

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 18 October 2013

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Suggested amendments or corrections will be considered by the Editor.
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to arrive not later than two weeks after publication of this report.

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Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 18 October 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Photographic Services to the Executive

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much has been paid to photographers, or other service providers, for the provision of photographic services to the Executive for work outside Northern Ireland since May 2007.

(AQW 9879/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): Since May 2007, £33,656.51 has been spent on photography provision outside Northern Ireland. In the case of two departments, DEL and DSD, figures (if any) are not available for the entire period.

Expenditure on photography services outside of Northern Ireland incorporates Trade Missions, Ministerial visits and assignments with Ministers in other jurisdictions.

Hong Kong Open and the European Golf Tour

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 17449/11-15, which decision-makers and organisers they have met with in relation to the Hong Kong Open and the European Golf Tour.

(AQW 20151/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We met with the Championship Director, Deputy Director for International Policy, the Tournament Director and the Press Director.

We also met with the President, Captain and Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Golf Club and the Hong Kong Assistant Commissioner for Tourism.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr McCarthy asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what consultation has taken place with representatives of integrated education on the formulation of a Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy.

(AQW 20158/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The leasing of the North South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat building in Armagh is managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel whose name appears on the lease.

When North South Bodies lease property, the name of the Body or the name of the relevant Agency of the Body concerned, appears on all associated legal documentation.

Department Information Service: Staff

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many staff are employed in their Department's Information Service; and what is the annual cost of this service.

(AQW 20172/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department's information service provides a range of communication services and a planning, co-ordination and corporate support role across all Executive departments. There are 3 business areas within the department's information service.

1 OFMDFM Ministerial Press Office and Corporate Support

There are currently 5 press officers working directly to the 4 OFMDFM Ministers.

A further member of staff works on publications, the web and social media.

The Director and deputy Director, supported by a Personal Secretary, provide a strategic communications role across the 12 Executive departments.

There are 5 staff in a corporate support role providing a range of services including the central management of cross department contracts and the management of a professional development programme for EIS staff across all of the departments.

The total cost for these staff in 2012/13 was £779,952.

2 Government Advertising Unit

There are currently 15 staff (12.5 full time equivalent) employed in the Government Advertising Unit. The Unit is a shared service centre, funded and governed by the 12 Executive departments. It applies specialist expertise to the management of government advertising to improve value for money and effectiveness in communicating with the public. The Unit delivered estimated savings of more than £1.2 million gross to the public sector during 2011/12.

3 NI Direct

There are currently 7 staff employed in the Central Editorial Team of NI Direct. The team is responsible for the development and maintenance of the NI Direct website which comprises citizen-facing information and services from all Departments. The team is not directly funded by OFMDFM but is funded through DFP's NI Direct programme. Since the site went live in April 2009 it has had 28 million visits and delivered 70 million page impressions.

North South Ministerial Council: Leasing Property

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, when the North South Ministerial Council or any other North South body leases property, what name appears in the legal documentation on behalf of the interests of the North South body concerned.

(AQW 20562/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The leasing of the North South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat building in Armagh is managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel whose name appears on the lease.

When North South Bodies lease property, the name of the Body or the name of the relevant Agency of the Body concerned, appears on all associated legal documentation.

Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2012

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why their Department's view was unobtainable when it was sought prior to the publication of the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2012.

(AQW 20935/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Rt Hon Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Defence, wrote to us in June 2012 regarding the commencement of work on producing the first Annual Report on the Armed Forces Covenant and requesting our co-operation with compiling the report. We replied on 24 July 2012 suggesting that officials could discuss the details of the input with the Ministry of Defence. The Armed Forces is a reserved matter, but liaison arrangements exist with Executive departments in areas such as healthcare and housing.

Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide dates and details of any meetings, including attendees, that they have had with representatives of Her Majesty's Government to discuss the extension of the implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 20936/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There has been a range of discussions to date between NI officials and Ministry of Defence officials and we expect these will continue. There is no central record kept of the liaison arrangements and discussions which take place.

Visit to the United States and Brazil

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) who accompanied them on their recent visit to the United States and Brazil; (ii) the accommodation in which they stayed; and (iii) the itinerary for their visit.

(AQW 21043/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Consistent with the minimum practise elsewhere we were each accompanied by a special adviser, a private secretary and a press officer. We also brought an official photographer with us, who had been selected through the normal tendering process. Support was provided by staff from the NI Bureau, NI Screen and the local Invest NI representatives.

All hotel accommodation was booked on advice of the embassies and consulates in each city. Their recommendations took into account security and safety issues, the availability of meeting rooms for press interviews or speaking engagements and the embassy rate for foreign delegations.

Details of the itinerary relating to our recent visit to Brazil and the USA were published by the Executive Information Service through a series of press releases and photographs. Copies of all those releases and photographs are available at the following websites:

www.northernireland.gov.uk/news

www.flickr.com/photos/niexecutive/sets/72157633036155586/ www.flickr.com/photos/niexecutive/sets/72157632960681381

Magdalene Laundries

Mr Buchanan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action their Department has taken to ensure that the voices of women in Northern Ireland who were subjected to abuse in the Magdalene laundries or homes will be heard.

(AQW 21302/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Following the publication of the McAleese Report, we appointed a senior civil servant to draw up a scoping paper in regard to the Magdalene Laundry type institutions that operated here so as to inform us of what potential actions we might be able to take.

We received that report just prior to recess and we are currently giving serious consideration to the options that have been laid out before deciding the way forward.

Under the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse, any woman who entered a Laundry here before she was 18 may contribute to the Inquiry, including recounting their childhood experiences to the Inquiry's Acknowledgement Forum and having those experiences acknowledged.

However, anyone who has experienced abuse of any kind is encouraged to report this to the PSNI and Social Services for investigation, whether the context of their experience falls within the scope of the current Inquiry or not. Where appropriate, the alleged perpetrators can then be brought before the courts. This is the primary means by which victims and survivors can seek justice for what happened to them.

Assembly Written Questions asked of the Department

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the number of Assembly Written Questions asked of their Department since September 2012; (ii) the number of questions for ordinary written answer which the Department has not answered within the designated timeframe; and (iii) the number of priority questions which the Department has not answered within the designated timeframe.

(AQW 21351/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The figures provided below relate to Assembly Questions asked within the period September 2012 – February 2013:

- (i) 249
- (ii) 125
- (iii) 25

Constitutional Convention of the Republic of Ireland

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the deputy First Minister is a member of the Constitutional Convention of the Republic of Ireland in that capacity as shown in its membership list; and, if not, whether they require the matter to be corrected.

(AQW 22397/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The deputy First Minister was nominated to this body by Sinn Féin. Its membership list is not a matter for OFMDFM.

Community Relations Spending

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much of the £0.5 billion that has been spent on community relations has been contributed by their Department.

(AQW 23495/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The figure of £0.5 billion is an approximate figure which includes European Regional and Peace Programme monies (approx €330 million), as well as expenditure by the International Fund for Ireland, the Atlantic Philanthropies and various government Departments.

In the period from 2007 until 2015, our department will have committed funding of approximately £73 million to good relations activities and a further £70 million towards Victims and Survivors.

The contribution from our department has been significant. Not simply in financial terms, but also in driving policy and internal government support for the good relations agenda.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the financial implications of the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

(AQO 4249/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The details of the costs for actions arising from the Together: Building a United Community Strategy will be worked up in the design groups that have been established to take this work forward. We will make the full details public in due course when this work is completed.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what are the budgetary plans for delivering the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

(AQO 4254/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The budgetary plans for delivery of the actions arising out of the Together: Building a United Community will be assessed once the Design Teams have reported.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Mr Dickson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline his plans for reassessing the financial costs of providing public services as part of the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

(AQO 4256/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Avoidance of unnecessary expenditure or duplication in the provision of public services is a core aspect of the new Strategy.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Mr McElduff asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the announcements they made on the Together: Building A United Community Strategy.

(AQO 4240/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Design teams have been meeting to draw up detailed proposals to implement the actions in the new Strategy. It is our intention that the plans and proposals that arise from these teams are robust and no decisions will be taken on the specific aspects of the programmes until the design teams conclude their work.

We have appointed Dr Richard Haass as the independent chair of an all-party group which will consider and make recommendations on matters including parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and the past. We are confident that we will be able to find lasting solutions.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Mrs Cochrane asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when an action plan will be produced for the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

(AQO 4241/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The key actions have already been announced and design teams to draw up detailed proposals to implement the actions in the new Strategy have started to meet. It is our intention that the plans and proposals that arise from these teams are robust.

An All-Party Group, chaired by Richard Haass, will consider and make recommendations on matters, including parades and protests; flags, symbols, emblems and related matters; and dealing with the past.

Inward Investment

Mr McAleer asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, following their investment visit to China and other recent overseas engagements, for an update on Executive efforts to stimulate inward investment.

(AQO 4243/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A key focus of the Executive's Programme for Government 2011-2015 is to grow the economy. The Executive is committed to bringing investment, jobs, tourists, new skills and best practice into Northern Ireland by promoting local capabilities and developing mutually beneficial relationships with targeted countries, regions and international organisations.

Our overseas efforts are paying dividends and we aim to continue to meet influencers and business representatives to promote trade, tourism, inward investment, university and government links. Securing international projects requires long-term relationship building and raising awareness of the many advantages of investing in Northern Ireland. Executive Ministers will continue to be proactive in targeting countries and organisations in an effort to secure trade and investment opportunities.

Urban Village Regeneration Projects

Mr Douglas asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the four Urban Village Regeneration projects which were included in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

(AQO 4244/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are considering where best to situate the Urban Villages to achieve maximum benefit from the proposal and intend to make a further announcement on the detail of these in due course.

Public Assemblies, Parades and Protest Body

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the anticipated work of the Public Assemblies, Parades and Protest Body during the rest of this Assembly mandate.

(AQW 24218/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The All-Party Group, chaired by Richard Haass, will consider and make recommendations on matters including, parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and dealing with the past.

Farming Life Section of Newsletter

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail how much the Executive Information Service has paid to the Farming Life section of the Newsletter, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 24352/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The information requested is not held centrally by the Executive Information Service (EIS).

The Government Advertising Unit, which is part of EIS, does place advertisements on behalf of all NICS departments, agencies and some ALBs. Details in relation to these costs are held by departments.

EIS can confirm that over the past three years, classified advertising has been placed in the Farming Life as follows:

- 2012/13 - DARD, NI Policing Board, Roads Service
- 2011/12 – DARD, Roads Service
- 2010/11 – DARD, Roads Service

Over this same period, campaign advertising has been placed in the Farming Life as follows:

- 2012/13 – DETI, HSENI, Invest NI, NI Water, DARD
- 2011/12 – DARD, HSENI
- 2010/11 – DARD, NMNI, NISRA

‘Economic Pact’ for People on an Irish Visa in Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how the proposal in the recent ‘economic pact’ for people who are travelling on an Irish visa to Northern Ireland will work in practice; and how this will differ, in the short and long term, in respect of such persons visiting the rest of the United Kingdom.

(AQW 24922/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The economic package, ‘Building a Prosperous and United Community’, was announced on 14 June 2013 and ratified by the Executive on 27 June. We welcome the proposals contained in the economic package to develop visa waiver arrangements between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

The Irish Government introduced a visa waiver scheme, accepting visitors from 17 countries with a UK visit visa for travel to the Republic of Ireland without applying for a separate Irish visa. Under a reciprocal visa arrangement, the UK Government will, subject to appropriate safeguards and to agreement between the UK and Irish Governments, aim to work towards a pilot visa waiver reciprocation by the UK which would permit visitors from some destinations to enter the UK using an Irish visit visa, without the need for a separate UK visa.

The development of a pilot scheme should provide the platform to drive our ambition to make tourism a £1 billion industry by 2020. It should make it easier for tourists and business people visiting the Republic of Ireland, travelling only on an Irish Visa, to include the UK in their trip. This measure should provide an important boost to the Executive’s drive to increase tourism revenue to £676 million and visitor numbers to 4.2 million by December 2014.

Costs of the Haass Talks

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how the administrative and other costs of the Haass talks are being funded; and what is the estimated total involved.

(AQW 25926/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The costs relating to the work of the Panel of Parties are being met by OFMDFM.

Neither Richard Haass nor Meghan O’Sullivan are taking a fee for their time, which is testament to their commitment to this process. Both have offered their services on a pro bono basis and they will therefore only be reimbursed for the expenses they incur. We have also agreed to pay remuneration to their researcher and to cover any other costs and expenses directly relating to Dr Haass’s work.

At this stage it is not possible to provide an estimate of the overall cost. This will be assessed on a continuing basis as work progresses over the next three months.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what representations they have made to the Government regarding the retention of the Driver and Vehicle Agency.

(AQO 4597/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Minister of the Environment, and his predecessor, have taken every opportunity to argue the case for retaining the DVA facility in Northern Ireland through their responses to consultations on the proposal and directly with the Northern Ireland Secretary of State and the Transport Minister. We have raised the issue with the Prime Minister on a number of occasions when we have met over recent months.

Building a United Community Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the ten shared education campuses identified for delivery as part of the Building a United Community Strategy.

(AQW 26162/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our commitment to establish ten shared education campuses is being taken forward by a design group specifically established to research and detail proposals and costs for implementation. The design group is expected to conclude its work in the next few months and its report will inform Ministerial decisions on the specific projects and geographical areas.

Community Empowerment Partnership

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail each Director of the Community Empowerment Partnership in 2003.

(AQW 26355/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Information on Directors of the Community Empowerment Partnerships in 2003 is no longer held.

Community Empowerment Partnership

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the proposals made by the Community Empowerment Partnership, including those that relate to primary schools.

(AQW 26356/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The information requested is not centrally available and could not be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

Social Investment Fund

Mr McNarry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the outlay of funding from the Social Investment Fund to date; and to list the parties in receipt of these funds.

(AQW 26377/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: To date, £389,847 has been spent in relation to the preparation for delivery, such as provision of support to develop area plans, economic appraisals and undertaking Gateway Reviews of the programme. The parties in receipt of these funds were RSM McClure Watters, Wallace Consulting, Deloitte, Copius Consulting and Central Procurement Directorate.

Bright Start: the Strategic Framework for a Childcare Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what assurances they can give that the 7000 additional childcare places committed by Bright Start: a Strategic Framework for a Childcare Strategy will be sufficient to meet the shortage in provision.

(AQW 26653/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Bright Start's key first actions aim to address the main childcare priorities identified during the consultation process. In response to an identified need for additional childcare provision, the key first actions aim to create or sustain several thousand childcare places. These are first actions. Their performance will be monitored and evaluated to assess what further steps are needed to address childcare provision over the life of the Bright Start strategy.

Bright Start: the Strategic Framework for a Childcare Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an estimate of the (i) cost; and (ii) timescale to deliver Bright Start: the Strategic Framework for a Childcare Strategy.

(AQW 26656/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department is currently working on the detailed costings of several of the key first actions set out in the first phase of Bright Start. This work will estimate the cost of delivery. We aim to have all 15 key first actions initiated before the end of the 2013/14 financial year.

Bright Start: the Strategic Framework for a Childcare Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to explain the rationale for the moratorium on Executive advertising, which may impede the ability of Bright Start: the Strategic Framework for a Childcare Strategy to deliver on the key aim to improve the information available to families regarding childcare cost assistance.

(AQW 26657/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no moratorium on Executive Advertising. On 7 March 2013, the Executive approved the Executive's Advertising Programme 2013/14 of almost £14 million. This equates to more than £1 million a month on campaign advertising. Under the Executive Advertising Programme, all campaigns are clearly aligned to the Programme for Government. The commissioning process for the Executive's Advertising Programme 2014/15 is currently underway and all departments are now assessing their campaign advertising requirements for 2014/15.

Together: Building a United Community

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the provision of the additional apprenticeship posts outlined in Together: Providing a United Community, including (i) when the posts will be available; (ii) in which industries; and (iii) in which constituencies.

(AQW 26849/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The process of designing the United Youth volunteer programme is being taken forward by a design group specifically established to research and detail proposals and costs for implementation.

Until that work is completed no decisions will be made on specific aspects of the Programme as outlined above.

The design group is expected to conclude its work later this year and its report will inform Ministerial decisions on the way forward.

Shackleton Army Barracks at Ballykelly

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the estimated cost of decontaminating the former Shackleton army barracks at Ballykelly; (ii) the cost of maintenance since the site was acquired; and (iii) the number of inquiries from potential investors in the last 12 months.

(AQW 26879/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

- (i) The estimated costs for decontaminating the former Shackleton Army barracks at Ballykelly are in the region of:

Consultancy/Investigations	£900k to £1,100k
Remediation and Disposal	£5m to £7m
Total	£5.9m to £8.1m

- (ii) Shackleton was acquired in October 2011. Maintenance costs from this date amount to the end of the last financial year were £310,756.

- (iii) There have been in excess of 60 enquiries from potential investors in the last 12 months.

Decommissioning Land at Magilligan

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what representations have been made to the Ministry of Defence to decommission land at Magilligan which is currently used as a shooting range, and therefore out of bounds to the public including walkers and tourists.

(AQW 26880/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have not made any representations at this time to the Ministry of Defence in respect of the decommissioning of land at Magilligan.

Economic Pact: Fiscal Powers

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the preparations for the review of fiscal powers, which were agreed as part of the Economic Pact proposals with the British Government, including the processes for developing the terms of reference, key approaches and timescale for the review.

(AQO 4651/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Economic Package 'Building a Prosperous and United Community' was announced on 14 June and ratified by the Executive on 27 June and includes a commitment to examine the potential for devolving specific additional fiscal powers. As part of the package, the Government and Executive agreed that the devolution of further tax powers might have the potential to enable the local economy to respond in a more tailored way to the social and economic challenges that we face. The Government and the Executive have already agreed to devolve to the Assembly the power to set Air Passenger Duty on long-haul flights, helping to preserve our vital air link to the United States.

We recognise that decisions around any further fiscal devolution require careful consideration and analysis. As a first stage of this work, the Department of Finance and Personnel is currently undertaking a scoping exercise to examine the Calman and Silk Commission reports, the positions taken in respect of each individual tax and the wider financial context in that regard.

After that, a work programme will be developed to progress this exercise in order to put recommendations, if any, for further devolution to Executive and Government Ministers by autumn 2014.

As part of the package, it was also agreed to take forward further work on Corporation Tax devolution and the package also indicated that the Government would make a final decision on the devolution of these powers no later than the Autumn Statement 2014.

Poverty

Mr McElduff asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the growing pressures faced by voluntary and charitable organisations, such as St. Vincent de Paul, in their efforts to address and alleviate poverty.

(AQO 4769/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We understand that voluntary and charitable organisations like St Vincent de Paul are facing ever greater pressures in their efforts to tackle poverty. The reasons for these growing pressures appear to be two-fold. Firstly, as the downturn in the economy continues to bite, an ever increasing number of families and individuals are approaching such organisations seeking financial support. And secondly, there's a sense that the level of funding for these organisations may have peaked, and that, indeed, it may be about to fall back. This is partly as a result of the economic downturn, but also because some who contributed previously are now looking for support themselves. In short, these organisations are being asked to help a growing number of people with a potentially decreasing budget.

In this time of global economic challenge, the Executive remains focused on growing our economy whilst at the same time tackling social and economic disadvantage. However, the difficulties being

experienced currently by organisations like St Vincent de Paul serve to increase the Executive's commitment to do all it can to alleviate poverty.

With this in mind, Our Delivering Social Change inter-departmental framework has been developed to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty across all ages; and an improvement in the health, wellbeing and life opportunities of children and young people thereby breaking the long-term cycle of multi-generational problems.

Six signature programmes are helping drive this forward. We are helping struggling pupils with literacy and numeracy; we are providing positive parenting programmes; we have established 10 Family Support Hubs, 10 Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs and 20 additional nurture units; and we are committed to providing young people not in education, employment or training with skills programmes.

Delivering Social Change also complements the much larger social and economic policies and programmes that have been designed to tackle poverty, by identifying clear lines of departmental accountability and delivering additional actions that can add real value and achieve measurable improvements.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether Strategic Action Plans have been produced for all nine regions identified to benefit from the Social Investment Fund.

(AQO 4773/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 28 February, the Social Investment Fund Steering Groups submitted area plans for each of their Zones.

Representatives of the wider community were involved in identifying the issues to be addressed and prioritising the interventions for inclusion in the plans thus ensuring that they reflect needs identified locally.

The plans included a total of 89 projects across 9 Zones. These proposals are now going through a quality assurance review by officials. This will ensure that projects are robust and will have a positive impact within their communities.

Child Poverty

Mr Hazzard asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of the steps recommended by the National Children's Bureau to help departments tackle child poverty.

(AQO 4776/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The National Children's Bureau and the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes developed a Child Poverty Outcomes Framework, as commissioned by our Department in February 2012.

The Child Poverty Outcomes Framework was published on the Department's website on 4 October 2013. The purpose of this Model is to assess which interventions are likely to produce the best outcomes over the long-term and to assess the impact of mainstream programmes already in place.

The starting point of establishing the framework is to establish clear outcomes for children and young people towards which Government departments and other stakeholders can direct their efforts. The Outcomes Framework comprises a set of clearly defined outcomes and indicators; exemplar balanced scorecards; and advice and guidance on using the Outcomes Framework.

The next steps will involve using this suggested framework as the basis for undertaking capacity building activities across all departments. The data presented in the report will be used as the basis for undertaking a series of workshops, which can then be used to populate balanced scorecards for all of the indicators included in the report. The first of these workshops for Senior Civil Servants was held last week.

The Child Poverty Outcomes Framework will be taken forward under the auspices of Delivering Social Change, the Executive's comprehensive delivery framework to co-ordinate the efforts across departments to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages and an improvement in children and young people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities thereby breaking the cycle of multi-generational problems.

Immediate action to deliver improvements is already underway with the implementation on the ground of six Delivering Social Change signature projects on key priorities including improving literacy and numeracy levels, family support and pathways to employment framework for young people. Work on the implementation of the six initial signature projects is progressing well.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Sports Facilities: Fermanagh and Tyrone

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the funding offers made for sports or partial sports facilities in the constituencies of (i) Fermanagh and South Tyrone; and (ii) West Tyrone, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26410/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): No such offers have been made by DARD. The Quality of Life Axis (Axis 3) of the Rural Development Programme is delivered through the LEADER approach by seven Joint Council Committees working with Local Action Groups in council cluster areas. Two such clusters, South West Action for Rural Development (SWARD) and Assisting Rural Communities North West (ARC NW), cover the two constituencies referred to in your question and are responsible for opening calls, assessing applications and awarding funding.

Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme does not provide funding for sport facilities for direct sporting activity. However, where an organisation wishes to promote a project that benefits the wider rural community and which is separate from their primary activity, this may be considered for funding by the LAGs and JCCs.

The following list details rural development projects funded by SWARD and ARC which do include facilities that could be used for sporting activity, albeit as part of wider rural quality of life initiatives that benefit the broader rural community:

Org Name	Project Title	location	Grant Awarded	Letter of Offer Issued	Constituency
Strabane District Council	Youth Multi Use Games Area x 3	Strabane	250,000.00	11/09/2012	West Tyrone
Aghyaran Development Association CIC	Aghyaran Multi Use Recreational Area	Castledearg	135,430.50	19/09/2012	West Tyrone
Strabane District Council	Plumbridge Health and Recreation Project (MUGA)	Strabane	186,135.47	20/06/2013	West Tyrone

Org Name	Project Title	location	Grant Awarded	Letter of Offer Issued	Constituency
Tyrone County GAA Committee (CLG Thir Eoghain)	Garvaghey 3G Multi-Activity Pitch	Omagh	594,656.60	28/11/2012	West Tyrone
Fermanagh District Council	Provision of 3G floodlit pitch suitable for multi-purpose use	Enniskillen	599,973.00	29/03/2013	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Fermanagh District Council	Fermanagh 5 x MUGA's	Enniskillen	471,961.00	29/03/2013	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Ballinamallard Fisher Park	Ballinamallard Community Recreation Hub (3G)	Ballinamallard	283,509.00	29/03/2013	Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Greencastle St.Patrick's GFC	Greencastle CORE (Community Outdoor Recreational Ent) MUGA	Omagh	380,871.00	21/02/2013	West Tyrone
Strabane District Council	Glebe Community Park Regeneration (MUGA)	Strabane	165,075.00	30/09/2013	West Tyrone
Strabane District Council	Glenmornan Multi Use Games Area	Strabane	143,662.50	30/09/2013	West Tyrone
Loughmacrory Development Association	Running track, spectator stand, boats and jetties.	Omagh	824,491	28/03/2013	West Tyrone
Dungannon & South Tyrone Council	Rural Recreational and Healthy Living Hubs; 2 MUGA's and 1 pavilion	Benburb & Ballygawley MUGA's; Fivemiletown Pavilion	484,787	11/12/12	Fermanagh & South Tyrone

Single Farm Payment: Reviews

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how long it has taken to process the (i) stage one; and (ii) stage two reviews of Single Farm Payment decisions, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26415/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The average time to process a Stage 1 and Stage 2 review is highly variable depending on the particular nature and complexity of the casework in a particular year. In many cases there is a need to seek additional information from the applicant, other parties involved and, in some instances, legal advice is required. Stage 2 cases on average involve more complex considerations and take longer.

The figures shown below provide an estimate of the average time taken to process review cases (that is, from the date of application until the decision letter issues) in the three years shown. These averages are shown in calendar days and, therefore, include weekends, public holidays and privilege holidays.

While I recognise that the averages include time taken to process a significant number of cases that originated in 2006/2007 and which could not be processed for several years until legal proceedings had been concluded and assessed, I am concerned about the overall time taken to process review cases and have asked if these processes can be reviewed and timescales reduced.

(i) Stage 1

In 2011, the time taken to process a Stage 1 application from receipt to decision issued averaged at 263 calendar days. In 2012, the average was 186 calendar days and in 2013 (to date) the average is 205 calendar days.

(ii) Stage 2

In 2011, the time taken to process a Stage 2 application from receipt to decision issued averaged at 975 calendar days. In 2012, the average was, 1,383 calendar days and in 2013 (to date) the average is 612 calendar days.

Farm Safety Partnership

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 14346/11-15, whether additional research in relation to safety and slurry handling has been (i) considered; and (ii) undertaken following consideration by the Farm Safety Partnership.

(AQW 26417/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The need for additional research in relation to safety and slurry handling has been considered by my Department in conjunction with the Farm Safety Partnership.

As a result my Department has commissioned a research project at the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute on 'Safe Practice in Slurry Mixing Operations'. The focus of the project is to identify and evaluate slurry gas mitigation measures. The project has recently commenced and is expected to conclude by mid-2014.

