduction of a size criteria in the social housing sector.

I am therefore continuing to explore with Executive colleagues whether there is scope for additional measures to be taken outside of the benefit system which will help to ameliorate some of the negative impacts.

Bloomfield Bungalows, Bangor

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed transfer of ownership and refurbishment of the Bloomfield bungalows, Bangor.

(AQO 4688/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am pleased to report that on 10 September 2013 I formally consented to the Stock Transfer of 72 Housing Executive properties at Bloomfield Bungalows, Bangor to Oaklee Housing Association under the provisions of Article 88C of the Housing (NI) Order 1981.

I can confirm that, as part of a comprehensive consultation exercise, tenants at Bloomfield have overwhelmingly welcomed the proposals with a majority of 96.7% in favour of the transfer proposal.

This very significant development paves the way for the much needed multi element improvement scheme to progress to refurbish these properties and bring them up to modern standards.

The next step in the process is for Oaklee Housing Association, the Housing Executive and their legal teams to draft the necessary Transfer Agreement and Development Agreement required to implement the transfer.

I am confident that this scheme will bring real and tangible benefits to the residents of Bloomfield Bungalows and I look forward to the continued successful rollout of the Stock Transfer programme which will result in up to 2000 properties receiving much needed refurbishment works.

Town Centre Regeneration

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on his Department's efforts to reinvigorate and regenerate town centres.

(AQO 4689/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In February of this year my Department published the report of the Northern Ireland High Street Taskforce, which I commissioned to review the support provided by DSD to town and city centres. The Taskforce Report contained seven recommendations for DSD which I accepted.

Since the publication of the report good progress has been made in implementing the recommendations. A significant number of Public Realm and Revitalisation/Restore schemes have been completed or are in progress. Development Briefs continue to be brought to the market and Urban Development Grants provided to stimulate private sector investment.

Efforts are also being made to support traders through the introduction of legislation in relation to Liquor Licensing, Pavement Cafes and Street Trading. In addition legislation to facilitate the establishment of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) has received Royal Assent, regulations are being consulted upon and I have recently announced the award of a contract to provide expertise to support the establishment of a number of pilot BIDs in Northern Ireland.

In an effort to broaden the role and function of town and city centres I will also be reviewing Living Over the Shops (LOTS) with a view to developing a new scheme to encourage people to live in town centres. I will also be bringing forward proposals to the Executive on a policy for Community Asset Transfer. This has the potential to stimulate the diversification of services on offer in town centres and bring vacant buildings back into use.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Discarded Printers

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) the cost of the current programme to replace printers in Members' offices; and (ii) the income that will be derived from the discarded printers.

(AQW 18691/11-15)

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):

- (i) The cost of the current programme to replace printers in Members' offices is £ 92,237.40. In addition, an estimated £8,930.00 will be paid to cover delivery and installation costs.
- (ii) No income has been derived from the disposal of the old printer stocks. The printers currently being replaced were installed in 2007 and due to their age, generally poor condition and reliability they are deemed to have no residual value.

Printer Replacement Programme

Mr Campbell asked the Assembly Commission, in relation to the current printer replacement programme, how many MLAs have declined the offer of a replacement printer.

(AQW 18771/11-15)

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): To date, no MLAs have declined the supply of a replacement printer.

Education Service Programme

Mr Storey asked the Assembly Commission how many schools have participated in the Education Service programme in the last 12 months.

(AQO 3642/11-15)

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): From 12 March 2012 to 12 March 2013, 393 Primary and Secondary groups (12,741 individuals) from 248 schools participated in the Education Service Programmes. Of the 393 school groups taking part, 356 groups received Education Programmes in Parliament Buildings and the remaining 37 groups received outreach programmes in their schools. Including other groups (youth groups, universities etc.) the total number of groups taking part in the Education Service Programme was 546 – a total of 16,798 individuals.

Disposal of Computers

Mr Swann asked the Assembly Commission how it disposes of computers that are no longer used, and whether it has considered donating them to charities or community groups.

(AQW 21079/11-15)

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly last disposed of significant numbers of operational computers in 2007. At that time the Assembly Commission considered donation of some of the recycled equipment to a selected charity or charities. Resale or donation of redundant equipment was not recommended due to legal issues and the obsolescence of equipment available.

The Assembly Commission intends to replace all laptop computers in 2013, and as part of that project, will consider the donation of redundant equipment to charity or community groups; however there are several important factors to be considered including:

- The Data Protection Act (DPA) where obsolete computer equipment may have little or no residual financial value but may still hold valuable information that is covered by the DPA. Therefore care must be exercised during the storage, handling and processing of such equipment.
- The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) legislation and the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) legislation lay a duty on the owner of the equipment to dispose of it in an audited, approved manner to reduce the environmental impact of disposal.
- Liability for Dangerous or Defective Equipment for any equipment which the NI Assembly Commission may sell or donate to third parties.
- Software Licensing Agreements that the NI Assembly has entered into, dictate that the software licenses may not be sold on to third parties and that all such software should be removed during any disposal of equipment.
- Any company undertaking the disposal of computer equipment would require payment to undertake the necessary refurbishment work.

The options for the disposal of redundant computer equipment will be explored in more detail as part of the business case to be presented to the Assembly Commission later this year.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 4 October 2013

(AQW 26502/11-15)

Next week the Help to Buy Mortgage Guarantee Scheme, announced by the Chancellor in Budget 2013, will be available for applications. This scheme will see the Government and lenders guaranteeing up to 15 per cent of a property's value and will allow potential buyers to purchase a home with a 5% deposit and the balance covered by a mortgage.

Several high street banks, including RBS and Lloyds Banking Group, will be offering the new Help to Buy mortgages to customers, ranging from 80 to 95% of the property's value. These mortgages will be on a repayment basis and borrowers will be subject to the usual affordability and income verification checks normally conducted by lenders to ensure they can afford the mortgage they are applying for.

Details of the lenders who will be offering the Help to Buy mortgages will be published next week and those wishing to avail of these products will be able to apply through the relevant banks.



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