Rate Relief for Stud Farms

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 26224/11-15, whether her Department will make the case to the Department of Finance and Personnel for rate relief for stud farms.

(AQW 26614/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: It will be a matter for the equine sector to make a case for stud farm rate relief to my Department for consideration before any formal engagement with the Department of Finance and Personnel. My officials are working closely with the Equine Council for NI (ECNI) on the matter. ECNI

has recently submitted a discussion paper to my Department and this will be the basis for future consideration of the issue. Any consideration of rate relief for stud farms must establish the need, assess the economic benefit, be affordable, consider alternative support measures, align with Programme for Government priorities, and be compliant with EU State Aid rules.

Severe Weather: Emergency Helicopter Services

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the basis on which she is challenging the invoice from the Ministry of Defence for emergency helicopter services provided to rural communities in distress during the severe weather in Spring 2013.

(AQW 26642/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: You will be aware that extreme snow falls affected many parts of the north of Ireland in March of this year. As part of my Department's response, I approached the British Secretary of State, Theresa Villiers, asking for helicopter assistance to be made available for animal welfare reasons. I also obtained support from the Irish Air Corps after speaking to the Justice Minister Alan Shatter TD.

The airborne resources provided by both the British MoD and the Irish Air Corps greatly assisted our emergency efforts and were very much welcomed by the industry and my Department.

The Irish Air Corps have not requested any payment for their participation.

Whilst I appreciate that it is British MoD policy to charge full costs for its services, given the extreme conditions and animal welfare emergency that existed at the time, it was disappointing to have received such a substantial charge. I therefore considered that it was appropriate to write to the British Secretary of Defence to ask him to reconsider this policy given the emergency circumstances that existed.

Severe Weather: Rescue and Support Services

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the invoices received, from both public and private sector organisations, as a result of rescue and support services during the severe weather at Spring 2013; and whether she is challenging these.

(AQW 26643/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: During the snow storm in March this year, part of my Department's immediate response was to air drop fodder to stranded livestock cut off by the heavy snow. The Irish Air Corps and the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) provided helicopter support to allow the air drops to take place. In addition to the air drops my Department arranged for the collection and disposal of carcasses resulting from the severe weather.

The Irish Air Corps has not charged for their participation.

My Department is in receipt of a bill of costs from the British Government and I have written to the British Secretary of State for Defence to ask him to reconsider his departments policy of charging for its services given the emergency circumstances that existed at the time.

With respect to the carcase collection and rendering costs which the Department is meeting, due to commercial confidentiality I am unable to disclose the details of invoices received. However I can confirm that interim payments have been made to two private companies and that the final payments will be made when the final invoices are received and agreed. My Department is not currently challenging any invoices from rendering companies but all invoice lines are verified and validated before payment is approved.

Potato Breeding Programme

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in regards to the potato breeding programme at the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute at Loughgall, to outline the (i) process; and (ii) timescale for the commercialisation of the new Loughgall potato varieties.

(AQW 26649/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: New variety propagation for potatoes is a protracted, resource intensive process. At AFBI it is divided into two separate projects: strategic and commercial.

The strategic (core) research involves the production of parental and pre-breeding material. During this phase cross pollination results in seeds which are grown. Seedlings are then evaluated and selected plants grown for three years. Successful plants which carry required characteristics then become part of the commercial research.

The Commercial research involves propagating those chosen varieties for a further four years under various growing conditions. For Loughgall varieties that will include trials in Morocco and in Britain, the main markets for our seed potatoes. There is a parallel selection and evaluation system by the Loughgall programme.

The final decision on which seedlings are to become varieties is made jointly at year 8/9. Variety registration takes two years during which time pre-commercial seed production is scaled up and large-scale on-farm demonstration trials are carried out in the target markets.

The release of a registered variety will coincide with commercial quantities of seed ready to be sold to customers who have already been able to assess the variety in demonstration trials.

Agri-Food Strategy Board's Strategic Action Plan - Going for Growth

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, further to the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise's recent enrolment drive in which they state the agri-food industry is planning 15,000 new jobs, whether funding has been made available to enable the sector to achieve this level of growth, as laid out in the Agri-Food Strategy Board's Strategic Action Plan - Going for Growth. **(AQW 26679/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: I hope that you will join me in supporting CAFRE's continued provision of world class education in Agriculture and Food. As you will be aware, the Executive has made a commitment under the Programme for Government for a Strategic Action Plan to be developed for the agri-food sector. The industry, through the Agri-Food Strategy Board (AFSB), has identified opportunities for sustainable growth and targeted increased employment in these sectors and this is something that we all hope for.

The AFSB's Strategic Action Plan, Going for Growth, is currently being considered by Government Departments, Agencies and the Board itself to identify the best way to take forward its numerous and wide-ranging recommendations.

The recommendations made by the Board are directed at both Government and industry and the investment the Board has identified from both is significant. From a Government perspective, Departments are exploring the various mechanisms across Government that could provide funding to support sustainable growth in the sector, including the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and the European Regional Development Fund 2014-2020, both of which are currently out for consultation and Invest NI's Selective Financial Assistance Programme. In the current economic climate, implementation of some of the recommendations will be very challenging for the Executive and we will need to look carefully at the resource implications of proposals.

We plan to seek Executive endorsement of the proposed way forward in response to the Board's report in the near future.

Fracking on Departmental Land

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many individuals and groups have responded to her regarding the possibility of fracking on land owned by her Department. **(AQW 26701/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: Three individuals and one group have contacted me about the possibility of fracking on land owned by my Department.

Wild Animals in Circuses

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what work is taking place on a North/South basis to look at the issue of wild animals in circuses.

(AQW 26710/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I raised the issue of wild animals in travelling circuses at the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Agriculture meeting on 10 July 2013. Minister Coveney and I agreed that officials would investigate the possibility of an All-Island approach to the issue of these animals in travelling circuses, and that the findings and proposals would be reported at a future NSMC Agriculture meeting.

My officials met officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine under the auspices of the North South Animal Welfare and Transport Working Group on 5 September 2013. The issue of wild animals in circuses was discussed in detail and a number of actions were agreed to be taken forward including engagement with stakeholders who would be directly affected by any proposals on the use of these animals in travelling circuses. Officials will report back to Minister Coveney and I once these actions have been completed.

Risks Associated with the Farming Environment

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has undertaken, or plans to undertake, any projects with schools to highlight to young children the risks associated with the farming environment.

(AQW 26789/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department as a member of the Farm Safety Partnership support all the actions set out in the Partnership's Action plan. There are two specific actions assigned to HSENI which involve school children. These are:

- Deliver key farm safety messages to 90 rural primary schools throughout NI annually.
- Hold an annual Child Safety on Farms Poster Competition in June.

My Department has provided funding for the Farm Safety Multi-media campaign which is targeted at farmers and their families including school children.

All Farm Safe Awareness courses while targeted at farmers, welcome children and farm families.

CAFRE has also delivered the farm safe message at events where school children can be present.

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise College Advisory Group

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development who has been appointed to the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise College Advisory Group and to detail (i) the total membership; and (ii) the remit of the Group.

(AQW 27126/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The following people have been appointed to the College Advisory Group (CAG) of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE): Mrs Hilda Stewart (chair), Mr Mark Beattie; Mrs. Teresa Canavan; Mr James Coyle; Mr. Allan Chambers; Mr. John Chambers; Mr Ivor Ferguson; Mr. Hamilton Hassard; Mr. Maynard Mawhinney; Professor David McDowell; Mr Liam McStravick; Dr Patrick Murphy and Mr Jason Podris.

The remit of CAG is to provide advice at a strategic and operational level to the College Director and the College Management Team of CAFRE. The group reports to the College Director. In discharging its responsibilities, CAG will take proper account of Department's agreed policies and strategies.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Commonwealth Games: Queen's Baton

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 23749/11-15, to outline the role which she and her Department played in promoting and marking the arrival of the Olympic Torch; and why a different approach is being taken to the arrival of the Queen's Baton in connection with the Commonwealth Games.

(AQW 25502/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Responsibility for promoting and marking the arrival of the Olympic Torch rested, in the first instance, with the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG). Likewise responsibility for the Queen's Baton rests with the NI Commonwealth Games Council.

Foras na Gaeilge: Budget

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail how much of its annual budget Foras na Gaeilge has spent on (i) staff costs; (ii) general operating costs; (iii) core-funding organisations; (iv) project funding; and (v) other costs, in each of the last five financial years.

(AQW 25562/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The details of the breakdown of the annual budgets of Foras na Gaeilge since 2008 are shown in the tables below. The final audited figures for 2011 and 2012 have not yet been published.

		(i) Foras na Gaeilge Staff Costs (* note 1)	(ii) FnG Other Operating Costs (* note 2)
2008	€	3, 470, 805	5, 013, 542
	£	2, 763, 801	3, 992, 287
2009	€	3, 320, 942	5, 508, 800
	£	2, 958, 627	4, 907, 790
2010	€	3, 283, 985	5, 039, 148
	£	2, 817, 330	4, 323, 090
2011	€	4, 301, 711	4, 176, 953
	£	3, 733, 455	3, 625, 178
2012	€	4, 395, 430	4, 614, 636
	£	3, 564, 254	3, 742, 008

Notes:

- Staff costs include: Salaries and Wages, Board Member Fees, Social Security Costs and Superannuation Costs
- Other Operating Costs include: Programme Costs, Administration Expenses, Establishment Expenses and Financial Charges

		(iii) &(iv) Core-funding Organisations and Project Funding (total grant expenditure including corefunded organisations)	(v) Other Costs – Direct Printing Costs	(vi) Other Costs – Depreciation Costs
2008	€	14, 544, 592	1, 626, 757	137, 403
	£	11, 581, 859	1, 295, 386	109, 414
2009	€	12, 749, 514	1, 516, 535	99, 973
	£	11, 358, 542	1, 351, 081	89, 066
2010	€	12, 629, 789	1, 202, 533	119, 462
	£	10, 835, 096	1, 031, 653	102, 486
2011	€	12, 055, 694	1, 008, 530	102, 847
	£	10, 463, 137	875, 303	89, 261
2012	€	11, 807, 825	860, 129	95, 658
	£	9, 574, 966	697, 479	77, 569

Hosting of the Commonwealth Games

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what work her Department has carried out on the possibility of hosting the Commonwealth Games.

(AQW 25705/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Planning and preparation of any bid to host future Commonwealth Games in the north of Ireland is a matter, in the first instance, for the NI Commonwealth Games Council.

Hosting of Sports Teams in the Commonwealth Games 2014

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has had discussions with the Scottish Government regarding the hosting of sports teams who are participating in the Commonwealth Games 2014.

(AQW 25945/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have been in correspondence with the Scottish Government with regard to potential overall opportunities that may be open to the north of Ireland during the Glasgow Games in 2014.

Closure of Visitor Attractions, Leisure Facilities, Community or Amenity Facilities

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has any evidence of a growing trend in councils of closing visitor attractions, leisure facilities, community or amenity facilities that were initially jointly funded by Government and/or European funding provided on a three year sustainability basis; and if any funded activities are under pressure from closure or additional funding requirements.

(AQW 26447/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My department, and its associated arms length bodies, has no evidence of a growing trend in councils closing visitor attractions, leisure facilities, community or amenity facilities that were initially funded by Government and/or European funding. Similarly, I am not aware of any funded activities that are under pressure from closure or additional funding requirements.

Library Members: Bangor; Donaghadee; Newtownards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of members of (i) Bangor; (ii) Donaghadee; and (iii) Newtownards libraries, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26530/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The number of active members for (i) Bangor; (ii) Donaghadee; and (iii) Newtownards libraries, in each of the last three years is as follows:

Branch	01-Apr-2011	01-Apr-2012	01-Apr-2013
(i) Bangor Library	9,924	11,399	10,575
(ii) Donaghadee Library	2,227	2,267	2,152
(ii) Newtownards Library	3,452	3,949	3,508

Sport Northern Ireland Grants: Guidelines and Regulations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the guidelines and regulations SportNI impose on the duration of the security on an asset required when a grant is provided to a sporting club.

(AQW 26621/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In cases where security on an asset is required when a grant is issued to a sporting club, historically Sport NI aligned the duration of security with the estimated economic life of the asset that was being purchased or built with the grant award. However, from July 2013 the Sport NI Board approved a revised policy, whereby the required duration of security will be based on the benefits realisation period of the project/programme as opposed to the economic life of the asset. This is reflective of the guidance within Managing Public Money NI and relevant Dear Accounting Officer letters issued by DFP.

Sport Northern Ireland Grants: Security

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the criteria that is used by SportNI when deciding whether a grant requires security.

(AQW 26622/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI's Risk Management Policy requires security on a capital award in the following circumstances:

- On all grant awards in excess of £500k; and/or
- On an organisation that is not deemed to be currently operationally viable and solvent, or has major issues surrounding their viability, regardless of the value of the grant award.

Football Ground Designation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there are plans to review the categories of football ground designation.

(AQW 26623/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Under The Safety of Sports Grounds (NI) Order 2006 legislation, my Department may, by order, designate - as a sports grounds requiring a safety certificate – any sports ground which in its opinion has accommodation for more than 5,000 spectators.

While the legislation does not include any reference to categories of designation, I can confirm that there are no plans to review the associated statutory process, or review the accommodation capacity which is stated within the legislation.

The Department has already designated fifteen football grounds and a full list is set out in The Safety of Sports Grounds (Designation) (No.2) Order (NI) 2009.

Proposed Velodrome

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what consideration has been given, in conjunction with the Dublin government, to the provision of a velodrome.

(AQW 26730/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials have met with the Department for Transport, Tourism and Sport to explore the feasibility of joint working and financing of key projects that might service the whole of Ireland, including a velodrome.

That said, responsibility for bringing forward proposals for the development of a cycling velodrome rests in the first instance with the governing body of the sport, Cycling Ireland.

Any possible investment for such a facility could only be considered in the context of a clear, co-ordinated strategy for the sport, developed by the governing body that, in turn, matches with my own priorities for sport as a whole.

Any proposal would need to set out how any such facility would be sustainable going forward.

Giro d'Italia 2014: Legacy

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the discussions she has had with cycling bodies to ensure a lasting legacy following the Giro d'Italia 2014.

(AQW 26736/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, is working with a large number of cycling bodies to ensure a lasting legacy following the Giro d'Italia.

As part of the Giro d'Italia 'Big Start 2014' Activation Committee Sport NI chairs a Cycling Sub Group which includes membership from CTC (the national charity), Sustrans, Cycling Ireland, Cycling Ulster and a number of district councils.

This Group feeds into a draft Legacy Plan to accompany the Giro Big Start 2014. That plan also encompasses input from a range of other government departments, agencies/organisations such as Volunteer Now and the district councils.

Sports Facilities in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding offers made for sports or partial sports facilities in the North Down constituency, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26931/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided total Exchequer funding of £14,592,032 for sports or partial sports facilities in the North Down constituency, in the last five years up to 31 March 2013 as detailed below.

Year	Organisation Name	Programme	Total
2008/09	North Down Borough Council	Elite Facilities	380,970
2009/10	Ballyholme Yacht Club	Places for Sport	12,499
	Bangor Lawn Tennis Club	Awards For Sport	10,000
	Bangor Swimming Club	Awards For Sport	7,901
	Belfast Kayak Club	Awards For Sport	2,200
	Donaghadee Golf Club	Places for Sport	108,980
	Donaghadee Sailing Club	Awards For Sport	10,000
	North Down Borough Council	Elite Facilities	828,697
2010/11	1st Bangor Ladies FC	Sport Matters: Capital and Equipment Programme	1,813
	North Down Borough Council	Elite Facilities	2,000,000
2011/12	North Down Borough Council	Elite Facilities	5,016,715
2012/13	North Down Borough Council	Elite Facilities	6,212,257
Grand Total			14,592,032

Department of Education

Holy Family Primary School, Omagh

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Education to outline the timescale for the design and building of the new Holy Family Primary School, Omagh, that will cater for the pupils from the previous CBS Primary School in Brooke Street and the Loreto Primary School in Brookemount Road.

(AQW 26125/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The amalgamation of Loreto PS and St Colmcille's PS Omagh to form Holy Family PS was approved on 16 October 2006 and I officially opened the new school in December 2012.

To facilitate the amalgamation, a number of minor works were undertaken at both sites to the sum of £309,920. The work included replacement of a retaining wall on the Loreto site, refurbishment of toilets, replacement floor coverings and blinds within the schools.

If the precise nature of any further capital works required is determined, a bid should be made through the Minor Works or Schools Enhancement programmes.

At present, there are no plans for a new build project for Holy Family in Omagh.

Education and Skills Authority: Cost

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of the Education and Skills Authority to date, broken down by area of expenditure.

(AQW 26291/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Skills Authority (ESA) has not yet been established therefore it has incurred no cost. The member may be referring to the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team (ESAIT) and associated costs within my Department.

The total cost of expenditure from 2005 to 31 August 2013 is £16.535m. A table detailing the breakdown of expenditure is as shown below.

TOTAL COST OF ESTABLISHING ESA - BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE APRIL 2005 – AUGUST 2013

Type of Spend	05/06 £000	06/07 £000	07/08 £000	08/09 £000	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000	12/13 £000	13/14 (April to August 13) £000	Total £000
Salaries	99	762	1,382	2,142	2,528	1,886	1,559	1,667	860	12,885
Travel and Subsistence	2	8	10	61	44	35	24	19	12	215
Consultancy	0	327	143	161	218	15	0	22	0	886
Other Professional Fees	0	2	11	3	19	2	0	11	0	48
Research	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	15
Staff Training and Development	5	6	37	6	19	8	3	3	1	88
Hospitality	1	16	10	4	8	4	1	3	1	48
Other Office Services (i.e. postage, printing, telephony, stationery, photocopying leases and computer maintenance)	0	34	65	89	204	218	197	199	68	1,074
Advertisement and Publicity Costs	0	27	0	0	9	0	0	15	0	51
Translation Costs	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	1	7
Accommodation	0	0	127	117	212	166	122	125	49	918

Type of Spend	05/06 £000	06/07 £000	07/08 £000	08/09 £000	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000	12/13 £000	13/14 (April to August 13) £000	Total £000
Non cash charge in respect of services provided by other Departments	0	32	77	137	0	1	0	0	0	247
Mis/Other	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	9	0	11
Depreciation and Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	32	9	42
Total	107	1,214	1,864	2,720	3,277	2,335	1,907	2,110	1,001	16,535

The member's Party has been to the fore in blocking ESA and therefore must accept responsibility in the cost associated with the delay.

Special Educational Needs Assistance for Playgroups

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education why his Department does not fund special educational needs assistance for playgroups.

(AQW 26340/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: An education and library board may fund special educational provision in non grant-aided institutions, such as playgroups, as long as it is satisfied that the interests of the child require such arrangements to be made and that the arrangements are compatible with the efficient use of resources.

Education and Library Board: Transport Assistance

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education how many A-level pupils in each Education and Library Board area are provided with transport assistance to their chosen school, when A-levels are available at a school within the statutory walking distance of their home.

(AQW 26690/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards determine whether a pupil is eligible for transport assistance using only two criteria: "distance" and "suitable school" as laid down within the Department's Home to School Transport Circular 1996/41 (as amended).

In line with the Circular, where there is A-Level provision at a suitable school within three miles of a pupil's home, transport assistance is not provided to a more distant school unless the pupil has applied to and been refused admission to all schools within three miles of their home. The Education and Library Boards have advised me that no exceptions are made to this policy and thus no pupils have been provided with transport assistance as outlined in the question.

Education and Library Boards: Elluminate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 25559/11-15, which Education and Library Boards are currently using Elluminate as part of their home tuition support services.

(AQW 26703/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) and the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) are the only Boards currently using Elluminate within their home tuition service.

Within BELB, all teachers in the Belfast Hospital School have received training in Elluminate and use it alongside the other Classroom 2000 (C2k) services to deliver a blended approach of face-to-face sessions and on-line learning for children who are ill. SELB have used Elluminate to support sick children at home on a pastoral level, helping them maintain contact with school and peers and allowing pupils to participate in some lessons. To-date, this use has mostly occurred within primary schools.

Needs of Pupils on Free School Meals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how the needs of pupils on free school meals will be protected in schools that have a low or moderate uptake of free school meals, should proposed changes to the Common Funding Formula be implemented.

(AQW 26713/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Free school meals (FSM) are available to pupils from non-working and low income households who meet the Department's free school meals eligibility criteria. The criteria are based mainly on receipt of certain benefits or Tax Credits: Income Support, Income based Jobseekers Allowance, Income related Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

My proposed changes to the Common Funding Scheme do not affect the Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) eligibility criteria. Therefore, pupils from schools with low or moderate FSME will continue to get their free school meal if they meet the eligibility criteria.

The Common Funding Formula uses registered entitlements to Free School Meals in determining funding distributions under the social deprivation element of the Targeting Social Need factor.

I have signalled my intention to apply the same eligibility criteria for free school meals for both primary and post-primary pupils from September 2014 which is expected to impact positively on around 15,000 post-primary pupils.

To ensure that other pupils (and schools) are not adversely impacted as a result of more FSME children in the system, part of the £30m which I announced for the ASB is to cover the increased pressures generated by these 15,000 pupils.

Alternative Renewable Energy Sources on School Estates

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has considered installing alternative renewable energy sources on school estates to reduce electricity and heating running costs for schools.

(AQW 26739/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department is committed to the provision of modern sustainable accommodation for educational establishments and consideration is given to the use of renewable energy sources where economically feasible.

Studies are carried out for all new builds to establish if a suitable renewable energy source can be effectively utilised. The energy performance of existing buildings is monitored regularly and where deemed viable the installation of renewable technology is pursued.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs: Transport to School

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Education how many pupils with Special Educational Needs in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area require transport to school, broken down by district.

(AQW 26742/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have been advised by the North Eastern Education and Library Board that the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs who require transport to school is as set out in the table below:

Council Area	Number of Pupils
Antrim	260
Ballymena	318
Ballymoney	132
Carrickfergus	159
Coleraine	307
Larne	116
Magherafelt	171
Moyle	51
Newtownabbey	350
Total	1,864

The figures include special educational pupils attending both special and mainstream schools.

Small Schools Subsidy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the impact on the viability of rural schools of the suggested removal of the Small Schools Subsidy.

(AQW 26747/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: One of the recommendations in the Independent review of the Common Funding Scheme was to remove all small schools factors from the current funding. While I accepted this recommendation in principle, I decided not to implement it at this time. The small schools factors in the current formula will be retained for the 2014-15 financial year.

However, I want to see more progress on area planning and I will therefore reserve the capacity to make further adjustments to the funding formula in future years, including the removal of small schools factors, to reflect and respond to that progress in due course.

Children with Dyscalculia

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what assistance his Department gives to children identified as having dyscalculia.

(AQW 26772/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that there is a range of support for children identified as having dyscalculia including:-

- educational psychologists can provide advice to schools from stage two of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (COP);
- advice and training can also be provided by boards' support services to school staff, children and parents;
- If appropriate, direct support to children is provided on the basis of a Statement of Special Educational Needs at Stage Five of the COP;
- Advice and support can also be provided to schools by boards' Maths Advisers and through my department's Literacy and Numeracy Signature Project for underachieving pupils some of whom may have dyscalculia;
- If appropriate, examination concessions can also be applied at post-primary level.

Schools will also identify pupils with mathematical difficulties through all stages of the COP and deploy their own resources by way of relevant and purposeful measures.

Risks Associated with the Farming Environment

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has undertaken, or plans to undertake, any projects with schools and farming communities to highlight to young children the risks associated with the farming environment.

(AQW 26788/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has not taken forward any projects with schools or farming communities in relation to the risks associated with the farming environment.

The revised curriculum is less prescriptive, with legislation setting out the minimum to be taught in our schools as Areas of Learning (AOLs) for each Key Stage. It provides more flexibility for teachers to make decisions on how best to interpret and combine minimum requirements to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils. The specifics of what is taught, and how it is taught, under each the Areas of Learning is therefore a matter for each teacher/school.

In line with this flexibility, the Department delegates as much funding and decision-making as possible to schools which are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils.

The Areas of Learning do provide teachers with the opportunity to cover this important issue, for example, through the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) Area of Learning at primary level, pupils should be enabled to explore the importance of keeping healthy and how to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments. Similar opportunities are provided at Post-Primary level through the Learning for Life and Work (LLW) Area of Learning.

Sure Start Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the success of the Sure Start programme.

(AQW 26795/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Sure Start Programme plays a vital role in ensuring that young children have a good start in life, through the delivery of a wide range of programmes and services to children aged under four and their parents living in the most disadvantaged areas. The ETI evaluation of the Sure Start developmental programme for 2-3 year olds in 2009/10 concluded that the programme had the potential to add value to pre-school provision and contribute positively to an integrated approach to meeting the needs of young children and their families.

There are now 35 Sure Start projects benefitting over 33,000 children and their families. My Department is investing £25m in 2013-14 in Sure Start, which represents a significant investment in this service.

The Learning to Learn strategy, which was published on 7th October 2013, sets out the way forward for early years education and learning services in line with education priorities. One of the key actions that will be taken forward will be a review of Sure Start, with input from DHSSPS, to assess the extent to which the programme is having the desired positive impact on the well-being and development of children and families in the most disadvantaged areas.

Sure Start Programme: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education in which areas of North Down is the Sure Start programme operating.

(AQW 26796/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The wards of Dufferin and Whitehill and the Super Output Areas (SOAs) of Conlig 3 and Harbour 1 will be served by the new Bangor Sure Start project.

At present Ards Sure Start provides the service delivery for Conlig 3 and Harbour 1. Responsibility for these areas will transfer to Bangor Sure Start once the project is established. I am advised that the Bangor Sure Start is on course to be fully operational in 2013/14.

Sure Start Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many people have taken part in the Sure Start programme to date.

(AQW 26797/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: DE delivers the Sure Start programme through the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), which has operational responsibility for the delivery of Sure Start. HSCB has recently developed and implemented a Sure Start database (Sure Start Play) funded by DE, to ensure effective monitoring of activity within Sure Start projects.

The database indicates that a total number of 33,360 children aged 0-4 years, and 37,101 adults are currently registered with Sure Start projects and therefore able to avail of services. Prior to establishment of the database, monitoring of Sure Start project activity was the responsibility of the former Health and Social Care Boards, prior to their transformation under RPA to the regional Health and Social Care Board. Information on how many people have taken part from the Programme's

inception in 2000/01 until the establishment of the database is not held centrally by DE or the HSCB and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Common Funding Formula: Reduction in School Budgets

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education what advice his Department has given to schools, that face a reduction in their budget under the Common Funding Formula, on how they can improve their educational performance.

(AQW 26807/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Indicative budgets for each grant-aided school were prepared as part of the current consultation process on the proposed changes to the Common Funding Scheme. These budgets are for illustrative purposes only and reflect the delegated budget that individual schools would have received in this current financial year, if the proposed changes had been implemented.

My proposals on the reform of the Common Funding Scheme are still out for consultation. I have not taken any final decisions on these proposals yet. It should be remembered that investment in schools is on the way up rather than on the way down. The aggregated schools' budget is set to increase by £15.8m next year, and I have already announced my intention to inject an additional £30m into it over the next two years, targeted at social deprivation.

Since coming to office I have continued to implement policies to raise standards and tackle educational underachievement. These policies include the school improvement policy, the literacy and numeracy strategy, the revised curriculum, entitlement framework, the framework for early years' education and learning, and the SEN and Inclusion Review.

These policies are realising improvements for all our young people. This is evidenced by improved outcomes at Key Stage 2, GCSE and A Level. However, despite these improvements, there still remains too large a gap in performance between pupils from socially disadvantaged areas and those from more affluent areas. More needs to be done to support pupils in areas of social deprivation. The key now is to step up the pace of implementation and delivery of these policies and to maintain the focus on raising standards to ensure that every pupil is able to achieve to their full potential.

Non-Teaching Staff in the Voluntary Grammar Sector

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education for an update on the payment of due remits to non-teaching staff in the Voluntary Grammar Sector.

(AQW 26823/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have instructed officials to ensure that any outstanding £250 payments, for eligible staff in the Voluntary Grammar Sector earning less than £21,000 a year in 2010/11 and 2011/12, are made without unnecessary delay. Staff should receive the payments they are entitled to, as soon as the necessary approvals are in place.

Southern Education and Library Board: Statementing

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education what is the average timeframe for the statementing for children in the Southern Education and Library Board.

(AQW 26826/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board has advised that the average timeframe for statementing children, for the period October 2012 to September 2013, excluding valid exceptions, is 21.75 weeks.

Omagh Christian Brothers Grammar School

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education whether his Department plans to involve professional mediators from the Labour Relations Agency to address the serious issues between management and

staff at Omagh Christian Brothers' Grammar School, as identified in the recent Education and Training Inspectorate report.

(AQW 26839/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As indicated previously, my Department is working with Omagh Christian Brothers' Grammar School and the Western Education & Library Board to put in place a suitable mediation arrangement designed to help the Board of Governors address outstanding issues and build a culture of trust and mutual support throughout the school community. The precise nature of those arrangements is the subject of continuing discussion between the Department, the WELB and the school.

Looked After Children: Personal Education Plans

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education why he was unaware that looked after children should have had personal education plans in place by June 2013.

(AQW 26854/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I assume the member's question refers to his recent question during Topical Questions and my reply. I have since corrected the record on this matter and apologise for any misunderstanding.

All looked after children do require Personal Education Plans (PEPs). These are initiated by the child's social worker and schools complete them when asked to do so. The Health and Social Care Board's timetable for progressing PEPs indicated that all looked after children and young people would have a PEP in place by 1 June 2013. This has not been achieved. My Department officials are working with other partners including DHSSPS, the Health and Social Board, Trusts and Education and Library Boards to address this issue.

South Eastern Education and Library Board: Statementing

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what is the average time for statementing in the South Eastern Education and Library Board.

(AQW 26859/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the average timeframe for statementing children, for the period October 2012 to September 2013, excluding valid exceptions, is 24 weeks.

Education and Library Boards: Statementing

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many pupils in each Education and Library Board have been statemented in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26862/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that the number of pupils who have had a statement of special educational needs issued in the last three academic years is as follows:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
BELB	401	416	366
NEELB	358	420	402
SEELB	483	326	440
SELB	326	393	449
WELB	267	372	357

Temporary and Permanent Posts in the Department

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) number; and (ii) percentage of people (a) applying for; and (b) appointed to, temporary and permanent posts in his Department in each of the last two years, broken down by community background.

(AQW 26875/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: 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 the Department of Education (DE). The most recent data available is for the period 1 January 2012 until 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 DE is carried out by volume, corporate led competitions, whereby individuals apply to join the NICS rather than rather than specific departments. Data relating to applicants and appointees to permanent DE posts as a result of 5 DE led competitions held in 2011 and 2012, is set out in the tables below. The year refers to the year of application and not the year of appointment. There were no DE led competitions for temporary posts with a closing date for applications in 2011 or 2012.

Applicants to DE led competitions

For 2012, due to small numbers of applicants (ie less than 5) in the Not Determined category, this category has been combined with the Protestant category.

	2011			2012	
	No.	%		No.	%
Protestant	9	34.6%	Protestant/Not Determined	24	25.8%
Catholic	17	65.4%	Catholic	69	74.2%
Not Determined	0	0.0%			

Appointments from DE led competitions held in 2011 and 2012

To protect the confidentiality of the community background of appointees, in 2011 and 2012, this information has been suppressed. Data re appointments is as at 26 September 2013.

	2011	2012
	No.	No.
Total	2	4

Education Other Than at School Facilities

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to list the number of Education Other Than At School facilities in each Education and Library Board area; and the year in which they were opened.

(AQW 26897/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A list of Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) Centres in each Education and Library Board (ELB) area and the year they were opened is included below.

BELFAST EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD (BELB)

Centre	Year Opened
Glenmona Resource Centre Glen Road Belfast BT11 8BX	1999
Iveagh Centre 67 Broadway Belfast BT12 6HF	2012
Loughshore Education Resource Centre 889 Shore Road Belfast BT36 7DH	2001
The Link Centre SPSS 8 – 30 Barrack Street Belfast BT12 4AH	2000 1999
TOPS (Staffed by The Belfast Hospital School which opened in 1990) 8 – 30 Barrack Street Belfast BT12 4AH	2010
Newstart Education Centre 1a Dunlewey Street Belfast BT13 2QU (Community Based)	1998
Conway Education Centre 5 – 7 Conway Street Belfast BT13 2DE (Community Based)	1983
Pathways Unit 5 Nelson Trade Centre Nelson Street Belfast BT15 1BH	1998
Pathways 141 – 149 York Street Belfast BT15 1 AB	1998
Pathways 331 Shankill Road Belfast BT13 2AA (Community Based)	1998

SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD (SEELB)

Centre	Year Opened
Beechcroft Education Unit 110 Saintfield Road Belfast BT8 6HD	2010
Castlereagh AEP 56 Merok Park Belfast BT6 9LT	2002
Downpatrick AEP Ardmore 95a Saul Road BT30 6NJ	2000
Groomsport Intensive Support Learning Unit Springwell Drive Groomsport BT19 6JX	2007
Redburn 364 Old Holywood Road Holywood BT18 9QW Previously at Victoria Road, Bangor from 2004	2008
Lagan Valley AEP 4a ColinGreen (in partnership with SELB since 2004) Poleglass Dunmurray Belfast BT17 0PQ (Community Provider)	1994

NORTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD (NEELB)

Centre	Year Opened
Ballymena EOTAS Braid Primary School 187 Carnlough Road Broughshane BT43 7JW	2012
Carrick/Larne EOTAS Greenisland Youth Centre 15c Glassillan Grove Greenisland BT38 8TE	2007

Centre	Year Opened
Coleraine EOTAS Drumard Primary School 70 Tamlaght Road Tamlaght O'Crilly Upperlands Maghera BT46 5XB	2013
Leagreen Primary Referral Unit Glenvarna Drive Glengormley BT35 5JB	2003
Newtownabbey Educational Guidance Centre 231 Jordanstown Road Newtownabbey BT37 0LR	1990
Rathmore Educational Guidance Centre 10 Loughanmore Road Dunadry BT41 2HQ	1990
Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre 180 Ballycastle Road Coleraine BT52 2EG	1982

SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD (SELB)

Centre	Year Opened
The Kinnego Centre 56 Lislasy Road Kinnego Dungannon BT71 6TB	1995
Lough Road Primary Pupil Referral Unit Lough Road Key Stage 2 Provision Lough Road Key Stage 3 Provision* Lough Road Key Stage 4 Provision 27 Lough Road Lurgan BT66 6JJ *KS3 provision transferred to Tamnamore LC in 2013	2002 2006 2004 2002
Newry KS4 EOTAS 61 Dominic Street Newry BT35 8BW Tamnamore Learning Centre 2009 151 Tamnamore Road Dungannon BT81 6HW	2004 Closed in 2013 for KS4 Re-opened September 2013 for KS3

WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD (WELB)

Centre	Year Opened
Laurel Centre (KS3) Laurel Centre (KS4) Maydown House 1 Maydown Road L' Derry BT47 6UF	2002 2002
EOTAS Enniskillen Shanmullagh Support Unit Ballinamallard BT94 2LY	2004
EOTAS Limavady LEAP Support Unit Limavady BT49 9ET	2004
EOTAS Strabane Knockavoe Support Unit Strabane BT82 9EB	2004
Longtower Youth and Community Centre Anne Street L'Derry BT48 6PB	2002

2012/13 Teachers' Superannuation Annual Scheme Statements

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the discrepancies identified in membership data for the purposes of the 2012/13 Teachers' Superannuation Annual Scheme Statements; (ii) when these discrepancies were first identified; and (iii) what action has been taken to address this issue.

(AQW 26902/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The discrepancies identified in membership data for the purposes of the 2012/13 Teachers' Superannuation Annual Scheme Statements arise from reconciliation of membership statistics at 31 December 2012 to those at 31 March 2013. This shows a decrease (1556) in active members, offset by a similar increase (1506) in deferred members.
- (ii) These discrepancies were identified earlier this year during preparation of the 2012/13 Teachers' Superannuation Annual Scheme Statements published on 5 July.
- (iii) The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) concluded that any potential misstatement on the pension liability, arising from these discrepancies, does not have a material impact on the 2012-13 resource accounts. However the Department fully recognises the importance of the accuracy of membership data and is currently implementing a plan of actions developed from NIAO advice on this issue.

Raising of the School Leaving Age

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what consideration his Department has given to raising the school leaving age to 18 years old, similar to recent legislative changes in Great Britain.

(AQW 26904/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Compulsory school age in Northern Ireland is where pupils, who are 16 between 1 September and 1 July (inclusive) in the school year, can leave school on 30 June of that year. Pupils, who become 16 between 2 July and 31 August (inclusive) in any year, cannot leave school until 30 June of the following year.

I have currently no plans to change the school leaving age.

Education Together

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 21991/11-15, to clarify what is meant by 'education together of learners from all Section 75 and socio-economic status'.

(AQW 26905/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education sought responses from stakeholders on how the advancement of shared education meet the needs of, and provide for the education together, of learners from all Section 75 categories and all socio-economic backgrounds.

The three key themes that tended to emerge were:

- shared education as a way of schools supporting each other and sharing expertise;
- greater coordination of school development plans and resources; and
- the inclusion of special schools in collaborative networks.

I intend to make a statement to the Assembly in the near future on recommendations made by Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education. In my statement I will also outline how shared education can be advanced in ways that ensure equality of opportunity and access to education for all learners.

Educational Psychologists

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many educational psychologists are employed in each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 26930/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of educational psychologists employed in each Education and Library Board (Full Time Equivalents) are listed below:

SEELB	34.4
SELB	26.9
WELB	22.5
BELB	28.1
NEELB	25.92

Inclusion and Provision for People with a Disability

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to promote inclusion and provision for people with a disability.

(AQW 26953/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 strengthened the right to an ordinary education place for children or young people with special educational needs (SEN) and extended similar provisions to those contained in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to educational institutions in the north of Ireland. Not every pupil with a disability will have SEN but, where a disability prevents the pupil from accessing education then provision for the pupil may be considered through the medium of a statement of special education needs.

With the introduction of SENDO it is unlawful for a “responsible body” to discriminate against pupils or prospective pupils in;

- the arrangements a school makes for determining admission to the school;
- the terms in which the school offers to admit a child;
- a refusal by the school to admit a child or by deliberately omitting the child’s application
- discrimination by the school in the education or associated services provided for or offered to pupils at the school;
- discrimination by the school by suspending or expelling the child.

“Responsible body” means;

- in the case of a grant-aided school the Board of Governors of the school or the Education and Library Board for the area in which the school is situated, according to which has the function in question; or in relation to an independent school, the proprietor.

Part B of the Department’s Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission sets out action measures carried out in relation to the implementation of disability duties. The most recent Annual Progress Report can be found on the Equality Scheme page of the Department’s website.

Copies of the Annual Progress Report have also been placed in the Assembly Library.

In the near future, there will be a consultation on the Department’s proposed Disability Action Plan for 2013-15 and the Five Year Review of Disability Action Plans. This will provide additional opportunities to engage with, and be challenged by, individuals with disabilities and organisations representing persons with disabilities.

Southern Education and Library Board Area: Statementing

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education whether there is a limit on how many children can be statemented per term, or per academic year, in the Southern Education and Library Board area, and if so, if there flexibility is on the basis of need.

(AQW 27007/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board has confirmed that there is no limit on how many children can be statemented per term or academic year.

Statement of Special Educational Needs

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education whether he will place a duty on Education and Library Boards to hold reserve funding to meet the medical needs of primary school pupils whilst they await a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

(AQW 27044/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: I do not believe that it would be appropriate to place a duty on Education and Library Boards to hold reserve funding to meet the medical needs of primary school pupils whilst they await a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

This is due to the precise nature of support required for each child, as contained in a Statement, only being able to be finalised following full consideration of each child’s individual special educational needs involving close co-operation between all agencies concerned, including health professionals, and subsequent consultation with the child’s parents.

Corran Integrated Primary School, Larne

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Education what progress has been made on a new and permanent building for Corran Integrated Primary School, Larne following his announcement on 22 January 2013.

(AQW 27057/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Corran Integrated Primary School was included in my capital investment statement of 22 January 2013 as one of 22 primary and post-primary schools which will be advanced in planning.

The project is still at an early stage of the planning process and my officials are currently considering all options regarding the appointment of consultants for those projects included in the January 2013 announcement.

Until this work has been concluded and outcomes agreed no further planning on the Corran Integrated Primary School project can proceed. It is hoped that this matter will be resolved shortly. Officials will engage with the school authorities in the coming weeks to advance the appointment of the required professional consultants.

Relationship and Sex Education

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the evaluation and due diligence procedures in place with regards to the materials permitted in Relationship and Sex Education (RSE); and (ii) to what extent the organisation "Precious Life" or any of their affiliated organisations are involved in the schooling system with regards to Relationship and Sex Education.

(AQW 27078/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education delegates as much funding and decision-making as possible to schools which are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils and we take the view that it is very much a matter for schools themselves to decide on the resources they wish to use in their delivery across all subjects within the curriculum – the Department of Education does not prescribe the resources to be used.

The Department does provide advice and guidance about Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) for schools and this guidance requires schools to have in place its own policy on how it will address the delivery of RSE. A school's policy should be subject to consultation with parents, and should be endorsed by a school's Board of Governors. It must also be delivered in a sensitive manner which is appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and to the ethos of the school.

With regards to the use of external programme providers, it is a matter for each school to reach a judgement on whether or not a resource provided by an external body might enhance their teaching and learning. Accordingly, the Department does not endorse, promote or recommend such resources or programmes and we do not hold information about the use of such organisations by schools.

Department for Employment and Learning

South West Regional College: Beacon Centre

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 25524/11-15, why South West Regional College delivered provision for young people leaving special schools through the Beacon Centre, which predominately deals with mental health issues.

(AQW 26594/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): South West College (SWC) does not deliver provision to young people leaving special schools through the Beacon Centres.

As I stated in AQW 25524/11-15, during the 2012/13 academic year, SWC provided part-time courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at the Dungannon campus, in conjunction with the Beacon Centre. SWC considered that this type of provision was not appropriate for young adults leaving special schools.

South West Regional College: Consultation Process

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 25524/11-15, for an assurance that the consultation process will be conducted by South West Regional College with the relevant parties in future.

(AQW 26671/11-15)

Dr Farry: South West Regional College have informed me that the College has worked to develop strong links with the local special schools, together with other professional staff, related to the field of special educational needs.

The College assure me that they are in communication with all key stakeholders, on an ongoing basis. On this basis, I am content that they already include all relevant parties in their consultation process and have no doubt that this will continue to be the case.

South West College: Audit on Learning Disability Provision

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when the audit that was completed by his Department on learning disability provision at South West College will be published; and to outline the reasons for the delay in publication.

(AQW 26901/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have shared the findings of the audit of further education provision for adults with learning disabilities, in South West College, with Lord Morrow and the Committee for Employment and Learning, as agreed.

The audit was conducted by my Department to determine the availability of provision and is available to those who require it.

Management and Leadership Development Programme Initiatives

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the Management and Leadership Development programme initiatives in the South Down Constituency.

(AQW 26903/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department offers a range of leadership and management interventions across Northern Ireland, which aim to improve the skills of both companies and individual managers. A total of 29 different initiatives are comprised in the Management Analysis and Planning (MAP) programme, the Management and Leadership Development Programme (MLDP) and the INTRO Graduate management development programme. Since April 2013 leadership and management programmes have been fully funded for interested companies and participants.

Over the three years to date in the South Down constituency area 18 companies have taken up the MAP programme; 41 individual managers have participated in MLDP; and; 13 graduates have participated on the INTRO Graduate Management Development programme. Two focused leadership and management roadshow events were held in Newry, providing details of available leadership and management support as well as providing a leadership themed talk by a leading UK expert.

Queens University: Tuition Fees

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he has given any consideration to; (i) increasing university tuition fees beyond £3500; and (ii) the appeal by the new Vice Chancellor of Queens University to lift the cap on tuition fees.

(AQW 26976/11-15)

Dr Farry: As you are aware, on 27 June 2011 the Executive agreed to cap tuition fees for Northern Ireland domiciles studying in Northern Ireland at £3,465, subject only to annual inflationary increases. Presently, my Department is committed to maintaining the current Executive policy of freezing tuition fees at their current levels.

Ultimately, I remain fully committed to ensuring that our universities continue to be able to compete with universities throughout the rest of the United Kingdom and indeed globally. Thus, while tuition fees remain capped in Northern Ireland, my Department has continued in its role as the primary funder of the sector. This is in stark contrast to the rest of the United Kingdom, where, although the universities now receive a higher proportion of their incomes through annual tuition fee payments, direct government funding has substantially decreased.

Youth Employment Scheme

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the success rate of the Youth Employment Scheme broken down by constituency.

(AQW 26993/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information in relation to the Youth Employment Scheme is outlined in the attached table. This information is collated on a local office rather than constituency basis and reflects the position from the launch of the scheme until 4 October 2013.

Constituency	Served by Offices	Employer Agreements Signed	Opportunities Available	Young People taking up Placement	Young People Securing Employment
North Antrim	Ballymena Ballymoney	156	230	116	46
South Antrim	Antrim Newtownabbey	123	197	88	25
East Antrim	Larne Carrickfergus	112	146	79	20
East L'Derry	Coleraine Limavady	266	315	200	64
Foyle	Foyle Lisnagelvin	682	761	437	126
West Tyrone	Strabane Omagh	118	137	100	54
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Enniskillen Dungannon	158	209	106	75
Mid Ulster	Magherafelt Cookstown	99	128	71	37
Newry & Armagh	Newry Armagh	128	314	97	33
Upper Bann	Lurgan Portadown Banbridge	282	427	222	78
South Down	Kilkeel Newcastle Downpatrick	144	190	75	15

Constituency	Served by Offices	Employer Agreements Signed	Opportunities Available	Young People taking up Placement	Young People Securing Employment
Lagan Valley	Lisburn Ballynahinch	125	209	105	37
Strangford	Newtownards	56	102	50	23
North Down	Bangor	89	107	68	28
Belfast North	North Belfast	38	112	34	10
Belfast East	Hollywood Road	41	99	50	13
Belfast South	Knockbreda Shaftesbury Square	123	333	88	24
Belfast West	Falls Andersonstown Shankill	94	370	194	21
Total		2834	4386	2180	729

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 25734/11-15, when the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project will be operational.

(AQW 26338/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project began procurement on 2 October 2013 and responses to the tender are to be submitted by 6 November. The time at which the project will become operational will be dependent on the tender response from the market. The target for completion is March 2015.

Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment where the annual Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator for Northern Ireland Compliance Plans are publicly available.

(AQW 26399/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Handling of the Compliance Plans is a matter for the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation, not my Department.

I refer also to my response to AQW 26316/11-15.

Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what formal reporting structures exist from the Utility Regulator to her Department on whether Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator for Northern Ireland are compliant with their licences.

(AQW 26400/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Compliance with licence requirements is a matter for the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation.

Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what process is in place to address non-compliance in respect of Northern Ireland Electricity or System Operator for Northern Ireland's licence obligations.

(AQW 26407/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Compliance, or otherwise, with licence conditions is a matter for the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation.

Non-Compliances Reported

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many non-compliances have been reported (i) before Northern Ireland Electricity was sold to ESB; and (ii) following the sale.

(AQW 26408/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Monitoring of compliance with licence conditions is a matter for the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation.

System Operator for Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many non-compliances have been reported (i) before System Operator for Northern Ireland was sold to EIRGRID; and (ii) following the sale.

(AQW 26409/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Monitoring of compliance with licence conditions is a matter for the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation.

Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to whom the Utility Regulator is accountable, in terms of ensuring adequate monitoring of Northern Ireland Electricity or System Operator for Northern Ireland compliance plans or licence obligations.

(AQW 26473/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation is a non-Ministerial Government Department accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Price Rise in Electricity

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the reasons for the eighteen percent price rise for electricity consumers in Northern Ireland, but not in the Republic of Ireland, despite both being a part of the same electricity market.

(AQW 26475/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Regulator has advised that whilst Power NI, the regulated electricity supplier in Northern Ireland, does purchase wholesale energy from the same pool market as suppliers in the Republic of Ireland, the network and supply and tax elements of the final price paid by customers will be different. These non-wholesale elements make up around 45% of the final price.

The Regulator has further advised that despite the recent 17.8% increase, the Power NI standard tariff is today still cheaper than the Electric Ireland standard tariff. Electric Ireland is the main supplier in the Republic of Ireland.

Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department has continued to (i) monitor the importance of securing existing jobs; and (ii) maintaining the identity of the electricity network business in Northern Ireland; and whether this is still valid given the changes within Northern Ireland Electricity and the System Operator of Northern Ireland, following their sale to the Irish state owned companies, ESB and Eirgrid.

(AQW 26483/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As per my response to AQW 26317/11-15, licence conditions require that the businesses have adequate financial and non-financial resources to conduct their operations. As per my response to AQW 25202/11-15, identity is a matter for the company.

Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of how Northern Ireland Electricity and System Operator for Northern Ireland are complying with their licences, in particular, how each have remained fully independent to ESB and Eirgrid by providing the premises, systems, equipment, facilities, property, personnel, data and management resources that are necessary for its efficient and effective managerial and operational independence.

(AQW 26484/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Monitoring of compliance with licence requirements is a matter for the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation.

System Operator for Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, as the independent Transmission System Operator Business for Northern Ireland, for her assessment of whether the System Operator for Northern Ireland should be totally independent from the equivalent Transmission System Operator Business for the Republic of Ireland, notwithstanding any normal co-operation between Transmission System Operator Businesses of neighbouring countries.

(AQW 26490/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am not the Independent Transmission System Operator Business for Northern Ireland.

Exploris Aquarium

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department can take to allow the Exploris Aquarium to remain open.

(AQW 26683/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the reply I gave to AQW 26535/11-15.

Allstate Northern Ireland

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether Allstate Northern Ireland intends to announce redundancies in the North West.

(AQW 26822/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Allstate Northern Ireland is not intending to announce any redundancies in its North West office.

In fact I recently approved a package of assistance totalling £4.9million to support the creation of 650 new technology, knowledge and business process outsourcing positions across Allstate's 3 sites in Northern Ireland with scope to create up to 200 in the North West region – skills availability and business demand permitting.

Mobile Network Coverage

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department will make direct contact with mobile phone companies to address the network coverage problems over the last number of weeks.

(AQW 26827/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The mobile phone companies are private sector organisations, independently regulated and, to date, have not been supported with public investment from my Department. As such there is no obligation on those companies to report any network outage issues to my Department.

Nevertheless, DETI officials have contacted the four main operators to ascertain if they have been experiencing any significant network problems in recent weeks particularly in the South Down constituency. They have been advised that while some have reported localised issues related to loss of power or temporary site shutdown due to ongoing network upgrades, for the majority there have been no widespread outages. It is understood that on those localised occasions disruption is being kept to a minimum.

If consumers are experiencing issues with their network services, these should be reported directly to the service provider in the first instance. All mobile phone companies have coverage checkers on their websites to enable consumers to check signal strength in their areas. Indeed some post details of areas where unexpected problems are being experienced or planned maintenance is scheduled, together with an indication of possible time to resolution/completion.

Mobile Infrastructure Project

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the roll out of the Mobile Infrastructure Project which is being administered by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

(AQW 26828/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The contract for the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) is being fully administered, resourced and managed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. DETI therefore has no direct involvement in its implementation.

DCMS does however keep DETI informed of progress on an ad hoc basis. The latest update was received at a telecoms meeting of the Devolved Administrations in Belfast on 13 September. At that meeting it was reported that the project was progressing well generally and that in the Northern Ireland context there had been good local engagement as the contractor, Arqiva, conducted its site planning analysis.

Arqiva has been conducting site analysis in one of the first areas of Northern Ireland to be addressed by the project i.e. Newry & Mourne and has been meeting with local elected representatives and others in this regard. Arqiva has also been in contact with the DoE Planning Service to unlock potential planning issues and with bodies such as Northern Ireland Water and the Forestry Commission around potential land use.

More details on the project in general can be found on the DCMS website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-it-easier-for-the-communications-and-telecoms-industries-to-grow-while-protecting-the-interests-of-citizens/activity>.

Mobile Infrastructure Project

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether South Down will have improved network coverage as a result of the Mobile Infrastructure Project.

(AQW 26829/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) is administered and resourced directly by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in London and delivered through a contract with communications infrastructure and media services company Arqiva.

In July 2013 DCMS and Arqiva published a map setting out the local authority areas that stand to benefit from MIP investment with an indication that Arqiva had begun the process of identifying suitable sites for mast infrastructure in a phased manner. The map, which also provides an outline of the project phasing across the UK, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mobile-reception-around-uk-to-get-massive-boost>.

It is my understanding that South Down is currently one of the areas standing to benefit from the extended mobile coverage that the MIP will bring about.

Mobile Infrastructure Project

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department plans to address potential network problems during the roll out of the Mobile Infrastructure Project.

(AQW 26830/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As per my response to AQW 26829/11-15, the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) is administered and resourced directly by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in London. My Department does not therefore have any direct involvement in the project implementation.

Under the project, DCMS is providing capital funding to its contractor, Arqiva, to build the new site infrastructure, while mobile network operators EE, Telefonica (O2), Three and Vodafone will be providing coverage from the sites and funding their operating costs for the 20-year life of the project.

DCMS has advised my officials that at this stage, it is not envisaged there will be any network disruptions associated with the roll out of the MIP.

Home Heating Oil Prices

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is the total percentage increase in home heating oil prices since 2007.

(AQW 26832/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not hold data on the cost of home heating oil but does track information collated from a selection of local distributors by the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, which has published data since 2009 covering the price range of 300, 500 and 900 litre fills.

This information can be obtained through the following link: www.consumercouncil.org.uk/oil-price-watch/

Gas Storage Facility at Islandmagee

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the decision of the UK Government to end subsidies for gas storage facilities has an impact on the proposed facility in Islandmagee.

(AQW 26886/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Islandmagee gas storage project has been developed as a commercial venture without any expectation of government subsidy. The developers of the project are continuing to work towards obtaining the necessary consents and regulatory arrangements for the project.

Gas Storage Facility at Islandmagee

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the proposed gas storage facility in Islandmagee.

(AQW 26887/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Northern Ireland is totally dependent on imported natural gas for power generation, business and domestic use. A gas storage facility, such as that proposed at Islandmagee, would enhance our security of supply in the event of a disruption to gas supplies and provide an additional gas resource at times of peak demand. A gas storage facility could also help consumers to avoid price spikes at times of high gas demand.

Businesses Exporting to the European Union

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline how she supports businesses that wish to export to other countries within the European Union.

(AQO 4816/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI provides a range of export trade solutions that are available to any Northern Ireland-based manufacturing or tradeable service company wishing to sell outside Northern Ireland.

The current Overseas Events Programme includes over 40 missions and exhibitions in European countries.

To assist businesses develop these markets, Invest NI has representation across Europe, with offices in Brussels, Dublin, Dusseldorf and London and trade advisors based in the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Russia, Turkey and the Scandinavian countries.

Broadband

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the Further Consultation on the Provision of Basic and Superfast Broadband Services.

(AQO 4812/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Responses to the further consultation were received from 156 individuals and 13 organisations highlighting nearly 700 postcodes where it was felt broadband was not available.

After removing duplicates and seeking clarification from the telecoms industry, my Department decided that 138 postcodes should be added where a basic broadband service of 2 Mega bits per second was not currently available and 85 postcodes added to the list of postcodes where superfast services are not available.

I am pleased to announce that procurement has commenced and an Invitation to Tender was issued on the 2 October 2013.

Jobs: East Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what potential job creation opportunities have been identified for East Londonderry in the last 18 months.

(AQO 4817/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In the last 18 months, Invest NI has made offers of assistance to companies in East Londonderry valued at £4.6 million, leading to total investment in the constituency of nearly £23 million and promoting almost 300 new jobs.

In addition, the Jobs Fund, which aims to help boost employment creation in the shorter-term, remains ongoing and in East Londonderry there are currently 17 projects at varying stages of development which have the potential to deliver a further 80 new jobs.

The Jobs Fund has also provided support to 18 young people not in Education, Employment or Training to set up their own businesses in the constituency and 14 other new business starts in the constituency's Neighbourhood Renewal areas.

In June of this year I also met with members of the Roe Valley Chamber of Trade and Limavady Borough Council to discuss a wide range of economic development issues in the area. You can be assured that

my Department and Invest NI continue to do all we can to identify new projects that will lead to further job creation in the constituency.

Manufacturing

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the outcomes from activities undertaken by InvestNI and InterTradelreland to facilitate island-wide networks to support the development of local manufacturing.

(AQO 4819/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI and InterTradelreland both work on a collaborative and individual basis to facilitate networks that support the development of local manufacturing.

Invest NI has supported InterTradelreland's Acumen programme, helping support 43 Northern Ireland businesses and providing over £300,000 of financial assistance. Invest NI in association with Bord Bia and Scottish Food and Drink have been instrumental in helping to create a new cross border business network 'Access 6' in the promotion of SME food and drink processors in external markets.

In 2012, InterTradelreland's Fusion Programme reported a business development impact of £31.2 million and 101 jobs, while its Innova programme reported a business impact of £23.7 million and 31 jobs. InterTradelreland's FP7/Horizon 2020 programme has now realized a drawdown valued at €80.55 million distributed among 89 successful projects in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Giro d'Italia 2014

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the criteria used when establishing the provisional route for the Giro d'Italia 2014.

(AQO 4820/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would like to confirm that I did not choose the route for The Grand Partenza of The Giro d'Italia 2014. RCS Sport, the event owners, chose the route based on a number of conditions primarily around sporting criteria.

They take into account the roads, the flow of the stage and how this will affect the racing. RCS Sport has also considered the television images that will showcase Northern Ireland.

You will understand that there are many areas of the country that are not included and it would be impossible for the event to go through every area of Northern Ireland.

A lot of work has gone into getting these stages right from a Giro d'Italia point of view. When an event comes this far away from its home base we must take care to look after their interests and ensure the central sporting considerations of the race are met.

Electricity Supply

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the ongoing work to ensure sufficient electricity supply post 2016.

(AQO 4821/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am not concerned about security of electricity supply in the short term as the 2013 Generation Capacity Statement notes that a generation surplus in Northern Ireland will remain for several years from 2016. Additionally, the island will have a generation surplus for the next decade.

My officials have been engaging with the Utility Regulator and the system operator SONI to consider how best to maintain an appropriate generation capacity margin until the new North-South electricity link is in place. Also, I have encouraged Mutual Energy to restore the Moyle electricity link with Great Britain to its full capacity as soon as possible.

Renewables

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on progress towards achieving her Department's Programme for Government 11/15 target to encourage 20 per cent of electricity consumption from renewable sources and 4 per cent renewable heat by 2015.

(AQO 4822/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As of end August 2013, the annual average percentage of electricity generated from renewable sources was 14.9% and we are on track to meet the Programme for Government target of 20% by 2015.

The collection of up to date data on renewable heat demand is less straightforward as there is no centralised heat network that can be monitored.

Initial uptake of the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive and Renewable Heat Premium Payment suggests that we are in line to meet the 4% milestone in 2015.

Department of the Environment

Recycling Figures in Council Areas

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the recycling figures in each council area.

(AQW 26369/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): The latest annual validated figures for waste sent for recycling 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.

Waste Group	Council Area	KPI (a)	KPI (e)
		Household Waste ¹ sent for recycling and composting – 2011/12 validated figures	Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste ² sent for recycling and composting – 2011/12 validated figures
arc 21	Antrim	49.3%	53.2%
	Ards	41.2%	38.2%
	Ballymena	38.0%	38.3%
	Belfast	31.7%	26.9%
	Carrickfergus	40.9%	46.1%
	Castlereagh	42.2%	42.3%
	Down	33.0%	31.0%
	Larne	50.8%	53.0%
	Lisburn	40.5%	40.0%
	Newtownabbey	43.4%	40.6%
	North Down	45.0%	44.3%

Waste Group	Council Area	KPI (a)	KPI (e)
		Household Waste ¹ sent for recycling and composting – 2011/12 validated figures	Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste ² sent for recycling and composting – 2011/12 validated figures
NWRWMG	Ballymoney	36.2%	35.2%
	Coleraine	39.8%	37.8%
	Derry	28.8%	29.8%
	Limavady	36.4%	36.6%
	Magherafelt	60.2%	59.1%
	Moyle	41.2%	38.5%
	Strabane	33.6%	31.7%
SWaMP 2008	Armagh	42.4%	43.4%
	Banbridge	52.0%	53.3%
	Cookstown	41.0%	41.1%
	Craigavon	43.5%	41.0%
	Dungannon	41.6%	39.2%
	Fermanagh	35.4%	37.0%
	Newry & Mourne	37.1%	32.5%
	Omagh	43.4%	42.8%

Waste Group	Council Area	KPI (a)	KPI (e)
		Household Waste ¹ sent for recycling and composting – 2012/13 provisional estimates	Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste ² sent for recycling and composting – 2012/13 provisional estimates
arc 21	Antrim	49.2%	53.6%
	Ards	37.7%	35.6%
	Ballymena	44.1%	44.2%
	Belfast	34.1%	29.7%
	Carrickfergus	39.4%	41.5%
	Castlereagh	40.7%	40.9%
	Down	33.5%	32.0%
	Larne	50.1%	52.9%
	Lisburn	40.1%	39.8%
	Newtownabbey	45.7%	43.2%
	North Down	43.6%	43.9%

Waste Group	Council Area	KPI (a)	KPI (e)
		Household Waste ¹ sent for recycling and composting – 2012/13 provisional estimates	Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste ² sent for recycling and composting – 2012/13 provisional estimates
NWRWMG	Ballymoney	33.9%	33.3%
	Coleraine	41.4%	38.7%
	Derry	27.3%	28.3%
	Limavady	38.3%	42.0%
	Magherafelt	56.7%	56.0%
	Moyle	40.8%	38.5%
	Strabane	32.5%	30.0%
SWaMP 2008	Armagh	40.6%	41.0%
	Banbridge	53.8%	55.7%
	Cookstown	41.4%	41.6%
	Craigavon	46.1%	45.3%
	Dungannon	42.4%	40.5%
	Fermanagh	34.8%	37.0%
	Newry & Mourne	37.2%	33.1%
	Omagh	43.2%	42.6%

Notes:

- 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.
- Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste is waste under the control or possession of a district council including non household sources.

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

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

Planning Conditions: Breaches

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how many cases of a breach of planning conditions his Department has dealt with in each of the last four years; and how many of these were referred to the Planning Appeals Commission.

(AQW 26387/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Table 1 below provides figures for alleged breaches of planning conditions from April 2009 to March 2013.

	April 2009 - March 2010	April 2010 - March 2011	April 2011 - March 2012	April 2012 - March 2013
No of cases opened for alleged breach of planning condition	645	526	393	444

The figures in Table 1 reflect the number of cases that were opened in each year for alleged breaches of planning control that the Department has dealt with. Not all of these cases would result in a Breach of Condition Notice being served.

When a Breach of Condition Notice is served, there is no right of appeal against such. Therefore none were referred to the Planning Appeals Commission.

Planning Conditions: Breaches

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment, in cases of a breach of planning conditions, what guidance his Department issues to Strategic Planning on the number of warning letters that are sent to the alleged offender before a summons is issued.

(AQW 26388/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Enforcement Manual provides guidance to planning staff on the implementation of 'Planning Policy Statement 9: The Enforcement of Planning Control'. This guidance sets out the procedures to be followed when investigating possible breaches of planning control including a breach of a planning condition.

Staff will be aware through this guidance that where a breach of planning control has been established, the Department may attempt to remedy it by issuing a warning letter. The warning letter will advise the recipient of the breach, what needs to be done to remedy it and how much time they have to carry out what needs to be done. This gives the recipient the opportunity to either rectify the breach or contact the Department and explain how the unauthorised development has occurred. If there is no reasonable prospect of the situation being resolved through negotiation the Department may move directly to formal action.

In cases of a breach of planning condition, no specific guidance has been issued to planning staff regarding the number of warning letters that can be sent to an alleged offender before a summons is issued as each breach of a planning condition is considered on a case by case basis.

It is important to note that the Department has a general discretion on whether to take enforcement action against a breach of planning control. It does so when it regards it as expedient, having regard to the provisions of the development plan and any other material consideration. Any action taken against a breach of planning control shall be proportionate to the breach. In exercising discretion, the Department is mindful of its duty to enforce planning legislation and to ensure that development is managed in a proactive and proportionate manner.

Planning Conditions: Enforcement

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what powers his Department has to enforce planning conditions.

(AQW 26434/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department can take enforcement action where a breach of planning control has occurred and it is deemed expedient to do so. This includes failing to comply with any conditions subject to which planning permission was granted.

Article 76A of The Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 provides the Department with the legislative authority to issue a Breach of Condition Notice where a condition has clearly been breached and the threat of prosecution is likely to compel the recipient to comply with the condition.

There is no right of appeal and non-compliance with a breach of Condition Notice within the specified time period is an offence.

The Department investigates all complaints into breaches of planning control and prioritises each complaint as necessary.

Planning Conditions: Properties Vacated

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment, over the last three years, how many properties have been vacated as a result of his Department not enforcing planning conditions.

(AQW 26435/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department does not hold records on properties that have been vacated or the reasons for the vacancy.

Exploris: Rescue and Rehabilitation of Seals

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment what contingency plans have been made by his Department for the rescue and rehabilitation of seals should the facilities at the Exploris aquarium close.

(AQW 26438/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As explained in my response to AQW 26245/11-15, my Department has no statutory responsibility for the rescue and rehabilitation of seals, although officials do from time to time become involved in rescues and onward transfer of pups to Exploris. The future of the seal pup sanctuary must be considered as part of the deliberations on the future of Exploris and these will include the need for contingency plans if required.

Mineral Extraction Sites

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 25630/11-15, of the last 25 discharge consents that were granted to mineral extraction sites, how many had planning permission.

(AQW 26495/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Of the last 25 discharge consents granted to minerals extraction sites 24 have planning permission. The remaining consent relates to the live planning application for Dalradian Gold, Curraghinalt, Gortin, Omagh.

Ards Borough Council: Future of Exploris

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to assist Ards Borough Council to secure the future of Exploris.

(AQW 26517/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I met a delegation from 'Friends of Exploris' led by Councillor Boyle on 30th September. Having listened carefully to their representations, I then raised the issue with my Ministerial colleagues in the Executive on 3rd October. The Executive asked for more detail about the proposal to allow further discussion at the next Executive meeting on 17th October. Officials are also in contact with Ards Borough Council.

George Best Belfast City Airport: Runway

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the plans to extend the runway at George Best Belfast City Airport.

(AQW 26578/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The planning application to extend the runway at George Best Belfast City Airport was withdrawn by the Airport in March 2012 and no further applications for any extensions have been received.

In March 2012 the Airport also submitted a request to modify the terms of their Planning Agreement with the Department. Further information has been requested to assist that process and the Airport's proposals will be considered at an independent public inquiry in the new year.

Refusal for Retrospective Planning Application

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW/25727/11-15, on what date did the deemed refusal for retrospective planning application A/2009/0400/F become effective; and when the letter of deemed refusal was issued to the applicant in accordance with Regulation 15(2A) of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.

(AQW 26580/11-15)

Mr Durkan: This application was deemed refused on 4 June 2010 due to the applicant failing to submit further environmental information required to forward the assessment of the proposal.

While a procedural error resulted in no letter issuing to the applicant, advising of the deemed refusal, the application remains deemed refused in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

Taxis: Meters and Increases in Rent

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment (i) when taxis will be required to have meters; and given the outcome of the Review of Taxi Fares and Taxi Fare Structure, what he can do to protect drivers from increases in rent by taxi operators which has the potential to remove any benefit that maximum fares may have on drivers income.

(AQW 26658/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department plans to have legislation requiring the use of taximeters in taxis across Northern Ireland operative in September 2014. It will be necessary to provide for a phased introduction of the mandatory requirement, to allow taxi operators sufficient time to purchase and install the taximeters. The precise duration of this phased introduction will be closely linked to the availability of private sector fitters and sealers, who will be authorised by the Driver and Vehicle Agency to install, calibrate and seal taximeters. Until there is a clear picture of the numbers of authorised fitters and sealers it will not be possible to provide a definitive timetable for the phased introduction. However, my Department aims to ensure that all taxis are fitted with compliant taximeters by the end of 2014.

The Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 provided the Department with powers to establish a maximum taxi fare structure across Northern Ireland. Since the Act was primarily aimed at consumer protection, these powers are limited to the specification of a maximum fare and do not permit the Department to set minimum fares. Any minimum fare levied by operators is driven by market forces and, therefore, outside the remit of the Department.

The level of depot fees, radio circuit fees, rents or other charges levied on drivers by operators are private commercial arrangements and as such are beyond the Department's control.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment when he will publish the final version of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

(AQW 26686/11-15)

Mr Durkan: After extensive assessment of the recommendations made by the Planning Appeals Commission, my Department recently submitted BMAP to the Department for Regional Development (DRD) for assessment of the Plan against the Regional Development Strategy (RDS). I expect DRD's consideration to be completed by 16 October and subject to the Plan being awarded a Certificate of General Conformity, preparations for publication will commence and are expected to take 3 – 4 months. Once completed, I plan to adopt BMAP at the earliest opportunity.

Current Tranche of Dereliction Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the timescales for funding for councils under the current tranche of Dereliction Funding.

(AQW 26707/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As part of this year's June monitoring round my department received funding of £1.5 million for dereliction. This was allocated to 15 councils on 11th July, to be spent before 31 March 2014.

I will continue to seek to secure financial resources for this important scheme.

Current Tranche of Dereliction Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how much funding is available in the current round of the Demolition Fund.

(AQW 26708/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As part of this year's June monitoring round my department received funding of £1.5 million for dereliction. This was allocated to 15 councils on 11th July, to be spent before 31 March 2014.

I will continue to seek to secure financial resources for this important scheme.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Signing Off Public Sector Works

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cases of public sector works being completed without final accounts being signed off; (i) 2 years; (ii) 3 years; (iii) 4 years; (iv) 5 years; and (v) 5+ years after the works were completed.

(AQW 25693/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The number of Government construction works contracts where work is completed and the construction contract final account not agreed are listed in Table 1 attached at Annex A. The figures provided are subject to the explanatory notes below the table.

ANNEX A

TABLE 1 - NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION WORKS CONTRACTS WHERE WORK IS COMPLETE BUT THE FINAL ACCOUNT NOT AGREED AFTER -

Department of/for	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6+ years	Total
Finance & Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regional Development	1	0	0	0	0	1
Education	2	1	1	1	1	6
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social Development	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health, Social Services & Public Safety	1	1	0	0	0	2
Employment & Learning	0	0	0	0	0	0

Department of/for	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6+ years	Total
Justice	2	0	0	0	0	2
Culture, Arts & Leisure	3	0	0	0	0	3
Agriculture & Rural Development	0	0	0	0	0	0
the Environment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Office of the First and Deputy First Minister	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Prosecution Service	0	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	9	2	1	2	1	15

Explanatory notes.

- 1 Figures only include construction works contracts awarded since the introduction of eSourcingNI in May 2008 (the cost to go back beyond electronic records would be disproportionate for those bodies that rely on such records.)
- 2 Figures only include construction works contracts with departments, their NDPBs, Agencies and Government owned companies.
- 3 Each project is recorded in the column which equates to the maximum length of time for which the final account was not agreed. The total column gives the total number of affected projects.

Peace and Reconciliation Centre

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for their assessment of the key issues that the EU Peace Programme IV will need to address; and whether the EU funds allocated for the delivery of a Peace and Reconciliation Centre will be utilised.

(AQW 25798/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Based on consultation and research, the key areas emerging for support under PEACE IV include investment in young people, creation of shared space and services, and civic leadership. It is also important that the programme aligns with, and supports, the key objectives of the Together: Building a United Community strategy.

Officials from my Department are working in partnership with SEUPB to develop PEACE IV programme proposals, which will be finalised after full public consultation.

In relation to those funds previously allocated to the delivery of a Peace building and Conflict Resolution Centre, the Special EU Programmes Body is currently considering options for reallocation to suitable alternative projects.

Public Procurement Opportunities

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the advice his Department provides to local businesses and companies in relation to accessing public procurement opportunities.

(AQW 26231/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: CPD is actively engaging with the business sector to aid understanding of, and participation in, public procurement by:

- Publication of guidance to address barriers which may prevent local businesses and companies accessing public sector procurement opportunities and encouraging small businesses to develop partnerships or consortiums to overcome gaps in their service for larger contracts.

- Simplifying the procedure for lower value procurements not subject to the same level of European legislation.
- Supporting “Meet the Buyer” events designed to stimulate the local business sector and raise awareness of best practice. This involves working closely with a number of other bodies (such as Intertradelreland and Invest NI) to promote access to public contract opportunities.
- Encouraging local businesses to register on the e-SourcingNI public procurement portal.

Public Sector Contract Procurements

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what assessment has been made of introducing a living wage requirement within public sector contract procurements.

(AQW 26244/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department has looked in detail at whether the payment of a living wage could be made a condition of public contracts. While the payment of a living wage can be encouraged the introduction of such a requirement within public sector contracts would present a significant legal risk.

This was confirmed by the European Commission in responding to a request for clarification from the Scottish Government. The Commission stated that any requirement to pay a living wage is unlikely to be compatible with European legislation.

Construction Contracts

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the measures introduced by the previous minister in regard to construction contracts on 15th November 2012 and for an update on each of their implementation.

(AQW 26247/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: On 15 November 2012 the Procurement Board, chaired by former Minister Wilson, endorsed a range of measures to assist the construction industry and to protect subcontractors and suppliers in Government construction contracts. The measures include:

- ensuring that contractors are paid within 10 days of the date of their invoice;
- ensuring that all contractors are signed up to the Construction Industry Forum Northern Ireland (CIFNI) Fair Payment Charter;
- ensuring that Project Managers check that subcontractors and suppliers are being paid promptly; and
- ensuring that Government contracts are not awarded to contractors who:
 - use the insolvency legislation to drop debts;
 - fail to pay their subcontractors and suppliers promptly; or
 - submit abnormally low tenders or sub-economic tenders.

The position on implementation of the measures is summarised below:

- on 12 December 2012 former Minister Wilson requested that Executive colleagues implement these measures;
- each of the measures is in place within Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) and all steps are being taken to monitor implementation across other Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs);
- CPD has published guidance on abnormally low tenders and insolvency during the procurement process;
- Project Bank Accounts (PBAs) are being introduced on all appropriate construction works contracts procured by CPD where the contract value exceeds £1million and there are significant subcontract opportunities; and

- guidance has been prepared by CPD to facilitate the wider application of PBAs by CoPEs.

Report on Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the recent Northern Ireland Audit Office report on Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand; and to detail his plans to achieve an sufficient balance.

(AQW 26302/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: A revised Strategy for Collaborative Procurement was approved by the Procurement Board on 6 June 2013.

This strategy will allow Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to progress collaboration for the education sector, departments and their sponsored bodies in partnership with the Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS). Whilst not fully 'pan-government' as recommended in the NIAO Report, the revised strategy has the potential to influence in excess of 85% of spend and represents a pragmatic way of moving forward. There will be a presumption in favour of Translink, NI Water and NIHE using these collaborative arrangements for specified common services and supplies on a comply or explain basis.

A Collaborative Contracts Board has been established and will meet every two months to monitor the progress and provide oversight of the NI Collaborative Procurement Strategy.

A Task and Finish Group has been established with representation from the Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs) to develop a procurement pipeline for collaborative arrangements and agree benchmarking proposals.

CPD has initiated a spend analysis in conjunction with the Cabinet Office's Government Procurement Service (GPS). This analysis will capture approximately 90% of the total spend across all bodies covered by Public Procurement Policy. The analysis will be concluded by the end of November 2013 and will provide information on expenditure for the agreed collaborative categories of spend.

CPD has put in place structures to take forward collaborative arrangements for the following categories:

- Postal Services;
- Advertising;
- Banking;
- Energy; and
- Travel.

The remaining collaborative categories will be implemented from April 2014 namely:

- Office Supplies;
- Telecoms and Networking;
- Facilities Management;
- IT commodities; and
- Fleet.

To ensure commitment to the collaborative arrangements the SLAs for CPD clients will:

- mandate the use of the arrangements established through the CCB;
- allow CPD access to the client's financial systems for spend analysis and benchmarking purposes;
- identify a single point of contact for collaboration within each department to assist in the collection of data on future demands and requirements within designated areas of common spend;

- require clients to report annually to the Procurement Board on non-compliant expenditure by their department or arms length bodies outside the common procurement categories.

Audit Office Report on Procurement

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the actions identified in response to the audit office report on procurement.

(AQW 26312/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: A revised Strategy for Collaborative Procurement was approved by the Procurement Board on 6 June 2013.

This strategy will allow Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to progress collaboration for the education sector, departments and their sponsored bodies in partnership with the Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS). Whilst not fully 'pan-government' as recommended in the NIAO Report, the revised strategy has the potential to influence in excess of 85% of spend and represents a pragmatic way of moving forward. There will be a presumption in favour of Translink, NI Water and NIHE using these collaborative arrangements for specified common services and supplies on a comply or explain basis.

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- allow CPD access to the client's financial systems for spend analysis and benchmarking purposes;
- identify a single point of contact for collaboration within each department to assist in the collection of data on future demands and requirements within designated areas of common spend;

- require clients to report annually to the Procurement Board on non-compliant expenditure by their department or arms length bodies outside the common procurement categories.

Cycle to Work Scheme: Promotion

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if the cycle to work scheme has been promoted equally within all public service departments and organisations that are applicable and if the scheme is advertised annually to all civil servants.

(AQW 26378/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The NICS Cycle to Work Scheme is advertised and promoted annually at a corporate level. The scheme is available to all Civil Servants however it is not open to non Civil Servants who work for public service departments, NDPBs and ALBs. I am aware however that a number of these organisations run their own Cycle to Work schemes.

Closure of Visitor Attractions, Leisure Facilities, Community or Amenity Facilities

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has any evidence of a growing trend in councils of closing visitor attractions, leisure facilities, community or amenity facilities that were initially jointly funded by Government and/or European funding provided on a three year sustainability basis; and if any funded activities are under pressure from closure or additional funding requirements.

(AQW 26449/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Visitor attractions, leisure facilities and community or amenity facilities are not the policy responsibility of this Department.

Pensioners in Receipt of Rate Relief

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many pensioners were in receipt of at least one form of rate relief in (i) 2006; and (ii) 2012.

(AQW 26618/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Information for 2006 is not available.

Information on how many pensioners were in receipt of at least one form of rate relief in 2012 is not available as the LPS information system does not hold information on gender and it is therefore not possible to identify those who are in receipt of pension. Information is available on the number of persons aged 60 or older who were in receipt of Housing Benefit for Rates, Low Income Rate Relief or Lone Pensioner Allowance. As at 31st March 2013, a total of 66,639 people aged 60 or over were in receipt of one or more of these benefits as shown in the table below. A further 8,902 persons were in receipt of Disabled Persons Allowance only. From the information available it is not possible to say how many of these Disabled Persons Allowance recipients were aged 60 or older.

Rate Relief Type	Number of Persons aged 60 or older receiving the relief
Housing Benefit for Rates	41,687
Low Income Rate Relief	11,445
Lone Pensioner Allowance ¹	22,623
At least one form of Rate Relief ²	66,639

1 Must be aged 70 or older

2 Individuals may be in receipt of more than one relief.

This information relates to the reliefs administered by Land & Property Services for owner occupiers.

Graduates Recruited by the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of graduates recruited by the Northern Ireland Civil Service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 26673/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The majority of Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) posts do not require applicants to have a degree therefore the NICS does not hold information on the number of graduates who have been appointed through such competitions.

The table attached outlines the number of graduates appointed through the Northern Ireland Fast Stream scheme (2011-2013) and the previous Degree Holder competitions (2008-2009) for which a degree is an entry requirement.

Year of appointment	Number of Appointments made
2013	15
2012	12
2011	6
2010	No appointments were made in 2010 due to an embargo on NICS recruitment.
2009	27
2008	47

Graduate Recruitment Campaign

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he has any plans to launch a graduate recruitment campaign within the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 26685/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The NICS has been participating in the Fast Stream scheme run through GB Civil Service Resourcing since 2011. The NI Fast Stream is an accelerated training and development programme for degree holders who have the potential to become senior managers within the NI Civil Service. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2014 scheme; the closing date for applications is 31 October 2013.

The NICS does not have any plans to run any additional graduate campaigns at this time.

Management of Response Maintenance Contracts

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the precise action his Department taken following recommendation 10 of the Public Accounts Committee report of March 2013 on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive: management of response maintenance contracts.

(AQW 26687/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report and associated formal response, in the form of a Memorandum of Reply, was circulated by my officials to all departmental and Agency Accounting Officers and Finance Directors on 19 June 2013. In that correspondence, attention was drawn to several key PAC recommendations, including recommendation 10.

Accounting Officers and Finance Directors were asked to review the documents in the context of their own organisations, and to ensure that they were given appropriate circulation both within their own organisations and to sponsored bodies.

Unemployed People in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) number; and (ii) percentage of unemployed people in North Down under the age of twenty five, in each quarter of each of the last six years.

(AQW 26705/11-15)

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 North Down 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 NORTH DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

Date	Number	% of 16-24 population
February 2007	270	3.2
May 2007	250	3.0
August 2007	255	3.0
November 2007	210	2.5
February 2008	235	2.8
May 2008	215	2.6
August 2008	300	3.6
November 2008	320	3.9
February 2009	435	5.2
May 2009	445	5.4
August 2009	530	6.4
November 2009	455	5.5
February 2010	545	6.6
May 2010	510	6.2
August 2010	565	6.8
November 2010	530	6.4
February 2011	530	6.5
May 2011	485	6.0
August 2011	580	7.1
November 2011	515	6.3
February 2012	555	7.0
May 2012	530	6.7
August 2012	570	7.2

Date	Number	% of 16-24 population
November 2012	515	6.5
February 2013	520	6.6
May 2013	450	5.7
August 2013	500	6.3

Cabinet Office Mystery Shopper Team

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel in relation to the recently updated Suppliers Charter to detail the arrangements in place which allow the Director of Central Procurement Directorate to refer complaints to the Cabinet Office Mystery Shopper Team for an independent review.

(AQW 26755/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Cabinet Office recognises the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) as the lead body for procurement in Northern Ireland. In 2009 CPD set up an arrangement with the Supplier Feedback Service (now known as the Mystery Shopper Scheme) to carry out an independent review of supplier complaints if requested to do so by the Director of CPD.

In such cases the CPD Director will take the outcome of the review into consideration when considering the supplier's complaint.

Mystery Shopper: Scope and Remit

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the recently updated Cabinet Office document Mystery Shopper: scope and remit, which states that it shall not intervene "where the case relates to procurement activity by the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland;" and whether this impacts on the current Central Procurement Directorate Suppliers Charter.

(AQW 26759/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The arrangement Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) currently has with the Mystery Shopper Scheme, within the Cabinet Office, is to provide an independent review of supplier complaints under CPD's Supplier Charter. This arrangement is not affected by the recent update to the Mystery Shopper Scheme.

The reference to devolved administrations in the Mystery Shopper Scope and Remit document is intended to confirm that suppliers should direct their complaint to the relevant Northern Ireland authority, in the first instance, rather than the Mystery Shopper Scheme. However if CPD does receive a complaint the CPD Director may still ask the Mystery Shopper Team to conduct an independent review before making a decision on the outcome of the complaint.

Vacant Domestic Dwellings in the Dungannon South Tyrone Council District Electoral Areas

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of vacant domestic dwellings in the Dungannon South Tyrone Council District Electoral Areas.

(AQW 26784/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Information on the number of vacant domestic dwellings in the Dungannon South Tyrone Council District Electoral Areas is not available as information is collated at district council and ward area.

At 30th September 2013, a total of 1,520 domestic dwellings in the Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council area were recorded as vacant.

Since the introduction of the Rating of Empty Homes legislation on 1st October 2011 the rate liability for vacant domestic properties has been assessed at 100%. There is currently no requirement for ratepayers to inform Land & Property Services that their property is vacant nor is there any financial advantage to doing so. As such, current information on the number of empty domestic properties may not be complete.

Publication of Lending Details for Northern Ireland

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any discussions he has had with the British Bankers' Association regarding the publication of lending details for Northern Ireland.

(AQW 26793/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I met with Anthony Browne, Chief Executive of the BBA, on the 11 September 2013 to discuss the provision of SME bank lending data for Northern Ireland.

As you may be aware, my Department currently receives a quarterly 'bank support for businesses in Northern Ireland' report on a confidential basis from the British Bankers Association (BBA) which provides high level data on deposits and lending to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises locally.

This data relates to the activities of the four main banks operating locally and my Department has been pressing for some time now for this to be widened to include other banks with a presence in Northern Ireland. We have also been calling for the scope of the data provided to be extended, and in particular for a sectoral breakdown to be provided.

Mr Browne indicated to me that he hoped that an improved dataset would be available before the end of the year and that he would update me on the precise detail of this in due course.

Household Expenditure on Food

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what percentage of total expenditure the average household spends on food.

(AQW 26831/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Based on the most recent information available from the Living Costs & Food Survey (LCF), households in Northern Ireland spent an average of 19.0% of total weekly household expenditure on food and non-alcoholic drinks. This includes expenditure on 'food & non-alcoholic drinks' in shops/supermarkets, 'restaurant & café meals', 'take away meals eaten at home', 'other take away and snack food' and 'contract catering & canteens'. The table overleaf provides a breakdown for each of the categories listed as a percentage of total weekly household expenditure.

Commodity or Service	Percentage of Total Household Expenditure*
Food & non-alcoholic drinks	11.8%
Restaurant & café meals	3.8%
Take away meals eaten at home	1.6%
Other take away and snack food	1.2%
Contract catering & canteens	0.6%
All food & non-alcoholic drinks	19.0%

* Includes expenditure on Housing (mortgage payments, rent, rates, etc)

Household Expenditure on Fuel and Gas

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what percentage of total expenditure the average household spends on fuel and gas.

(AQW 26833/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Based on the most recent information available from the Living Costs & Food Survey (LCF), households in Northern Ireland spent an average of 12.3% of total weekly household expenditure on fuel and gas. Expenditure on fuel includes 'electricity', 'other fuels (including home heating oil)' and 'petrol, diesel & other motor oils'. The table overleaf provides a breakdown for each of the categories listed as a percentage of total weekly household expenditure.

Commodity or Service	Percentage of Total Household Expenditure*
Electricity	2.3%
Gas	0.4%
Other Fuels (inc. home heating oil)	3.2%
Petrol, diesel & other motor oils	6.4%
All fuel and gas	12.3%

* Includes expenditure on Housing (mortgage payments, rent, rates, etc)

Unemployed People: Newtownabbey Borough Council and Antrim Borough Council

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of unemployed people, under the age of 25, in the (i) Newtownabbey Borough Council; and (ii) Antrim Borough Council area in each quarter for the last six years.

(AQW 26843/11-15)

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 Newtownabbey and Antrim District Council Areas 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 NEWTOWNABBEEY AND ANTRIM DISTRICT COUNCIL AREAS (DCA)

Date	Antrim DCA		Newtownabbey DCA	
	Number	% of 16-24 Population	Number	% of 16-24 Population
February 2007	175	2.8	330	3.2
May 2007	115	1.9	300	2.9
August 2007	150	2.5	280	2.7
November 2007	110	1.7	215	2.1
February 2008	160	2.6	255	2.4
May 2008	175	2.8	280	2.6
August 2008	210	3.4	355	3.4
November 2008	270	4.4	420	4.0
February 2009	380	6.0	545	5.1

Date	Antrim DCA		Newtownabbey DCA	
	Number	% of 16-24 Population	Number	% of 16-24 Population
May 2009	360	5.7	595	5.6
August 2009	400	6.3	685	6.5
November 2009	370	5.9	595	5.6
February 2010	435	7.0	635	5.9
May 2010	390	6.3	615	5.7
August 2010	435	7.1	655	6.1
November 2010	375	6.1	630	5.9
February 2011	385	6.3	690	6.5
May 2011	380	6.2	635	6.0
August 2011	420	6.8	700	6.6
November 2011	385	6.3	695	6.6
February 2012	400	6.6	710	6.8
May 2012	400	6.6	720	7.0
August 2012	400	6.6	750	7.2
November 2012	385	6.4	665	6.4
February 2013	390	6.5	675	6.5
May 2013	350	5.7	640	6.2
August 2013	350	5.8	665	6.4

Rate of Local Emigration

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the rate of local emigration. (AQO 4809/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The attached table contains estimates of out-migration from Northern Ireland to Great Britain (column A) and to countries outside the UK (column B) for each year in the period mid-2000 to mid-2012. The total out-migration rate per 1,000 population is also shown.

Year ending	Migration to Great Britain (A)	Migration to countries outside the UK (B)	Total out migration (A+B)	Total outmigration rate per 1,000 population
Mid-2001	11,669	7,609	19,278	11.5
Mid-2002	11,589	6,393	17,982	10.6
Mid-2003	11,005	6,683	17,688	10.4
Mid-2004	11,858	6,996	18,854	11.1
Mid-2005	11,291	8,861	20,152	11.8

Year ending	Migration to Great Britain (A)	Migration to countries outside the UK (B)	Total out migration (A+B)	Total outmigration rate per 1,000 population
Mid-2006	11,510	8,797	20,307	11.8
Mid-2007	11,142	10,633	21,775	12.5
Mid-2008	10,707	11,981	22,688	12.9
Mid-2009	10,198	11,406	21,604	12.1
Mid-2010	11,279	12,115	23,394	13.0
Mid-2011	11,121	14,097	25,218	14.0
Mid-2012	12,090	12,480	24,570	13.5

Civil Service Cycle to Work Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, to detail any planned measures to promote the Civil Service cycle to work scheme.

(AQW 26858/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The NICS Cycle to Work Scheme is advertised and promoted annually at a corporate level. It is due to be promoted again in January 2014 to all civil servants via e-mail, the HRConnect portal and directly to those staff who don't have access to the NICS HR computer system.

Recent Speech to the Confederation of British Industry

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 25825/11-15, which states no local figure for Gross Domestic Product, to detail the source of the information contained in his recent speech to the Confederation of British Industry, in which he stated that "roughly 1/3 of our workforce are employed in the public sector. About 2/3 of our GDP comes from government".

(AQW 26885/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Figures from the Business Register and Employment Survey show that the public sector accounts for 31% of the total employee jobs in Northern Ireland for 2012 (211,800 jobs out of a total of 680,402).

In broad terms, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Value Added (GVA) are both used to measure the output of an economy, although there are technical distinctions between them. The figures quoted referred to total identifiable expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total GVA for Northern Ireland. Information for NI "Identifiable Expenditure" in 2011 is available in HM Treasury's Public Expenditure Statistics Analysis publication. GVA for NI in 2011 is available from the Office for National Statistics Regional Accounts. "Identifiable Expenditure" when expressed as a percentage of total GVA is approximately 65% of total GVA for Northern Ireland in 2011.

Executive Contracts

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how he plans to reform procurement procedures to make it easier for small businesses to bid for Executive contracts.

(AQO 4806/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Over the last two years a number of changes have been made to procurement procedures to make it easier for small businesses to access public contract opportunities. This programme of change continues. For example, CPD is working to simplify and standardise contracts across Centres of Procurement Expertise. This will help to reduce the cost burden of preparing tender documentation.

CPD will also be availing of the scope to simplify processes contained within the new EU Procurement Directives. This includes a range of measures which will help small businesses including:

- A much simpler process for checking bidders credentials;
- A reduction in the minimum time limits by which suppliers have to respond helping to bring procurement to the market more quickly;
- Buyers being encouraged to break large contacts into lots to facilitate SME participation; and
- A turnover cap that will prevent buyers from setting turnover requirements at more than twice the contract value.

UK Statutory Instrument 2013 No 908

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, (i) to explain the significance of UK Statutory Instrument 2013 No 908, which came into force on 14 May 2013 and was issued under the title The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (No.2) Regulations 2013; (ii) to confirm when his Department first became aware of this amending regulation; and (iii) to indicate what changes, if any, will be required to the guidance contained within DAO (DFP) 04/13.

(AQW 26960/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: UK Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 908 amends the provision governing the late payment of commercial debt by removing the provision which could have given debtors a further 30 days payment period after an acceptance and verification procedure has been completed.

My department was made aware of the amending regulation in late August 2013.

DAO (DFP) 04/13 was amended on 3 September 2013 by removing the bullet point below in paragraph 5 of the DAO and reissued on the same day to all Accounting Officers.

'Verification or acceptance of goods and services should not as a general rule exceed 30 days. Nevertheless, it is possible for the verification procedure to exceed 30 days if it has been agreed by both parties and is not grossly unfair to the supplier.'

Procurement Across the Civil Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the guidelines and policy governing procurement across the Civil Service.

(AQW 26986/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Public Procurement by Northern Ireland Departments and their Arm's Length Bodies is subject to Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy approved by the Executive in 2002. This policy is supported by Procurement Guidance Notes, approved by the Procurement Board, which disseminate the policy and best practice in compliance with EU and UK legislation. These notes can be accessed via the CPD website.

Departments Retention of Documents

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how long Departments have to retain documents.

(AQW 27012/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Departments retain records in line with their disposal and retention schedules which are compiled in accordance with NI public records legislation, other relevant legislation, such as the Data Protection Act 1998 and also take into account ongoing Departmental business need. The process requires the approval of the DCAL Minister as Keeper of the Records.

The disposal and retention schedules have been laid at the NI Assembly under Section 8 (2) of the Public Records Act (NI), 1923 and in accordance with the Rules of the Disposal of Documents Order 1925, by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

The schedules are approved by the Assembly by 'negative resolution'. Copies are available in the Assembly Library.

Live Births Recorded at Altnagelvin Hospital and Causeway Hospital

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many live births were recorded at (i) Altnagelvin Hospital; and (ii) Causeway Hospital during 2012; and of these, how many of the mothers had an address in the Limavady Borough Council area.

(AQW 27025/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There were 2,741 live births registered in 2012 where the place of birth was Altnagelvin Hospital. Of these, 405 mothers had an address in Limavady Borough Council area.^P

There were 1,413 live births registered in 2012 where the place of birth was Causeway Hospital. Of these, 49 mothers had an address in Limavady Borough Council area.^P

^P Data for 2012 remains provisional until the publication of the Annual Report of the Registrar General in late 2013.

Revenue Estimates

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his analysis of the revenue estimates published by Revenue and Customs on 2 October 2013.

(AQO 4798/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The publication of these estimates is a positive development as the Treasury and HMRC has in the past been reluctant to produce any sort of regional tax figures.

In terms of the figures themselves, it is important to recognise that they do not represent a precise quantification of tax receipts generated in Northern Ireland and have been published as an experimental series. The majority of revenue lines are based on estimated shares of national tax receipts rather than specific regional data. This is a similar approach to the one we take in producing our Net Fiscal Balance Report Series.

My officials are currently considering the detail of these estimates and will liaise with HMRC as required, as we take forward our own work on this area.

Enterprise Zones

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration he has given to the introduction of Enterprise Zones.

(AQO 4799/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: In line with the commitments contained in the Economic Pact, we are currently considering the merits of establishing Enterprise Zones that would have the ability to offer Enhanced Capital Allowances in Northern Ireland. Enterprise Zones in GB offer a number of incentives, including business rate discounts, simplified planning, superfast broadband and, in a small number of cases, Enhanced Capital Allowances. The Executive already has policies in place to support businesses across all of Northern Ireland using rates, broadband provision and planning. The Enhanced Capital Allowances element is the only aspect that is not already devolved.

Reform Agenda

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how the new 11 councils could participate in his Reform Agenda.

(AQO 4800/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I established the Public Sector Reform Division to be a catalyst for change and improvement by supporting departments and arms length bodies in delivering more effective and efficient public services.

In this context, the new reformed structure of local government creates opportunities for the new, larger councils to become part of the collaborative procurement and shared services operated by DFP, should this be requested by the new councils.

In addition, when identifying best practice reform measures that could be applied in Northern Ireland Executive departments I think there would be merit in offering the support of the Public Sector Reform Division to also cover the services provided by local councils, where appropriate and with the prior agreement of the respective local councils.

At the same time, there may also be reforms taking place or being considered within local councils that could be applied more widely across the public sector in Northern Ireland.

OECD Meeting

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on his recent meeting with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

(AQO 4801/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I recently met with representatives from OECD teams engaged in research in a number of public sector areas such as procurement, budget treatment, shared services and governance reviews.

These meetings were extremely interesting and directly relevant to the reform agenda that I believe this Executive needs to pursue. A small regional economy such as ours needs to ensure that we are at the forefront of international best practice when it comes to delivering public services.

I am convinced that there are significant opportunities to exploit in both central and local government. For example can we make our procurement practices more streamlined, can we roll out the shared services we have and IT platforms in a manner that allows the new 11 councils to avail of the transformations that are happening with central government.

The OECD teams helpfully presented me with some specific practical exemplars from elsewhere and I will be exploring how best these lessons might be applied here.

Availing of these opportunities now will mean that arbitrary, across-the-board cuts in the pursuit of theoretical efficiencies becomes less important and needed and our citizens actually have lean and efficient public service interfaces.

Flagpoles

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why no equality screening or consultation with staff was undertaken before the decision was taken to erect new flagpoles on Government buildings.

(AQO 4802/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There was no requirement to carry out any equality screening in relation to the erection of flagpoles nor for consultation with staff in respect of these decisions taken regarding what are DFP managed buildings within the Government office estate.

NAMA: Loan Book

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the National Asset Management Agency loan book.

(AQO 4803/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I met with the NAMA Chairman, Mr Frank Daly, last week who updated me on the Agency's management of its Northern Ireland assets.

In terms of the overall size of NAMA's Northern Ireland portfolio, the acquisition value of this was €1.3 billion, which is a substantial holding. We have been advised that this comprises 18% office accommodation; 17% retail; 10% residential; 5% development; and 3% hotel and leisure assets, with the balance made up of land at 25% of the portfolio and 22% other investment assets. Approximately 80% of this is located in counties Antrim and Down with around 46% specifically in Belfast.

Clearly NAMA will have a significant impact on our local economy and property market for some time to come and I will continue to liaise with the Agency on a regular basis to ensure the best interests of Northern Ireland are served.

Ulster Bank

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the current situation with regard to the future structure of Ulster Bank.

(AQO 4804/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Treasury are carrying out a review of the RBS Group, including Ulster Bank, as part of their response to the Parliamentary Commission Report on Banking Standards which was published in June.

I have written to the Chancellor to outline the importance of Ulster Bank to the local economy and how any decision to place all of it in any sort of bad bank would be hugely damaging for us.

I asked that Treasury's consideration of the options for RBS separately considers the impact on Northern Ireland. At this point in time I have not yet had any indication from HMT on any future structure.

Civil Law Reform

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the Bain Review of Civil Law Reform and the legislation being considered.

(AQO 4805/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Professor Sir George Bain has never undertaken a review of civil law reform. In relation to the work of my Department, he did chair a Legal Services Review Group that reported on the regulation of the legal profession outlining a number of recommendations for reform.

I have considered those proposals and a draft Bill has been prepared that is currently under consideration by my Executive colleagues. I hope to consult on that Bill shortly with a view to bringing a Bill before the Assembly in 2014.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr Maskey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions he has had with the Minister of the Environment regarding possible Driver and Vehicle Agency job losses, including the cost of transferring the related powers from Westminster to the Assembly.

(AQO 4808/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: At the outset I wish to clarify that Vehicle Licensing and Registration is a reserved matter and is not devolved to the NI Assembly. To date I have had no discussions with the Minister of the Environment regarding the Department of Transport's (DfT) proposal to centralise the delivery of vehicle and registration services at the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Foyle Hospice, Derry: Funding

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the funding shortfall in Foyle Hospice, Derry is being addressed.

(AQW 26350/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Responsibility for the commissioning of health and social care services lies with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB)/ Public Health Agency (PHA).

The HSCB/PHA is finalising a Review of palliative and end of life care services commissioned from the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland. Part of the Review covers legacy funding arrangements with all Hospices. HSCB and PHA representatives will shortly meet with representatives from Foyle Hospice to discuss the findings of the Review with a view to ensuring appropriate funding within the current financial year and thereafter.

AQO 4576/11-15

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to his response to my supplementary to AQO 4576/11-15, when he expects to receive “an answer from the bodies involved on why they have not changed that decision”.

(AQW 26353/11-15)

Mr Poots: Further to my response to AQO 4576/11-15 I wish to clarify that Belfast Health and Social Care Trust clinicians took the decision to introduce a more rigorous case selection in July 2012 that only children in the lowest risk categories would be considered suitable for paediatric congenital cardiac surgery (PCCS) in Belfast. This was extended in November 2012 to include all children below the age of one who require open heart surgery. This followed discussion between the Trust, the Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency and the Department, and reflected prudent application of the principle that precautions should be applied.

In my response I also stated that: “I understand that, subsequent to that, there was an independent assessment of that decision, which indicated that it was wrong”. The only independent assessment concerning PCCS that has been carried out in relation to the Belfast Trust, since July 2012, is a validation by the UK national Congenital Cardiac Audit Database (CCAD) which demonstrates that patient outcomes for procedures carried out at the Belfast Trust in 2011/12 were within acceptable control limits as set by CCAD. Therefore I need to correct my response and confirm that there has been no independent assessment of the decision taken by the Trust to introduce a more rigorous case selection and that decision remains in place, nor has the Trust proposed any change in the risk profile of surgery at Belfast since that time. The Health and Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency accepted the action taken by the Belfast Trust as appropriate and proportionate.

Re-Ablement Services Programme

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the roll-out for the Re-ablement Services Programme; and to outline any difficulties with the roll-out, including the effect this will have on delivering Transforming Your Care.

(AQW 26405/11-15)

Mr Poots: Reablement is a key strand of delivering the vision set out in Transforming Your Care, designed to avoid premature dependence on services and support people to live independently in their own homes for longer. The Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) initiated the regional project board for reablement in September 2011 and subsequently developed a regional model which was issued to HSC Trusts in March 2012 to provide a standardised framework for implementation.

Trusts have developed implementation plans in accordance with this model and reablement services are being rolled out. Reablement services are being delivered across the entire Northern Trust area, and in October the South Eastern Trust aims to also have full coverage. The Belfast Trust is on track to deliver reablement services across the locality by the end of the year and there is currently about 50% coverage in the Southern and Western Trust localities. There are components of the model e.g. complementary voluntary and community sector services where further work and investment is required.

The HSCB has advised that Local Commissioning Groups have invested a significant amount of demographic funding via the HSC Trusts in the last two years to assist the transition to full operation of reablement services. There have been challenges in the roll-out, one of which has been the availability of Occupational Therapists. The HSCB is working closely with Trusts to resolve any challenges to implementation and meetings have been planned to discuss and agree a skill mix for Occupational Therapy in the new service model.

Southern Health and Social Care Trust: Myocardial Infarction

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether ambulance paramedics in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust no longer carry clot-buster drugs for administration in myocardial infarction and instead move patients to specified hospitals, depending on the area in which the incident occurs.

(AQW 26474/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) has advised that emergency ambulance crews in its Southern Operational Division (which is co-terminus with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust) are continuing to carry thrombolysis packs (often referred to as “clot busting drugs”).

This is in order to deliver this treatment to heart attack patients outside the current catchment area for the first phase of the regional primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PPCI) service, based in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

Transport to Attend Hospital Appointments

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will take steps to make it easier for older people, who are in receipt of pension credit, to access a refund when using public transport to attend hospital appointments.

(AQW 26481/11-15)

Mr Poots: The majority of people receiving pension credit will be eligible for free travel on public transport through the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme (Senior Citizen SmartPass/60+ SmartPass). For those older people who do not have a SmartPass and are in receipt of Pension Credit Guarantee Credit, the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme can provide help with the cost of travel to hospital by public transport.

Health and Social Care Trusts have local arrangements in place to ensure that information is widely available to patients about the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme and how to claim reimbursement. Measures taken by Trusts include displaying posters and notices in public areas of hospitals, in wards and at hospital Cash Offices; making leaflets and claim forms readily available to patients; and providing information on Trust websites. Information about the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme and how to claim is also available on the NI Direct website.

Fun, Food and Fitness Programme

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Motivate programme is available in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 26496/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given that the questions all relate to the same issue I have grouped the answers together for convenience and ease of reading.

I should state at the beginning that it is my Department's responsibility to set the strategic direction and policy in relation to work to prevent and address obesity. The commissioning of individual services and projects to deliver on this policy – in line with the evidence base and local need - is the responsibility of the broader Health and Social Care Family.

1 Whether the Motivate programme is available in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

The Motivate Program is not currently available in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area.

2 In light of the Public Health Agency's intention to roll-out the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme when evidence of effectiveness is established, when this evidence will be available; and why the Motivate Programme is not open for referrals and is not being rolled out

I have been informed that, at this stage, the Public Health Agency has no plans to fund or roll-out the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme in the NHSCT area. The last Motivate group session finished in December 2011 and during 2013/14 the PHA intends to undertake a review of adult weight management programmes in Northern Ireland. This will include a review of the global evidence base and a scoping exercise of the range of programmes available in Northern Ireland. The review will inform the development of a regional strategic direction for future commissioning in this area, ensuring that the PHA and HSCB commission evidence based programmes that are cost effective and deliver appropriate outcomes for the population.

3 How people in East Londonderry can access the Motivate Programme

The Motivate is not open for referrals, therefore there is no access to this initiative for people of East Londonderry.

4 Outline the evaluation that has taken place of the (i) Motivate Programme; and (ii) Fun, Food and Fitness Programme; and what evidence of effectiveness these evaluations have produced.

- (i) Motivate was evaluated in terms of effectiveness of the primary endpoint of the pilot (weight loss), clinical outcomes and objective indices of cardiovascular health, objective mental health outcomes and cost effectiveness through use of healthcare resources and pharmacological treatments.
- (ii) Given the small numbers that have been involved in the Fun, Food and Fitness programme, it would not be appropriate to comment on its effectiveness at this stage.

5 (i) how many patients have taken part in the Motivate Programme to date; (ii) for an overview of the weight lost by the participants; (iii) what additional benefits participants encountered; and (iv) for his assessment of the cost effectiveness of the programme.

- (i) 2,011 patient referrals were made to Motivate over a 24 month period (May 2009 - May 2011). 183 attended their individual end of program or 6 month review appointment.
- (ii) Patients who completed 3 months of the program lost on average 3% of their body weight; patients who completed 6 months of the program lost on average 6% of their body weight; 50% of patients who completed 6 months of the program were followed up on average 10 months post completion, these patients continued to lose weight, average weight loss at 10 months was 7%.
- (iii) Additional benefits participants encountered included: positive changes to biochemical markers after 6 months; improved general cardiac health, reduction in anxiety & depression levels; and improved quality of life which included vitality, physical role functioning, mental health and overall general health.

- (iv) Economic evaluation of the program was carried out by health economists and reviewed by the NHSCT finance team independent of the Motivate team. The cost-effectiveness of this programme is currently being considered.

6 (i) how many patients have taken part in the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme to date; (ii) for an overview of the weight lost by the participants; (iii) what additional benefits the participants encountered; and (iv) for his assessment of the cost effectiveness of the programme.

- (i) The pilot program for adults has been evaluated and indicates that 8 adults were invited, 6 attended, and 2 discharged. The children's programme enrolled 24 participants.
- (ii) The 6 who completed the adult programme averaged a 5.67% weight loss and a 5.53% reduction in BMI. Of the 4 from this pilot who attended the final group evaluation session results indicated an average weight loss of 8.64% and an 8.59% reduction in BMI. Of the 24 who enrolled for the children's (4-16 years) programme average weight loss at 3 months was 2.38kg. At the 6 month review, 50% demonstrated a reduction in BMI and around one third demonstrated weight loss. Of the children who had waist circumference measured at 6 months, around four fifths had a reduction and over 10% had maintained their baseline waist circumference.
- (iii) Additional benefits participants encountered included: nutrition questionnaire indicated 70% maintained or improved eating habits, 43% demonstrated increase in physical activity levels, 44.4% children reported improved body esteem and 60% had improved their behaviour and well-being.
- (iv) I have been informed that information on its cost effectiveness is not available at this time.

7 Given that the effectiveness of the Motivate Programme has already been established, for the rationale behind the decision to introduce the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme, which has similar aims.

The Trust has informed me that the Fun, Food and Fitness program was piloted to incorporate the most up to date weight management evidence into current dietetic practice. The program contains a family based approach for adults and children with 3 strands: one-to-one dietetic consultations, Cook-It and a physical activity component, provided in partnership with the local councils. A family based approach was taken to improve and help sustain behavioural change in the longer term for both the adults and children involved.

Fun, Food and Fitness Programme

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the Public Health Agency's intention to roll-out the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme when evidence of effectiveness is established, when this evidence will be available; and why the Motivate Programme is not open for referrals and is not being rolled out.

(AQW 26497/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given that the questions all relate to the same issue I have grouped the answers together for convenience and ease of reading.

I should state at the beginning that it is my Department's responsibility to set the strategic direction and policy in relation to work to prevent and address obesity. The commissioning of individual services and projects to deliver on this policy – in line with the evidence base and local need - is the responsibility of the broader Health and Social Care Family.

1 Whether the Motivate programme is available in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

The Motivate Program is not currently available in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area.

2 In light of the Public Health Agency's intention to roll-out the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme when evidence of effectiveness is established, when this evidence will be available; and why the Motivate Programme is not open for referrals and is not being rolled out

I have been informed that, at this stage, the Public Health Agency has no plans to fund or roll-out the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme in the NHSCT area. The last Motivate group session finished in December 2011 and during 2013/14 the PHA intends to undertake a review of adult weight management programmes in Northern Ireland. This will include a review of the global evidence base and a scoping exercise of the range of programmes available in Northern Ireland. The review will inform the development of a regional strategic direction for future commissioning in this area, ensuring that the PHA and HSCB commission evidence based programmes that are cost effective and deliver appropriate outcomes for the population.

3 How people in East Londonderry can access the Motivate Programme

The Motivate is not open for referrals, therefore there is no access to this initiative for people of East Londonderry.

4 Outline the evaluation that has taken place of the (i) Motivate Programme; and (ii) Fun, Food and Fitness Programme; and what evidence of effectiveness these evaluations have produced.

- (iii) Motivate was evaluated in terms of effectiveness of the primary endpoint of the pilot (weight loss), clinical outcomes and objective indices of cardiovascular health, objective mental health outcomes and cost effectiveness through use of healthcare resources and pharmacological treatments.
- (iv) Given the small numbers that have been involved in the Fun, Food and Fitness programme, it would not be appropriate to comment on its effectiveness at this stage.

5 (i) how many patients have taken part in the Motivate Programme to date; (ii) for an overview of the weight lost by the participants; (iii) what additional benefits participants encountered; and (iv) for his assessment of the cost effectiveness of the programme.

- (v) 2,011 patient referrals were made to Motivate over a 24 month period (May 2009 - May 2011). 183 attended their individual end of program or 6 month review appointment.
- (vi) Patients who completed 3 months of the program lost on average 3% of their body weight; patients who completed 6 months of the program lost on average 6% of their body weight; 50% of patients who completed 6 months of the program were followed up on average 10 months post completion, these patients continued to lose weight, average weight loss at 10 months was 7%.
- (vii) Additional benefits participants encountered included: positive changes to biochemical markers after 6 months; improved general cardiac health, reduction in anxiety & depression levels; and improved quality of life which included vitality, physical role functioning, mental health and overall general health.
- (viii) Economic evaluation of the program was carried out by health economists and reviewed by the NHSCT finance team independent of the Motivate team. The cost-effectiveness of this programme is currently being considered.

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- (vi) The 6 who completed the adult programme averaged a 5.67% weight loss and a 5.53% reduction in BMI. Of the 4 from this pilot who attended the final group evaluation session results indicated an average weight loss of 8.64% and an 8.59% reduction in BMI. Of the 24 who enrolled for the children's (4-16 years) programme average weight loss at 3 months was 2.38kg. At the 6 month review, 50% demonstrated a reduction in BMI and around one third demonstrated weight loss. Of the children who had waist circumference measured at 6 months, around four fifths had a reduction and over 10% had maintained their baseline waist circumference.
- (vii) Additional benefits participants encountered included: nutrition questionnaire indicated 70% maintained or improved eating habits, 43% demonstrated increase in physical activity levels, 44.4% children reported improved body esteem and 60% had improved their behaviour and well-being.
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The Trust has informed me that the Fun, Food and Fitness program was piloted to incorporate the most up to date weight management evidence into current dietetic practice. The program contains a family based approach for adults and children with 3 strands: one-to-one dietetic consultations, Cook-It and a physical activity component, provided in partnership with the local councils. A family based approach was taken to improve and help sustain behavioural change in the longer term for both the adults and children involved.

Fun, Food and Fitness Programme

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how people in East Londonderry can access the Motivate Programme.

(AQW 26498/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given that the questions all relate to the same issue I have grouped the answers together for convenience and ease of reading.

I should state at the beginning that it is my Department's responsibility to set the strategic direction and policy in relation to work to prevent and address obesity. The commissioning of individual services and projects to deliver on this policy – in line with the evidence base and local need - is the responsibility of the broader Health and Social Care Family.

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I have been informed that, at this stage, the Public Health Agency has no plans to fund or roll-out the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme in the NHSCT area. The last Motivate group session finished in December 2011 and during 2013/14 the PHA intends to undertake a review of adult weight management programmes in Northern Ireland. This will include a review of the global evidence base and a scoping exercise of the range of programmes available in Northern Ireland. The review will inform the development of a regional strategic direction for future commissioning in this area, ensuring that the PHA and HSCB commission evidence based programmes that are cost effective and deliver appropriate outcomes for the population.

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- (ix) 2,011 patient referrals were made to Motivate over a 24 month period (May 2009 - May 2011). 183 attended their individual end of program or 6 month review appointment.
- (x) Patients who completed 3 months of the program lost on average 3% of their body weight; patients who completed 6 months of the program lost on average 6% of their body weight; 50% of patients who completed 6 months of the program were followed up on average 10 months post completion, these patients continued to lose weight, average weight loss at 10 months was 7%.
- (xi) Additional benefits participants encountered included: positive changes to biochemical markers after 6 months; improved general cardiac health, reduction in anxiety & depression levels; and improved quality of life which included vitality, physical role functioning, mental health and overall general health.
- (xii) Economic evaluation of the program was carried out by health economists and reviewed by the NHSCT finance team independent of the Motivate team. The cost-effectiveness of this programme is currently being considered.

6 (i) how many patients have taken part in the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme to date; (ii) for an overview of the weight lost by the participants; (iii) what additional benefits the participants encountered; and (iv) for his assessment of the cost effectiveness of the programme.

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- (xi) Additional benefits participants encountered included: nutrition questionnaire indicated 70% maintained or improved eating habits, 43% demonstrated increase in physical activity levels, 44.4% children reported improved body esteem and 60% had improved their behaviour and well-being.
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Fun, Food and Fitness Programme

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the evaluation that has taken place of the (i) Motivate Programme; and (ii) Fun, Food and Fitness Programme; and what evidence of effectiveness these evaluations have produced.

(AQW 26500/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given that the questions all relate to the same issue I have grouped the answers together for convenience and ease of reading.

I should state at the beginning that it is my Department's responsibility to set the strategic direction and policy in relation to work to prevent and address obesity. The commissioning of individual services and projects to deliver on this policy – in line with the evidence base and local need - is the responsibility of the broader Health and Social Care Family.

1 Whether the Motivate programme is available in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

The Motivate Program is not currently available in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area.

2 In light of the Public Health Agency's intention to roll-out the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme when evidence of effectiveness is established, when this evidence will be available; and why the Motivate Programme is not open for referrals and is not being rolled out

I have been informed that, at this stage, the Public Health Agency has no plans to fund or roll-out the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme in the NHSCT area. The last Motivate group session finished in December 2011 and during 2013/14 the PHA intends to undertake a review of adult weight management programmes in Northern Ireland. This will include a review of the global evidence base and a scoping exercise of the range of programmes available in Northern Ireland. The review will inform the development of a regional strategic direction for future commissioning in this area, ensuring that the PHA and HSCB commission evidence based programmes that are cost effective and deliver appropriate outcomes for the population.

3 How people in East Londonderry can access the Motivate Programme

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(AQW 26501/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given that the questions all relate to the same issue I have grouped the answers together for convenience and ease of reading.

I should state at the beginning that it is my Department's responsibility to set the strategic direction and policy in relation to work to prevent and address obesity. The commissioning of individual services and projects to deliver on this policy – in line with the evidence base and local need - is the responsibility of the broader Health and Social Care Family.

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Fun, Food and Fitness Programme

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(AQW 26507/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given that the questions all relate to the same issue I have grouped the answers together for convenience and ease of reading.

I should state at the beginning that it is my Department's responsibility to set the strategic direction and policy in relation to work to prevent and address obesity. The commissioning of individual services and projects to deliver on this policy – in line with the evidence base and local need - is the responsibility of the broader Health and Social Care Family.

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Fun, Food and Fitness Programme

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that the effectiveness of the Motivate Programme has already been established, for the rationale behind the decision to introduce the Fun, Food and Fitness Programme, which has similar aims.

(AQW 26508/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given that the questions all relate to the same issue I have grouped the answers together for convenience and ease of reading.

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Nurses: Whistleblowing

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what he meant by 'protection' when he called on nurses to whistleblow in March 2012.

(AQW 26512/11-15)

Mr Poots: "Your Right to Whistle Blow", dated 22 March 2012, was addressed to all HSC staff and was not confined to nurses. The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (revised 2004) provides staff with protection, against victimisation, when reporting concerns reasonably and in good faith.

Circular HSC AfC 4/2010 asked employers to review their local policies to ensure that they emphasise that it is safe and acceptable for staff to raise concerns and to set out clear arrangements for doing so. A copy is available at: <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hsc-afc-2010-04-amendment-no19.pdf>. Whistleblowing policies have been in place in all Arms Length Bodies prior to my correspondence dated 22 March 2013.

Since March 2012, my Department has been made aware of 17 potential whistleblowing cases. When considered against the provisions set out in the Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 only 7 fell within the definition of whistleblowing. None were referred to the Ombudsman.

Nurses: Whistleblowing

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures were taken to ensure an open and transparent whistleblowing system was in place to protect whistleblowers, prior to his 'invitation to whistleblow' in March 2012.

(AQW 26513/11-15)

Mr Poots: "Your Right to Whistle Blow", dated 22 March 2012, was addressed to all HSC staff and was not confined to nurses. The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (revised 2004) provides staff with protection, against victimisation, when reporting concerns reasonably and in good faith.

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Nurses: Whistleblowing

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many whistleblowers have come to the attention of the Department since March 2012; and how many were referred to the Ombudsman.

(AQW 26514/11-15)

Mr Poots: “Your Right to Whistle Blow”, dated 22 March 2012, was addressed to all HSC staff and was not confined to nurses. The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (revised 2004) provides staff with protection, against victimisation, when reporting concerns reasonably and in good faith.

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Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many individual complaints have been investigated by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in the last twelve months.

(AQW 26515/11-15)

Mr Poots: The investigation of complaints within the health and social care sector regulated by RQIA are the responsibility of the provider. RQIA, however, has a statutory duty to require such providers to establish a complaints procedure, which is to be made known to every user or patient and to require the provider to ensure that a record of each complaint is maintained. Any complaint made under the procedure must be fully investigated by the provider.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Policing

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the joint-protocols with the PSNI that effectively allow Health and Social Care Trusts to police themselves, who is ultimately responsible for this policing process.

(AQW 26516/11-15)

Mr Poots: The decision whether or not to refer cases of alleged or suspected abuse of vulnerable adults to the PSNI is a professional decision taken by a HSC Trust Adult Protection Designated Officer (Designated Officer). The Designated Officer must act in accordance with the ‘Protocol for Joint Investigation of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Vulnerable Adults’ (Joint Protocol), which provides a framework within which staff exercise their professional judgement and discharge their legal responsibility.

Checking the appropriateness of referral decisions can occur at a number of levels. At an operational level, where it is considered appropriate, an adult safeguarding referral to social services is discussed with the PSNI to determine whether it should be progressed under the Joint Protocol.

Adult Safeguarding Specialists, who are senior staff within each HSC Trust, check samples of adult safeguarding referrals, including referrals that are screened out of the safeguarding process.

Other mechanisms which help to give assurance that HSC Trusts are making the correct decisions for referrals to the PSNI are: monitoring of monthly statistical returns received by the Health and Social Care Board from each HSC Trust showing the number nature and type of referrals to adult safeguarding services; inspections by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) of regulated services; Delegated Statutory Function Reports and related quarterly monitoring meetings; and reports by the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI).

In May 2011 a joint review of the Joint Protocol was initiated by the RQIA and CJINI. The Review report found that in all five HSC Trusts there were clear lines of management accountability and professional responsibility for services provided to vulnerable adults from front line staff through to the chief executive and the HSC Trust board. In reviewing the implementation and overall delivery of the Protocol across the five HSC Trusts, the review team found that the adult protection services were responsive to allegations of abuse to vulnerable adults, whilst conforming to the regulations, policies and procedures.

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Equipment

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the waiting times for patients to receive continuous positive airway pressure equipment through the Health Service.

(AQW 26519/11-15)

Mr Poots: Waiting times for CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) treatment in each of the five Trusts is given in the table below.

Health and Social Care Trust	Waiting Time
Belfast and Northern	6 Months
South Eastern	17 Months
Southern	3 weeks
Western	6 - 8 weeks

The Health and Social Care Board has acknowledged the difficulties in this service area and is undertaking a regional scoping exercise to gauge need against the current service provision. It is expected that this exercise will be completed in October 2013 and this will inform the Board's future commissioning arrangements for this service. The Board is currently working to put interim arrangements in place in 2013/14 with Trusts to deal with the current waiting lists for limited sleep studies and to enhance the access to CPAP equipment.

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Equipment: Waiting Times

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the waiting times for continuous positive airway pressure equipment are in keeping with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines.

(AQW 26520/11-15)

Mr Poots: In March 2008, NICE published TA139 on Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) for the treatment of obstructive sleep apnoea/hypopnoea syndrome. TA139 was reviewed by the Department and endorsed as applicable in Northern Ireland in October 2008.

TA139 does not specify a waiting time target.

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Treatment

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether patients are receiving timely and equitable access to continuous positive airway pressure treatment, review and follow-up at Health and Social Care Trust level, as stated in the overarching standard 31 of the Service Framework for Respiratory Health and Wellbeing.

(AQW 26524/11-15)

Mr Poots: I will answer these three questions together.

A number of Health and Social Care Trusts are experiencing significant pressures associated with the provision of sleep apnoea services and access to CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machines. The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), which has responsibility for commissioning health care services in Northern Ireland, acknowledges the difficulties in this service area and is undertaking a regional scoping exercise to gauge need against the current service provision. It is expected that this exercise will be completed in October 2013 and this will inform the Board's future commissioning arrangements for this service. The Trusts are working closely with the HSCB to identify the staffing and infrastructure requirements required to enable them to reduce the waiting times for CPAP.

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Treatment

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his plans to reduce the waiting times for access to continuous positive airway pressure equipment.

(AQW 26525/11-15)

Mr Poots: I will answer these three questions together.

A number of Health and Social Care Trusts are experiencing significant pressures associated with the provision of sleep apnoea services and access to CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machines. The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), which has responsibility for commissioning health care services in Northern Ireland, acknowledges the difficulties in this service area and is undertaking a regional scoping exercise to gauge need against the current service provision. It is expected that this exercise will be completed in October 2013 and this will inform the Board's future commissioning arrangements for this service. The Trusts are working closely with the HSCB to identify the staffing and infrastructure requirements required to enable them to reduce the waiting times for CPAP.

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Treatment

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his plans to assist patients who have currently been on the waiting list for continuous positive airway pressure equipment for more than 18 months.

(AQW 26526/11-15)

Mr Poots: I will answer these three questions together.

A number of Health and Social Care Trusts are experiencing significant pressures associated with the provision of sleep apnoea services and access to CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machines. The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), which has responsibility for commissioning health care services in Northern Ireland, acknowledges the difficulties in this service area and is undertaking a regional scoping exercise to gauge need against the current service provision. It is expected that this exercise will be completed in October 2013 and this will inform the Board's future commissioning arrangements for this service. The Trusts are working closely with the HSCB to identify the staffing and infrastructure requirements required to enable them to reduce the waiting times for CPAP.

Multiple Sclerosis Advice Line

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many calls to the Multiple Sclerosis Advice Line have been received in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26528/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on number of calls to the “Multiple Sclerosis Advice Line” is not available from the Department.

Multiple Sclerosis Advice Line

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much funding his Department provides to the Multiple Sclerosis Advice Line.

(AQW 26529/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department does not provide such funding.

Policy on the Removal of Anti-Psychotic Drugs

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his Department's policy on the removal of anti-psychotic drugs from a prisoner.

(AQW 26562/11-15)

Mr Poots: An antipsychotic drug such as Quetiapine which is on the South East Trust's list of abusable medications may be discontinued under the Trust's 'In-Possession Medication' policy if a prisoner fails a spot-check.

A failed spot-check indicates that the prisoner has not been taking his medication correctly and as such it will have been of no therapeutic benefit to him/her and therefore the prisoner has effectively self-discontinued his/her medication. All prisoners sign a 'Prisoner Medication Contract' on committal which clearly informs them of the consequences of abusing/trading certain medications.

A decision to discontinue antipsychotic medication would be made in conjunction with the Mental Health team in the Trust.

Health Officers at Maghaberry Prison

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of health officers at Maghaberry Prison; and (ii) the ratio of health officers to prisoners.

(AQW 26563/11-15)

Mr Poots: Healthcare officer posts were in place prior to the transfer of staff from the Northern Ireland Prison Service to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust in April 2012.

Currently there are no healthcare officers remaining in the prison healthcare system as these posts have been replaced following the appointment, by the South Eastern Trust, of a new multi-disciplinary healthcare team. The new healthcare team includes General Practitioners, Psychiatrists, Primary Care Nurses, Mental Health Nurses, Specialist Practitioners, Forensic Occupational Therapists, Pharmacists and Allied Health Professionals.

As your question refers to healthcare officers and there are no healthcare officers remaining in the prison healthcare system it is not possible to provide the information you require.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Liverpool Pathway

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the publication of the recommendations within the More Care Less Pathway: Review of the Liverpool Care Pathway report in July 2013, whether any Health and Social Care Trusts receive incentive payments when patients are placed on the Liverpool pathway; and if so, how much has been paid to each of the Trusts since the introduction of incentive payments.

(AQW 26586/11-15)

Mr Poots: No Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland receives incentive payments when patients are placed on the Liverpool Care Pathway.

Osteogenesis Imperfecta

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people diagnosed with osteogenesis imperfecta, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 26608/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available on the number of people diagnosed with osteogenesis imperfecta.

Osteogenesis Imperfecta: Assistance

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the treatment and support available to (i) children; and (ii) adults diagnosed with osteogenesis imperfecta.

(AQW 26609/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSC) provides a regional service for children diagnosed with osteogenesis imperfecta (OI); specialist support is also provided by the Sheffield Children's Hospital. Treatment and support is dependent on assessed need and may include intravenous bisphosphonates, as well as support from a wider multidisciplinary team including nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, endocrinology, nutrition, dietetics, orthopaedics and nursing.

Treatment and support for adults with OI includes bisphosphonate therapy, orthopaedics, physiotherapy and occupational therapy as necessary.

Support and genetic counselling to people and families affected by OI is provided by the Northern Ireland Regional Genetics Service at the Belfast City Hospital.

Funding for Domiciliary Care

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to increase funding for domiciliary care.

(AQW 26610/11-15)

Mr Poots: Within the context of Home as the Hub, as identified in Transforming Your Care, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has advised that additional investment of £3.7m in domiciliary care services is planned in 2013/2014.

Going forward, the HSCB is continuing to assess the impact of reablement services on future demand for domiciliary care services with a view to establishing future budget needs

Falls Prevention Nurses

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the benefits of investing in falls prevention nurses.

(AQW 26628/11-15)

Mr Poots: Current best practice guidance (NICE Clinical Guidelines) issued by my department, to HSC Trusts, indicates that a multi professional and multi factorial approach to both assessing the risk of falls and the interventions to prevention of harm from falls should be conducted by a multi professional team of healthcare professionals.

The success of a falls prevention programme is maximised by multidisciplinary team working, therefore assessment of the benefit should be based on the contribution of the whole team and not the contribution of individuals.

Nurses have a key role to play and work is being undertaken to introduce the nursing component of the Fallsafe Bundle, a tool to assess and minimise the risk of inpatient falls. This will be taken forward in all adult inpatient hospital areas.

Service Improvement Providers: Care Pathway for Stroke Patients

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what research or audit work his Department has carried out into the use of Service Improvement Providers to oversee the care pathway of stroke patients.

(AQW 26629/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not carried out any research or audit work into the use of Service Improvement Providers to oversee the care pathway of stroke patients.

I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Board that one Trust has appointed a Service Improvement Coordinator and the 4 remaining Trusts are exploring the potential to appoint time limited (2 years) Service Improvement Coordinator posts.

Pinewood Residential Care Home, Ballymena

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) respite; and (ii) intermediate residents in Pinewood Residential Care Home, Ballymena have requested, and been refused, permanent residency in this calendar year.

(AQW 26648/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Trust has advised that information regarding requests for a permanent residential care placement in any of the Trust's statutory homes is not routinely collected.

The Trust has advised that a small number of people (single figures) had requested a permanent place in the home during the calendar year.

Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin will be completed; and how many patients will benefit from using the facility in its first full year of operation.

(AQW 26700/11-15)

Mr Poots: The construction of the Radiotherapy Unit at the Altnagelvin Hospital site is planned to be completed by the end of 2015. Installation will take place during this time, and an intensive period of commissioning will then commence. It is planned that the Unit will be in operation by mid 2016.

In its first full calendar year, with three linear accelerators in operation, the Radiotherapy Unit is expected to have the capacity to treat approximately 1500 patients per year.

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, pursuant to AQW 26052/11-15, when contact was first made with the PSNI concerning the content of the Barnardo's report; and who made contact.

(AQW 26749/11-15)

Mr Poots: As stated in my response to AQW 26052/11-15, 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.

A representative from the PSNI was a member of the Advisory Group for the Barnardo's Not a World Away research. This advisory group met between September 2009 and August 2011.

Sport: Young People who Require Corrective Lenses

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the proven benefits for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people from playing sports, what provisions are in place to assist young people who require corrective lenses and who cannot afford specialised glasses for sports.

(AQW 26758/11-15)

Mr Poots: Provision is not made within the current regulatory framework for the provision of specialised corrective eyewear for sport.

Where a 'specialised' corrective optical appliance is required for reasons of special facial characteristics or for medical therapy, the Health and Social Care Board give individual consideration to these cases.

Kilcooley Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department has improved the health of the people in the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 26799/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Public Health Agency has been working closely with key stakeholders in this area for the past three years to both improve the overall health and wellbeing of the population and address health inequalities.

Significant PHA investment has been identified and provided to the community to allow it to build capacity and empower its residents to take control over, and responsibility for, their own health and social wellbeing. This investment has enabled the Estate to undertake a number of initiatives which have had an immediate impact on short term health outcomes and are, importantly, expected to yield significant improvements in longer-term health outcomes.

A consultation carried out earlier this year has informed the development of a Kilcooley Health Development Action Plan. Progress towards its implementation will be monitored by the Kilcooley Health Task Force.

People Receiving Treatment for Macular Degeneration

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are receiving treatment for macular degeneration.

(AQW 26805/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available on the number of people receiving treatment for macular degeneration.

In 2012/13, there were 632 admissions to HSC Hospitals in Northern Ireland with a diagnosis of macular degeneration. This equated to approximately 531 individuals.

Recommendations from the Ombudsman: Implementation Procedures

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what procedures and follow up exist to ensure that recommendations from the Ombudsman, when upholding a complaint in respect of the standard of care in a Health Service facility or administrative failures therein, are adequately acted upon; and whether his Department monitors such matters.

(AQW 26815/11-15)

Mr Poots: All investigations by the Ombudsman are conducted in private. The Ombudsman has no general powers to share information publicly. (Articles 12(3) and 21 of the Commissioner for Complaints (NI) Order 1996 refer).

My Department, therefore, does not receive copies of the Ombudsman's Investigation reports. These are strictly confidential and are only shared by the Ombudsman with those individuals/organisations concerned.

The power of the Ombudsman does not extend to enforcing any recommendations made following an investigation if these are not implemented.

Communication between Clinicians and the Families of Vulnerable Patients

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what advocacy procedures exist in Health and Social Care Trusts to ensure that there is adequate communication between clinicians and the families of elderly, confused or vulnerable patients.

(AQW 26818/11-15)

Mr Poots: Communication skills are intrinsic to the training of all clinical and professional staff groups working in the Health and Social Care service, and the codes of practice for many also include a requirement to advocate on behalf of their patient or client when required. To this end procedures for communication and providing information are contained within the operational policies of every service area.

Independent advocacy for vulnerable individuals and their families is available via a range of services across the province including specialist services for; older people with dementia; people with functional mental illness; people with physical disability or sensory impairment; and people with learning disability (of all ages), amongst others.

Advocacy specifically for family carers is included in most of the carer support programmes available in all areas alongside other supports such as information, training, respite and peer support services.

Adults with a Learning Disability: Work Placements and Day Opportunities

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what regulation is in place to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults with a learning disability who take part in work placements or day opportunities, which are co-ordinated but not operated by Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 26824/11-15)

Mr Poots: There has been considerable development of safeguarding vulnerable adults' policies, procedures and practice in recent years. Processes for adults with learning disabilities are regularly monitored by the NI Adult Safeguarding Partnership and apply in all settings, whether operated by the HSC or other provider. In addition, clients in work placements are subject to other safeguards such as those set out in the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and in general health and safety legislation applicable to everyone, and this includes liability.

Protection plans, completed assessments, care plans, risk assessments, occupational therapy workability and travel assessments must be in place before any placement begins. Providers will then have a day to day 'work plan' based on the client's needs, as identified in their care plan. Trusts will also have a formal contract with the provider which covers all the legal issues. All staff working with Vulnerable Adults must be screened by Access NI prior to starting any work with individuals.

In addition, work placements are monitored by Community Access Officers whose role is to personalise the placement to meet the individual's needs. Clients availing of day opportunities are also required to have these multi-disciplinary assessments in place before commencement. Providers of work placements and day opportunities are also offered support and information about learning disability and each client's needs.

Walk-in Genito-Urinary Medicine Services: Belfast

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what walk-in genito-urinary medicine services are available in Belfast; and what such services are available on an emergency basis. **(AQW 26835/11-15)**

Mr Poots: There is no routine walk-in service at the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust's genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic; however, there is still a facility for emergency appointments. Cases of emergency are seen as walk-in after triage, but this is typically only a small number of patients.

The Belfast HSC Trust has assured me that that the introduction of an appointment system has not had a negative impact on encouraging the public to seek treatment; it has however facilitated better management of appointments and patient care. Previously, patients would arrive at GUM clinics from 4.00am onwards in the hope of being seen when the clinic opened at 8.30am or 9.00am, and clinics were always overbooked by 6.00am.

Belfast Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the current genito-urinary medicine clinic in Belfast, including what impact the move to an appointment only service has had on encouraging the public to seek treatment. **(AQW 26836/11-15)**

Mr Poots: There is no routine walk-in service at the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust's genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic; however, there is still a facility for emergency appointments. Cases of emergency are seen as walk-in after triage, but this is typically only a small number of patients.

The Belfast HSC Trust has assured me that that the introduction of an appointment system has not had a negative impact on encouraging the public to seek treatment; it has however facilitated better management of appointments and patient care. Previously, patients would arrive at GUM clinics from 4.00am onwards in the hope of being seen when the clinic opened at 8.30am or 9.00am, and clinics were always overbooked by 6.00am.

Belfast Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department plans to temporarily fill the consultant roles at the genito-urinary medicine clinic in Belfast, that have been vacated because of maternity leave. **(AQW 26837/11-15)**

Mr Poots: I am aware there are two vacant consultant posts in the genito-urinary medicine (GUM) service at Belfast HSC Trust caused by maternity leave. The Trust has assured me that it has been making every effort to fill these vacancies. The Trust first advertised in May for two locum consultant posts. One applicant attended interview and was offered the post, however they later declined the offer of appointment due to accepting a permanent post elsewhere. I understand they subsequently agreed to accept the post for 4-7 weeks starting in October. The Trust re-advertised the post in July but unfortunately this did not generate any applicants.

The Trust has advised that all clinics are currently being delivered by the consultant in post.

Belfast Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what mechanisms will be put in place to overcome the difficulties that exist in arranging an appointment by telephone at the Belfast genito-urinary medicine clinic. **(AQW 26838/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust recognise that due to the high volume of calls, patients may experience difficulties when attempting to contact the genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic

by telephone. The management team at the clinic has been working with the service provider in an attempt to make the phone system more effective and efficient, including advising patients where they are in the queue.

The GUM service has also recently appointed a quality and data manager who will be able to identify and resolve ongoing problems more quickly.

Pinewood Residential Care Home

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide the findings, that relate to Pinewood Residential Care home, of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust's consultation on the provision of the Trusts residential homes for older people which closed in March 2009.

(AQW 26844/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Trust's analysis of responses to CSR Reform and Modernisation proposals, which included those stemming from its consultation on Reprovision of the Trust's Residential Homes for Older People, is available via the following link:

http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/pdf/CSR_reform_and_modernisation_proposals_consultations_findings.pdf

It should be noted, however, that the analysis makes no specific reference to Pinewood Residential Home as Pinewood was not proposed for closure in the Trust's consultation report.

GP Appointments: South Antrim

Mr Girvan 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 South Antrim constituency.

(AQW 26845/11-15)

Mr Poots: 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:

(i) 1672 for South Antrim Westminster Parliamentary Constituency (WPC) area.

The ratio was calculated using the headcount of principal and salaried GPs working at practices located in South Antrim 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 South Antrim 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.

Antrim Area Hospital: Improvements

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any further modernisations or improvements to be carried out at the Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 26846/11-15)

Mr Poots: The new emergency department and 24 bedded ward at Antrim Area Hospital have just been completed and work is currently ongoing on the site to extend and refurbish the Neonatal Unit and create a new Dentistry Department. In addition there are a number of minor improvements underway.

The Northern Trust is developing business cases for a replacement MRI scanner at the hospital as well as an additional MRI scanner at Antrim Area Hospital. There are also plans to enhance the breast imaging service accommodation.

The Trust is developing plans for a second phase of redevelopment at Antrim Hospital. A business case is currently being developed and it is expected that the next stage of redevelopment will include new

day surgery theatres and supporting accommodation, endoscopy suites, children's inpatient unit as well as an ambulatory and outpatient unit.

These further developments are subject to budgetary availability and business case approval and will be considered alongside other priorities across the region in light of the available budget.

Slieve Roe Residential Home, Kilkeel

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the last consultation on Slieve Roe Residential Home, Kilkeel was completed; and what were the conclusions of this consultation.

(AQW 26847/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Trust has advised that within the last CSR period 2008-2011, the Trust undertook to review the provision of Statutory Residential Care across the Southern area. This process resulted in a public consultation proposal to close both Slieve Roe House and Skeagh House. The public consultation period commenced on 15 December 2008 and concluded on Friday, 6th March 2009.

Following analysis of the consultation responses to the proposed changes the Trust put forward an alternative service model within its Consultation Outcome Report that proposed retaining all the current statutory residential homes albeit with reduced number of permanent placements. This was agreed at the Trust Board meeting on 26th March 2009 and subsequently implemented.

Slieve Roe Residential Home, Kilkeel

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many requests for admission to Slieve Roe Residential Home, Kilkeel were received during (i) 2011/12; and (ii) 2012/13; and how many people were admitted during these periods.

(AQW 26848/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not available centrally and was therefore requested from the Southern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. Their response can be found below.

TABLE 1: OCCUPANCY IN SLIEVE ROE RESIDENTIAL HOME AT 31 MARCH.

	Admissions	Available Permanent Places	No. of Permanent Residents
2011/12	2	12	12
2012/13	1	12	10

TABLE 2: RESPITE ADMISSIONS TO SLIEVE ROE RESIDENTIAL HOME

	Admissions	Occupancy
2011/12	36	57%
2012/13	32	51%

Information regarding requests for admission to residential care homes is not routinely collected by the Southern HSC Trust.

Causeway Hospital

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions have taken place to explore the future of the Causeway Hospital as part of the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 26881/11-15)

Mr Poots: Further to the information provided in response to your earlier Assembly Question AQW 22121, I can advise that work has been ongoing at the Northern Trust to take forward the implementation of the Turnaround Improvement Plan. A key element of that work is a series of service reviews, including networking of clinical services, and development of a new model for medical leadership and management. These processes should provide the Trust the opportunity to embed necessary change and reform. I am advised that it is the view of the Turnaround and Support Team that an appraisal on future management options should be informed by this work and therefore should follow on from it. This view is shared by the Trust. Accordingly, I am of the view that these processes should be substantially in place before further work is carried out on the options appraisal on management arrangements.

There have been no further discussions to date between the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, the Health and Social care Board or my Department to explore the future of the Causeway Hospital as part of the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

Patients Undergoing Dialysis

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many local patients are undergoing dialysis in each (i) Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) jurisdiction outside Northern Ireland.

(AQW 26889/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- i) The number of local patients who received dialysis in each Health and Social Care Trust during 2012/13 is given in the table below.

HSC Trust	Number of local patients receiving dialysis
Belfast	328
Northern	144
South Eastern	168
Southern	155
Western	137
Total	932

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

- ii) Local patients who require dialysis and receive treatment temporarily under the jurisdiction outside of Northern Ireland are also referred to as 'holiday dialysis' patients. During 2012/13, there were 133 local patients who received dialysis under the jurisdiction outside Northern Ireland.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Public Consultations

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the public consultations to which each Health and Social Care Trust has responded in the last three years.

(AQW 26890/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts respond to a wide range of consultations, however all this information is not available in the format requested and could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Departmental Investigations into Sexual Assault of Looked After Children: NHSCT

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many investigations his Department or any organisations under the remit of his Department, have undertaken, in the past 18 months, into the sexual assault of looked after children who were accommodated in a hotel, guest house or other likewise private accommodation by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) to detail the outcome of each investigation; and (iii) to detail the policies that relate to the accommodation of looked after children in private accommodation that include hotels, guests houses and likewise establishments.

(AQW 26908/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) There have been three investigations at two establishments into the sexual assault of looked after children accommodated in private accommodation by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in the past 18 months. One young person has since withdrawn their statement.
- (ii) PSNI investigations are ongoing into these incidents.
- (iii) The Children (NI) Order 1995 specifies the living arrangements in which looked after children can be placed and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2002 requires Health and Social Care Trusts to ensure the “suitability” of accommodation that young people leaving care move into. Currently there are eleven young people’s supported accommodation projects operational across the region and a further eight are identified for development over the next three years. All such projects must comply with DHSSPS Standards on Young Adults Supported Accommodation and are subject to inspection by RQIA and contract monitoring by Supporting People. In addition, a new model of young people supported living known as ‘supported lodgings’ is being piloted in the Northern and Western Trust areas in recognition of the limited supported and suitable accommodation available to young people in the Northern Trust area in particular. A further set of standards are being developed to underpin this model.

Regional Brain Injury Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will order a review of the Regional Brain Injury Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast, given the concerns raised by the families of patients.

(AQW 26909/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department launched its Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Action Plan in July 2010 and subsequently a Regional Acquired Brain Injury Implementation Group (RABIIG) was established to take forward its implementation.

Considerable progress was made for example with the development of Brain Injury Standards and Care Pathways for children and adults. The Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit (RABIU), ABI patients and their families and carers were also fully involved in this process which completed in 2012.

Should any specific concerns about patient care in RABIU be brought to my attention, I would of course be happy to examine these.

Belfast Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic: Appointments

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 22980/11-15, for an update on the number of requests per week the Genitourinary Medicine clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, receives for appointments; and how many appointment slots the clinic offers per week.

(AQW 26910/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has advised that their response remains unchanged from that given in AQW 22980/11-15:

At maximum capacity, there are two hundred appointment slots available per week at the Genitourinary Medicine clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital. There are approximately 1,800 telephone calls into the unit per week, though it is not possible to ascertain how many of these are actual appointment requests or calls of another nature, such as queries. The Belfast Trust has advised that they are working with BT to develop a system to ascertain the nature of calls and how many are actioned and answered.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of tests for (i) Chlamydia trachomatis; (ii) Neisseria gonorrhoea; (iii) Treponema pallidum; (iv) Herpes Simplex Virus I; and (v) Herpes Simplex Virus II have been positive in the last two years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 26911/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the percentage of positive tests for (i) Chlamydia trachomatis; (ii) Neisseria gonorrhoea; (iii) Treponema pallidum; (iv) Herpes Simplex Virus I; and (v) Herpes Simplex Virus II, is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

However, information on the number of new episodes of selected sexually transmitted infections (STI's) are published by the Public Health Authority, and available to view or download from the link below:

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/sexually-transmitted-infections>

Vetting Procedures of Independent Advocates Appointed by Health and Social Care Trusts

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what vetting procedures are in place to ensure that independent advocates appointed by Health and Social Care Trusts are, and remain, independent.

(AQW 26925/11-15)

Mr Poots: In May 2012, my Department published Developing Advocacy Services – A Guide for Commissioners. Within the Guide, independence is one of the key principles and standards that advocacy services commissioned by the Trusts must now adhere to.

Advocates recruited by Trusts are vetted, trained, managed and supervised in accordance with their role and function. Monitoring and supporting them to ensure that they can remain independent is an intrinsic element of their training and supervision. Any concerns about partiality or inappropriateness are addressed through normal Trust governance and contract monitoring arrangements.

Respite Facility for Ex-Service Personnel

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any plans his Department has for a respite facility for ex-service personnel.

(AQW 26928/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has no plans to provide a respite facility for ex-service personnel. Ex service personnel have equal access to statutory Primary and Secondary Care services as the rest of the population, underpinned by my Department's protocol for delivering health and social care services to members of the armed forces, their families and veterans.

The Armed Forces Liaison Forum, which my Department chairs, provides a forum for departmental officials, the HSC, representatives from the Defence Medical Services and veterans' organisations to discuss health and social care issues of mutual interest.

Consultation on Draft Abortion Guidelines

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many responses his Department received to the consultation on draft abortion guidelines.

(AQW 26965/11-15)

Mr Poots: Eighty six responses were received to the public consultation exercise on the termination of pregnancy draft guidance which closed on the 29 July 2013.

My officials are currently assessing the responses and I expect to receive advice shortly.

Abortion Guidelines

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will publish guidelines on abortion.

(AQW 26966/11-15)

Mr Poots: I cannot confirm a date for publication of guidance at this time. Officials are currently considering the responses received to the consultation exercise and will amend the draft guidance as required. The Northern Ireland Executive will then consider the revised document before publication. The current draft has no status until this process is complete.

Spend on Domiciliary Care

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much each Health and Social Care Trust has spent on domiciliary care in each of the last five years; and how many people have received domiciliary care from each Health and Social Care Trust during this period.

(AQW 26975/11-15)

Mr Poots: Domiciliary Care expenditure is collected annually via the Trust Financial Returns. The following cost information is the latest available:

	Belfast £	Northern £	South Eastern £	Southern £	Western £	Total Expenditure £
2011-12	48,595,407	44,751,363	43,648,118	44,198,959	30,122,041	211,315,889
2010-11	46,290,460	43,464,498	40,497,428	43,968,120	28,798,256	203,018,761
2009-10	44,334,169	40,884,227	40,415,202	43,879,485	30,512,322	200,025,405
2008-09	43,217,822	37,242,782	36,212,243	39,889,216	29,067,596	185,629,659
2007-08	40,454,745	35,038,761	33,857,305	34,697,556	26,649,853	170,698,220

The number of people receiving domiciliary care in NI is counted annually over a single week in September. The following are the numbers of people recorded as being in receipt of domiciliary care during the survey week over the last 5 years, broken down by Trust:

HSC Trust	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Belfast	6,297	6,214	6,427	6,454	6,363
Northern	4,143	4,052	4,164	4,231	4,623
South Eastern	4,278	3,908	3,954	4,169	4,544
Southern	4,685	4,462	4,331	4,219	4,389
Western	3,657	4,741	4,513	4,449	4,215
Northern Ireland	23,060	23,377	23,389	23,522	24,134

Source: Domiciliary Care Services for Adults in Northern Ireland

Abortion Guidelines: Foetus Diagnosed with Anencephaly

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he would consider altering guidelines to allow pregnant women, with a foetus diagnosed with anencephaly, to seek a termination.

(AQW 26978/11-15)

Mr Poots: The draft guidance document cannot change the law in relation to the grounds for a termination of pregnancy. Guidance can only reflect the legal position as it has been interpreted by the courts.

Any change to criminal law is a matter for the Department of Justice, the Executive and the Assembly.

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his Department's performance against the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against women.

(AQW 26984/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 17 July 2013, the United Nations Committee that oversees the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) formally examined the UK's performance in terms of its CEDAW obligations. The Committee was provided updates on the progress made in key areas details of which are available on the CEDAW website. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws55.htm>

The CEDAW Committee has published its Concluding Observations based on the Examination of the UK. Many of the recommendations are general and not specific to Northern Ireland. However, recommendations relating to abortion law and equal access to reproductive treatment are specific to Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland.

OFMdFM has overarching responsibility for ensuring that CEDAW is implemented here. CEDAW is implemented via the Gender Equality Strategy, which is currently under review. OFMdFM is working in conjunction with Departments to develop an action plan to deliver the objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy and the recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee will be considered as part of this process.

Respite Care Beds: Pinewood Residential Care Home and the Ballymena Area

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of respite care beds in (i) Pinewood Residential Care Home; and (ii) the Ballymena Area and their location; and to outline the plans to increase provision.

(AQW 26992/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern HSC Trust has advised that there are currently 5 respite beds available in Pinewood Residential Care Home. Respite is provided in a number of nursing and residential beds across the Ballymena Area. The list below details the homes used by the Trust to provide additional respite beds when the need arises.

Andena 206-208 Ballymoney Road Ballymena	Carn-vaddy 15 Doctors Road Ballymena	Innisfree 110 Buckna Road Broughshane	Redford 15 Redford Road Cullybackey
Braefield 2-6 Carncomb Road Connor, Ballymena	Craigdun 30 Dunminning Road Cullybackey	Kintullagh House 36 Westbourne Avenue Carniny Road Ballymena	Rose Martha Court 30 Westbourne Avenue Ballymena
Camphill 62 Toome Road Ballymena	Croft Lodge 6 Woodcroft Lane Oldpark Road Ballymena	Pinewood 101 Frys Road Ballymena	Rylands 11 Doagh Road Kells, Ballymena
Carmoyne 38 Church Street Ahoghill	Galgorm 90 Galgorm Road Ballymena	Prospect 1 Old Galgorm Road Ballymena	Slemish House 28 Broughshane Road Ballymena

Severe Foetal Abnormality

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has sought further legal advice on whether there is scope for severe foetal abnormality to be taken into consideration under the risk of permanent and serious damage to the mother's mental or physical health.

(AQW 27001/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department continues to seek advice on the grounds for termination of pregnancy as issues arise.

Foetal abnormality is not a ground for termination of pregnancy in Northern Ireland. Any change to the criminal law framing this area is a matter for the Department of Justice, the Executive and the Assembly.

Minimum Training Requirement for Domiciliary Care Workers

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the minimum training requirement for domiciliary care workers; and how are standards enforced in the independent sector.

(AQW 27022/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) sets out mandatory training requirements for staff in 'Guidance on Mandatory Training for Providers of Care in Regulated Services'. The guidance sets out a number of areas of training specifically in relation to domiciliary care workers, including: Vulnerable Adults & Child Protection; Medication; Manual Handling; Managing Service Users' Money; Restraint or management of Challenging Behaviour; Infection Control; Fire safety; and Food Hygiene. The guidance is available on the RQIA website.

In addition, the Minimum Care Standards for Domiciliary Care Agencies sets out the following in terms of training requirements for staff:

- The registered manager requires newly appointed staff to provide evidence of training most recently undertaken that fulfils mandatory training requirements.
- Mandatory training requirements are met.

- The training needs of individual staff for their roles and responsibilities are identified and arrangements are in place to meet them.

RQIA is responsible for regulating a range of health and social care providers, both statutory and independent, in accordance with the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation)(Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and its supporting regulations. This includes domiciliary care agencies.

Altnagelvin Hospital: Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention Treatment

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when Altnagelvin Hospital will be able to provide primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PPCI) treatment, in line with the treatment provided by the Royal Victoria Hospital; and whether the delay in providing treatment has disadvantaged rural communities.

(AQW 27064/11-15)

Mr Poots: The next phase of regional roll-out of the primary PCI service is expected to be in place by summer 2014 when Altnagelvin Hospital will become Northern Ireland's second primary PCI centre. Until then, services for patients who are not included in the catchment area of the Belfast service will continue with the use of clot-busting drugs followed by planned PCI before they are discharged from hospital.

Department of Justice

Interpreters Attending Court Hearings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much has been paid for interpreters to attend court hearings in (i) Magistrates Courts; (ii) Crown Courts; and (iii) the High Court, in each of the last twelve months, broken down by court division.

(AQW 26397/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The following tables set out the cost of interpreter and document translation services for each of the last 12 months in (i) Magistrates' Courts; (ii) Crown Courts; and (iii) the High Court by court division.

DIVISION OF BELFAST

	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013
High Court	£1,786	£1,731	£0	£2,407	£1,889	£2,240	£1,946	£8,859	£2,961	£2,856	£2,355	£294
Crown Court	£1,290	£6,146	£403	£11,202	£1,360	£9,205	£7,606	£10,212	£8,289	£2,652	£260	£268
Magistrates' Court	£5,175	£5,377	£1,111	£7,808	£3,988	£7,848	£4,657	£5,969	£5,953	£5,209	£5,616	£4,290

DIVISION OF ANTRIM

	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013
Crown Court	£0	£325	£0	£943	£163	£153	£3,068	£1,138	£0	£610	£8,277	£0
Magistrates' Court	£3,537	£2,830	£868	£3,543	£2,555	£2,676	£2,003	£4,794	£3,492	£3,465	£3,410	£1,602

DIVISION OF ARMAGH

	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013
Crown Court	£320	£1,452	£0	£2,126	£1,997	£1,278	£1,795	£1,321	£516	£10,090	£321	£0
Magistrates' Court	£2,539	£3,130	£1,770	£3,685	£2,060	£3,862	£2,802	£2,326	£2,510	£1,401	£3,026	£968

DIVISION OF CRAIGAVON

	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013
Crown Court	£2,751	£967	£0	£492	£3,431	£4,157	£6,871	£262	£0	£2,603	£460	£144
Magistrates' Court	£3,151	£5,483	£1,049	£7,104	£3,911	£3,338	£2,735	£3,913	£2,500	£1,872	£3,181	£1,623

DIVISION OF LONDONDERRY

	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013
Crown Court	£30	£0	£0	£335	£188	£2,754	£0	£0	£388	£0	£3,334	£0
Magistrates' Court	£1,645	£2,024	£350	£2,043	£1,524	£1,055	£1,451	£2,537	£1,634	£1,304	£2,267	£1,391

DIVISION OF ARDS

	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013
Crown Court	£3,136	£448	£0	£1,962	£148	£455	£1,960	£0	£0	£5,902	£0	£0
Magistrates' Court	£1,492	£1,556	£1,336	£1,967	£1,105	£1,102	£1,276	£1,297	£870	£1,762	£1,590	£738

DIVISION OF FERMANAGH & TYRONE

	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013
Crown Court	£386	£197	£0	£11,085	£552	£1,672	£0	£490	£4,821	£3,903	£490	£0
Magistrates' Court	£7,709	£8,595	£1,846	£10,181	£7,135	£6,500	£3,492	£7,140	£4,284	£3,848	£5,766	£3,063

Prisons: Reported Assaults

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many reported assaults by prisoners against staff have taken place, in each of the last twelve months, broken down by prison facility and juvenile justice unit; and to outline the seriousness or nature of each assault.

(AQW 26485/11-15)

Mr Ford: The breakdown of assaults by prisoners against staff for each of the last twelve months is shown in the table below:

		Total	Maghaberry	Magilligan	Hydebank Wood	Juvenile Justice Centre
2012	Oct	2	1	0	1	0
2012	Nov	10	9	0	1	0
2012	Dec	3	2	0	1	0
2013	Jan	4	3	0	1	0
2013	Feb	9	7	0	2	0
2013	Mar	12	6	1	5	0
2013	Apr	10	5	2	2	1
2013	May	6	3	1	2	0
2013	Jun	6	4	0	2	0
2013	Jul	14	8	1	2	3
2013	Aug	9	7	1	0	1
2013	Sep	11	7	0	2	2
		96	62	6	21	7

Three of the assaults reported at the Juvenile Justice Centre, and one assault at Maghaberry, were recorded as serious. The serious assault at Maghaberry resulted in minor injuries for three members of staff.

Prisoners: Keys to Their Own Cells

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners hold keys to their own cells, broken down by prison.

(AQW 26555/11-15)

Mr Ford: As of the 8 October 2013 the total number of prisoners who hold keys to their own cells, broken down by establishment, is as follows:

Maghaberry	173
Magilligan	234
Hydebank Wood (Ash House)	9
Hydebank Wood (YOC)	4

Prisoner Temporary Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 25218/11-18, to clarify the phrase within the stated Terms of Reference “What influence did a named manager have on the process and what were the circumstances that led to their departure from NIPS”; and to detail how this was brought to his attention and/or that of investigators, particularly given his response to AQW 25624/11-15.

(AQW 26556/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following a series of Assembly Questions, management at Maghaberry Prison conducted a fact finding exercise aimed at establishing the detailed information available. On 4 July 2013 the Director of Offender Policy & Operations initiated a formal investigation and issued terms of reference accordingly.

The phrasing of the terms of reference should not be taken as an inference of malpractice or guilt.

The phrases in question relate to an assessment of the role and level of influence that a named manager may have had. Furthermore, as the named manager resigned from NIPS to pursue a new career the Investigating Governor was asked to establish what involvement, if any, that individual had in the Temporary Release process.

The response issued to AQW/25624/11-15 remains valid.

Compromise Agreements: Financial Commitments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24971/11-15 and AQW 24920/11-15, whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service, prior to resourcing the financial commitments to effect the Compromise Agreements, discussed each case in terms of (i) regularity; (ii) propriety; and (iii) value for money with the Department of Finance and Personnel.

(AQW 26558/11-15)

Mr Ford: There was no requirement to refer this matter to the Department of Finance and Personnel because the payments are within the authority of the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Ratio of Prison Officers to Prisoners at Maghaberry Prison

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Justice to detail the ratio of prison officers to prisoners at Maghaberry Prison.

(AQW 26560/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below provides the information requested:

House	Officer to Prisoner ratio at unlock
Bann	1:22
Braid	1:15
Erne	1:18
Foyle	1:21
Lagan	1:17
Roe 1&2	1:18

House	Officer to Prisoner ratio at unlock
Roe 3&4	1:6
Bush 1&2	1:7

House	Officer to Prisoner ratio at unlock
Bush 3&4	1:21
Glen	Not occupied
Martin	1:7
Wilson	1:21
Quoile	1:15

Prisoners Per Cell Policy

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Justice to outline his Departments policy in relation to the number of prisoners per cell and whether this is being adhered to in all prisons.

(AQW 26561/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no written policy in relation to the number of prisoners per cell. The number of prisoners housed per cell in each establishment is dictated by an increased prisoner population, availability of accommodation and a cell sharing risk assessment process.

Cost of Legal Cases

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 26037/11-15, to detail the data that his Department holds on the costs of litigation; and to outline the mechanism used to allocate funding for legal costs.

(AQW 26577/11-15)

Mr Ford: The type of data held by my Department on the cost of litigation varies in each business area according to the type of case. The data includes, for example, the case reference number, forename and surname of name of claimant and details of costs.

As previously stated with regard to AQW/24826/11-15 and AQW/26037/11-15, the data is held in a format from which the information requested could only be provided by undertaking additional work at disproportionate cost.

Funding for litigation costs is allocated as part of the Department's normal budget setting process where relevant divisions bid for the necessary funding as part of a spending review process and the annual in-year monitoring process.

National Crime Agency: Legal Highs

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 25384/11-15, for his assessment of whether the National Crime Agency not being fully operational locally will result in difficulties in tackling the issue of legal highs.

(AQW 26584/11-15)

Mr Ford: The absence of a fully operational National Crime Agency in Northern Ireland could indeed impact on work to tackle new psychoactive substances (legal highs).

For instance, the NCA will not have police powers to investigate the supply of new psychoactive substances here.

In addition, there is no requirement to consult me as Justice Minister or the Policing Board on NCA's plans for Northern Ireland. This means that we may have less influence on their operations internationally, or they may be more likely to decline our requests for assistance using their non-devolved powers.

Temporary Release of Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 25218/11-15, why he waited to 4 July 2013 to appoint an investigating governor when the details were known in advance of this date; and whether this was compliant with procedures.

(AQW 26595/11-15)

Mr Ford: Management at Maghaberry Prison were instructed to conduct a fact finding exercise aimed at establishing the detailed information available. Once this had been established a Senior Governor from Headquarters was appointed on 4 July 2013 to carry out an investigation under the Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Cases Involving Sexual Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases involving sexual offences are in the court system, broken down by (a) Magistrates; and (b) Crown Courts, and shown per court division.

(AQW 26599/11-15)

Mr Ford: Table 1 below details the number of active cases involving sexual offences in the Magistrates' Court and Crown Court broken down by County Court Division.

TABLE 1

Division	Magistrates' Court	Crown Court	Total
Antrim	28	31	59
Ards	40	22	62
Armagh and South Down	31	18	49
Belfast	105	100	205
Craigavon	37	15	52
Fermanagh and Tyrone	42	26	68
Londonderry	44	24	68
Total	327	236	563

Table 2 details the number of active cases involving sexual offences that are currently being appealed before the County Court and the Court of Appeal by County Court Division.

TABLE 2

Division	County Court	Court of Appeal	Total
Antrim	0	1	1
Ards	0	4	4
Armagh and South Down	0	1	1
Belfast	5	3	8
Craigavon	0	1	1
Fermanagh and Tyrone	1	1	2
Londonderry	2	0	2
Total	8	11	19

Note: Information is provided from the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS) and is current at 4 October 2013.

Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour in Housing Estates

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice how his Department is tackling violence and anti-social behaviour in housing estates.

(AQW 26624/11-15)

Mr Ford: Tackling ASB and violence is the responsibility of a number of partners. Therefore this response includes both input from my Department's perspective and from the Department for Social Development, who have specific responsibility for social housing policy.

You will already be aware, through your membership of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, that the Police Service for Northern Ireland has operational responsibility for dealing with violent crime and that the Policing Plan update for 2013/14 contains a number of outcomes aimed at reducing violent crime.

At a strategic level, my Department has established Delivery Groups to support the achievement of these outcomes and to contribute to the wider safer communities outcomes of the Community Safety Strategy. These Groups bring together key partners, with responsibility for tackling the wide range of issues, to develop and deliver solutions.

The work of the Delivery Groups includes the implementation of the key priorities and outcomes outlined in the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs 2011-16; encouraging Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and Drug and Alcohol Co-ordinating Teams to develop and implement joint initiatives to tackle substance related harm; developing measures to provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of agencies in dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB); reviewing the role of ASB forums; and ensuring appropriate powers are in place to tackle ASB.

The Housing Executive, one of the partners represented on the Anti-social Behaviour Delivery Group, has a key role in tackling violence and ASB in housing estates.

Their use of warning letters has proved extremely successful in stemming ASB, often stopping unacceptable behaviour before more robust action becomes necessary. While many disputes are resolved through informal discussion by the parties involved, mediation provides an alternative when that is unsuccessful. The Housing Executive introduced its own in-house Mediation Service in 2002/03 and now has over 30 accredited external mediators. They also use the services of community-based restorative justice groups, Northern Ireland Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice Ireland, to provide community-based mediation as a means of addressing reported incidents of ASB in many areas.

The Housing Executive also makes use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) which are voluntary written agreements between the Housing Executive and individuals involved in ASB. The Housing Executive has advised that, since their introduction in 2006/07, ABCs have proved to be helpful in stopping ASB. If the individual fails to respond to offers of assistance and the ASB continues, or if the ASB is of such a serious nature that the Housing Executive must take immediate action, they will then use legal interventions that are available. For example, they may choose to repossess the property occupied by the perpetrator, or may seek an injunction to stop the ASB and protect the community.

At a local level, the Housing Executive has 65 Neighbourhood Officers in post who contribute to making their estates cleaner and safer places to live. The Housing Executive also funds various schemes with partner agencies to address crime and the fear of crime on their estates. The 4 Tier scheme in Antrim and Newtownabbey is an example of partnership working, providing a flexible tailored approach to meet specific crime prevention and community safety needs. The Housing Executive is also involved in the funding of a number of night-time warden schemes aimed at addressing issues of ASB and nuisance related incidents. The wardens work with local PSNI Neighbourhood Policing Teams and also with Housing Executive staff, and act as a point of contact for the public who have concerns regarding ASB, especially at nights or weekends.

In addition, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships have developed local action plans to tackle issues which are of concern to local communities. These measures include the delivery of a range of initiatives, such as youth engagement and diversion programmes, for example, cage sports; mediation

programmes which aim to reduce ASB arising from neighbourhood disputes; and alcohol awareness programmes which make the links between ASB and underage drinking. The Housing Executive are represented on PCSPs and input to the development and delivery of initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The Department of Social Development also supports Housing Associations to effectively tackle violence and ASB. This included a training event taken forward in association with the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations last year to disseminate good practice.

All Housing Associations are expected to have ASB policies in place. Local Housing Associations are using a range of programmes, including the REACT programme and the Chartered Institute of Housing's Respect programme, to help ensure housing officers are well-trained in dealing with these matters. When specific problems occur, Housing Associations work closely with the PSNI and Housing Executive in the first instance, then with mediation and other agencies to address issues with tenants. Associations are also doing a range of preventative work, such as Helm Housing's anti-bullying and anti-violence work with primary schools in Belfast.

The Minister for Social Development will, in the near future, be publishing proposals for new legislation to help the Housing Executive and other social landlords to deal with anti-social behaviour.

Audio Recording of All Appeals Tribunal Hearings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he will introduce audio recording of all Appeals Tribunal hearings, including hearings in relation to social benefits, similar to those that exist in Crown Courts and prisoner adjudications within prisons.

(AQW 26668/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to AQW/20632/11-15.

It is a matter for the Minister for Social Development to consider whether additional resources can be provided to support alternative methods to record benefit appeal tribunals. However the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, who support the administration and the President of the Appeal Tribunals, have agreed with the Department for Social Development to initiate a project to test the arrangements and benefits of introducing audio recording in benefit appeals tribunals.

Emergency Procedures Activated

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW25573/11-15, on how many occasions have the emergency procedures been activated, including the nature of the incident, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26670/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information you requested is not recorded in an easily retrievable format, and it will not therefore be possible to fully answer the question in the timeframe available for AQWs.

I will write to the Member once the full information is obtained.

Supporting Prisoners at Risk

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, since their inception, how many Supporting Prisoners at Risk audits have been carried out per prison facility; and to detail the result of each audit.

(AQW 26672/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service introduced an enhanced auditing system of the Supporting Prisoners at Risk documentation in March 2013. The table below shows the number of audits completed broken down by establishment.

At the end of each individual audit the auditor records the outcome and the action that is required locally. This information is not held centrally.

Establishment	No of SPARs Audited
Maghaberry	94
Magilligan	18
Hydebank	58

Cost of Legal Aid

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total cost of Legal Aid in each of the last 3 financial years.

(AQW 26693/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total cost of Legal Aid, excluding administration costs, in each of the last 3 financial years is as follows.

2010/11	£93.3m
2011/12	£101.7m
2012/13	£100.5m

Further detailed information is available by accessing the Annual Accounts of the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission from their website: www.nilsc.org.uk.

Legal Aid: Access

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice to detail how he is ensuring that people who require Legal Aid have the ability to access it, both for civil and criminal matters.

(AQW 26698/11-15)

Mr Ford: Criminal legal aid is granted by the court under the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. The court grants criminal legal aid to defendants if it is satisfied that their means are insufficient to enable them to obtain legal advice and it is desirable in the interests of justice that they should have free legal aid.

Civil legal aid is granted by the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission where two statutory tests are met, namely the applicant:-

- a. has shown reasonable grounds for taking, defending or being a party to proceedings, and
- b. meets the financial eligibility test for legal aid.

A number of consultations have issued this year regarding criminal and civil legal aid and I will give careful consideration to all the points raised by consultees who have responded.

It is my intention to ensure that we maintain the ability of those who require legal aid to access it, whether it is for civil matters or criminal matters, as far as possible.

Reductions in Legal Aid Budgets

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the impact the reductions in Legal Aid budgets will have on legal practices; and to detail the methodology behind his assessment.

(AQW 26717/11-15)

Mr Ford: Officials in my Department conduct Impact Assessments, including economic impact appraisals, prior to going out to consultation on the proposed legal aid changes. This is carried out in accordance with guidance contained in OFMDFM's policy toolkit.

In conducting the initial Impact Assessments, it is not always possible for officials to arrive at an accurate assessment of the impact the reforms will have on individual legal firms, as information is not routinely available on the levels of income obtained from private work that is not funded by legal aid. If information in relation to private earnings is brought to the attention of officials, as part of the consultation process through answering the impact assessment questionnaire (issued as part of the consultation) or otherwise, the Impact Assessments will take account of this to inform the decision making process.

Offences Relating to Rioting

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Justice to detail the age profile of people convicted of offences relating to rioting, since December 2012.

(AQW 26718/11-15)

Mr Ford: The most recent year for which information on convictions is available is 2009. Therefore, it is not possible to provide convictions information for the period requested in the question.

Representations to the Parades Commission

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Justice whether he has made representations to the Parades Commission in the last 12 months.

(AQW 26725/11-15)

Mr Ford: No.

Funding for Legal Aid

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what consultation and discussions have taken place with (i) the Law Society; and (ii) the Bar Council on the proposed £14 million reduction in the funding for Legal Aid.

(AQW 26766/11-15)

Mr Ford: Officials from the Department met with the Law Society on 23 September 2013 and gave a presentation on all of the proposals for legal aid reform. The key proposals discussed are set out in the table below.

Proposals	Proposed Estimated Savings
Legal aid funding for representation in civil cases	£3.5 million
Money damages – alternatives to legal aid	£1 million
Reform of financial eligibility tests	£2.9 million
Civil legal aid Remuneration	£13.8 million
Crown Court fees	£5.6 million

Officials from the Department also met with a representative of the Family Bar Association at the end of August 2013 and are awaiting the Bar Council to identify suitable dates to discuss the proposals for changes to Civil legal aid remuneration.

Further meetings will take place over the coming weeks with both arms of the legal profession. The outcome of these meetings, together with the substantive responses to the consultation will be carefully considered by me and reflected in the Department's consultation response documents.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum Collection

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the plans to rehouse the Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum collection.

(AQW 26768/11-15)

Mr Ford: I recognise the importance of many of the artefacts held by the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

NIPS is currently giving consideration to the future arrangements for storing and managing these artefacts and has engaged with a number of interested parties. Work is also ongoing to clarify what - if any - legal obligations are attached to the material. No final decisions have been taken.

Ruling of an Appeal Hearing in Ards Division County Court

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice to detail the legal significance of the ruling in an appeal hearing in Ards Division County Court, which led to the outcome being listed on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website under Neutral Citation No [2013] NICTY 3.

(AQW 26774/11-15)

Mr Ford: This appeal related to the interpretation of the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998. The Act gives a business a statutory right to claim interest and compensation for the late payment of commercial debt.

The ruling was published on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website as the County Court Judge considered it may be useful to others involved in small claims proceedings.

Cases Heard in the Small Claims Court

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice how many County Court Orders arising out of cases originally heard in the Small Claims Court have subsequently been listed under the Judicial Decisions area on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website.

(AQW 26776/11-15)

Mr Ford: Fourteen judgements published on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website arose out of cases originally heard in the Small Claims Court.

Offender Levy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total accrued from the Offender Levy; and of this (i) how much has been allocated; (ii) to list the organisations and individuals who have received an allocation; and (iii) whether any of these funds are being allocated to part-finance Legal Aid.

(AQW 26780/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since its introduction in June 2012, the Offender Levy has generated £146,361 for the Victims of Crime Fund (as at 30 September 2013). Of this, a total of £50,178 has been allocated to Barnardos Northern Ireland, Dunclug Partnership, Mediation Northern Ireland, Seven Towers Community and Cultural Educational Association, Women's Aid and Victim Support Northern Ireland. No funding from the Victims of Crime Fund has been or will be allocated to part-finance legal aid. The purpose of the fund is to deliver improved services to victims and witnesses of crime.

Northern Ireland Jurisdiction: Insurance Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 25698/11-15, how does this jurisdiction compare to other court divisions in relation to no insurance cases.

(AQW 26781/11-15)

Mr Ford: Uninsured driving is an offence under Article 90(4) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. The most recent two years for which the information requested is available are 2008 and 2009. The Table below gives the number of convictions for uninsured driving by Court Division for 2008 and 2009.

NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS FOR UNINSURED DRIVING BY COURT DIVISION, 2008-2009

Court Division	2008	2009
Ards	527	549
Antrim	502	535
Armagh & South Down	472	483
Belfast	1,265	1,264
Craigavon	395	409
Fermanagh & Tyrone	599	823
Londonderry	383	462
Total	4,143	4,525

Note:

- 1 Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.
- 2 The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offence specified.

Investigation Findings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 25218/11-15, as the investigation was submitted to the commissioning authority on 31 August 2013, when does he intend to make the findings available.

(AQW 26782/11-15)

Mr Ford: As this was an internal disciplinary investigation it would not be appropriate to make the findings publicly available.

Prisoners: Self-Harmed or Committed an Act of Suicide or Attempted Suicide

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 24166/11-15; AQW 24239/11-15; and AQW 24919/11-15, to outline why he, in conjunction with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, has not commissioned a formal review to examine, report and make recommendations on the safety and care of vulnerable prisoners in terms of the prevention of acts of self-harm, including attempted suicide and death by suicide in establishments managed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service; and given that he is Chairperson of the Prison Oversight Group, which in the Group's March 2013 Report states "the number of deaths in custody remains a concern" and "appropriate care of vulnerable prisoners will continue to be prioritised for improvement in that area"; and to detail why his inaction and his answers to previous Written Questions do not reflect the priority concerns of the Prison Oversight Group.

(AQW 26801/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service takes its responsibility for the safe custody of all those in its care extremely seriously and the safety and care of vulnerable prisoners continues to be a priority.

As previously advised the Northern Ireland Prison Service is committed to completing a formal review of its Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Policy, which will be taken forward in due course in consultation with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SET).

The Prison Service keeps its policies and procedures subject to ongoing informal review and continues to work with the SET and other partnership agencies to take all practicable and reasonable measures to prevent prisoners inflicting harm on themselves.

Historical Sexual Abuse Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, whether there is evidence to suggest that a percentage of historical sexual abuse cases involving children being processed through the court system are a result of reluctance to report the alleged offences at the time due to fear of community or terrorist recrimination by engaging with police at the time of the offences, and if not, will he commission an investigation to establish if this is the case.

(AQW 26804/11-15)

Mr Ford: Anyone who has concerns about any individual who they fear is posing a risk to the safety of a child can, and should, go to the police or social services at any time about their concerns. The PSNI have in place local public protection teams to deal with these issues. Children's services in Health and Social Care Trusts also have a role to protect children and work closely with police where a risk to a child is identified, under the Protocol for Joint Investigation by Social Workers and Police Officers of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Child Abuse – Northern Ireland. Social Services are also represented on the local public protection teams.

It is not clear what benefits an historic study of the kind the member proposes would bring to the justice system.

National Crime Agency: Local Issues

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to outline the issues that the National Crime Agency will not be able to deal with locally from October 2013 if the devolution of these functions does not proceed.

(AQW 26808/11-15)

Mr Ford: The National Crime Agency's powers are restricted to the reserved and excepted fields. As a consequence, the NCA's civil recovery remit is limited to non-devolved cases and even in those cases, it can only pursue assets within this jurisdiction. This leaves a serious gap in our law enforcement effort.

Additionally, NCA officers do not have devolved police powers in Northern Ireland and, therefore, are unable to directly assist the PSNI and others with investigations.

The absence of powers will present significant challenges. As the NCA came into existence on 7 October it is not yet possible to identify the additional annual costs of covering the gaps; however this will be kept under review.

National Crime Agency: Annual Cost of Functions

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, following the commencement of the operations of the National Crime Agency locally, to detail the estimated additional annual cost of the functions, that are expected to continue to be carried out by the PSNI if devolution of those functions does not proceed.

(AQW 26810/11-15)

Mr Ford: The National Crime Agency's powers are restricted to the reserved and excepted fields. As a consequence, the NCA's civil recovery remit is limited to non-devolved cases and even in those cases, it can only pursue assets within this jurisdiction. This leaves a serious gap in our law enforcement effort.

Additionally, NCA officers do not have devolved police powers in Northern Ireland and, therefore, are unable to directly assist the PSNI and others with investigations.

The absence of powers will present significant challenges. As the NCA came into existence on 7 October it is not yet possible to identify the additional annual costs of covering the gaps; however this will be kept under review.

Reducing Offending in Partnership Pilot Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 26210/11-15, to outline the steps that are being taken to address the problem, following the disclosure that under the Reducing Offending in Partnership pilot, 28 percent of offenders increased their offending.

(AQW 26811/11-15)

Mr Ford: The approaches taken through Reducing Offending in Partnership (ROP) enable the police to identify the minority of offenders who have increased their offending, target resources accordingly, and ensure that a clear and consistent approach is taken to addressing their behaviour.

The sharing of information and the partnership working among the agencies involved in ROP, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, the Youth Justice Agency and the Northern Ireland Prison Service, are key factors in dealing effectively with those offenders. Actions may include: dealing robustly and quickly with all incidents involving those identified offenders; ensuring compliance with all terms of bail, release licences or community orders; and providing the offender with support to address the issues contributing to their offending behaviour.

Repaying Legal Aid

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of people who have repaid Legal Aid after being found guilty of a criminal offence; (ii) the amount repaid; and (iii) the number of successful appeals against repaying Legal Aid.

(AQW 26877/11-15)

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 or repay the costs of his defence if he is found guilty.

I introduced Recovery of Defence Costs Orders (RDCO) to recover legal costs from wealthy defendants who are subsequently found to be in a position to repay some or all of their defence costs.

The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission ("the Commission") recently made an application for an RDCO in respect of one defendant. However, after investigation into the defendant's financial circumstances, the Commission decided that it was not appropriate to continue with the application.

Proposed Changes to Legal Aid

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the impact the proposed changes to Legal Aid will have on the most vulnerable in society.

(AQW 26943/11-15)

Mr Ford: In my assessment the proposed changes to legal aid will have no adverse impact on the most vulnerable in society.

STORM Assessment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the STORM assessment, devised by the University of Manchester, has been adopted by the Northern Ireland Prison Service, and if so, if it is carried out as part of Supporting Prisoner and Risk procedures.

(AQW 26970/11-15)

Mr Ford: The STORM assessment has not been adopted by the Northern Ireland Prison Service. The Supporting Prisoners at Risk procedures are underpinned by the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training model in assessing those who are at risk of self-harm or suicide.

Department for Regional Development

Programme for Government Commitments

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress made on each of his Department's Programme for Government commitments.

(AQW 25301/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Progress by all departments on their PfG Commitments is monitored centrally on a quarterly basis. The latest update is available via the Strategic Online Report published on the Northern Ireland Executive's website (www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg).

Cycle-Friendly Planning and Design

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development if there are plans to review the guidance on cycle-friendly planning and design, in conjunction with local authorities and other partners, to ensure that opportunities to improve cycling conditions are incorporated, wherever possible, into roads, traffic planning schemes and all planned road maintenance work.

(AQW 25715/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department uses a number of guidance documents relating to cycle provision and design to embrace best practice in this area. These include the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), Local Transport Notes produced by Department for Finance (DfT) such as 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' and various Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC), Sustrans and Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CHIT) guidance documents along with other documents produced by local councils and other voluntary groups. Revision of these documents is a matter for the individual groups and bodies responsible for them. The Department will engage with interested stakeholders with the aim of improving the provision of cycling facilities.

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.

New Footpaths in the North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of providing new footpaths in the North Down area, in the last three financial years.

(AQW 25756/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: 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.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/doc-details.htm?docid=8946

http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/doc-details.htm?docid=8202

Costs of Resurfacing Roads in the North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the costs of resurfacing roads in the North Down area, in the last three financial years.

(AQW 25757/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not maintain an analysis of spend in the format requested, however, it does maintain details of total Capital Structural Maintenance spend, which includes maintenance

activities such as resurfacing, surface dressing and structural drainage. This expenditure is recorded by District Council area not by Constituency area.

Details of expenditure of this type in the North Down area, during the last three years, are set out in the table below:

NORTH DOWN COUNCIL AREA

Financial Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Spend £k	1,681	2,266	1,977

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

Dropped Curbs in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of providing dropped curbs in the North Down area, in the last three financial years.

(AQW 25758/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: 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

Cycle Lanes That Require Re-Painting

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether Roads Service have made an assessment of cycle lane lines that require re-painting.

(AQW 26183/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department carries out regular inspections of all public roads, footways and cycle lanes that are adopted, or maintained by Roads Service, to ensure that essential response maintenance is identified and completed as necessary.

If the Member has any specific concerns about any cycle lane lines that are maintained by my Department, he should notify the local Roads Service section office, who will investigate his concerns.

Unmaintained Cycle Lanes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of whether unmaintained cycle lanes act as a deterrent to people considering cycling.

(AQW 26184/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The condition of cycle lanes is likely to be one of many factors that people consider when deciding whether to take up cycling.

If the Member has any specific concern/s about any cycle lanes that are maintained by my Department, he should notify the local Roads Service section office, who will investigate his concerns.

Translink and Ulsterbus Services

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the Translink and Ulsterbus services where routes are displayed in Irish.

(AQW 26234/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised my officials that Metro services on the Metro 10, Falls Roads corridor services, (with the exception of service 10H which travels along the Falls Road but which turns into Blacks Road), carry destinations signs in English and Irish with the display alternating between the two. The introduction of these signs was subject to appropriate consultation. On Ulsterbus services 274 (Londonderry-Dublin) and X4 (Londonderry-Dublin), the destination signage is in English and Irish and alternate between the two languages on services.

Roads Service Operated Car Park in Ballymena

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development how many parking tickets have been issued due to (i) cars being parked after the expiry of the time paid for; and (ii) the incorrect placement of a pay and display ticket, in each Roads Service operated car park in Ballymena.

(AQW 26315/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below contains details of Parking Charge Notices issued in each Roads Service Car Park in Ballymena for the following codes:

- Code 82 – parked after expiry of time paid for in a pay and display car park; and
- Code 83 – parked in a pay and display car park without clearly displaying a valid pay and display ticket (it is not possible to distinguish between those issued for incorrect display or non display).

PARKING CHARGE NOTICES ISSUED IN EACH ROADS SERVICE CAR PARK IN BALLYMENA

Location	Financial Year		
	11/12 Apr-Mar	12/13 Apr-Mar	13/14 Apr-Sept
Church St			
Code 82	180	133	55
Code 83	179	139	61
Broughshane St			
Code 82	334	185	117
Code 83	421	304	125
Ballymoney Rd			
Code 82	178	122	60
Code 83	181	171	93
Harryville			
Code 82	-	12	2
Code 83	-	96	28

Upgrading the A32

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the recent; and (ii) planned investment for upgrading the A32 between Omagh and Enniskillen.

(AQW 26359/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's improvement strategy for the A32 Omagh to Enniskillen route includes a number of significant road improvement schemes. Two of the schemes identified within this programme have already been delivered. The £2m improvement scheme at A32 Drumskinny was completed in early 2012 and a £7.3m realignment scheme at A32 Shannaragh opened to traffic in December 2012.

Together these schemes have improved the quality of the route, enhanced road safety and reduced travel times for all road users, including traffic generated by the new South West Acute Hospital, which opened in June 2012.

Design work is also well advanced on a number of other priority schemes along the route, including schemes at Cornamuck, Esker Bog, Kilgortnaleague and Newpark. However, delivery of these schemes will be dependent on the outcome of future budget settlements

Road and Pavement Conditions During the Winter

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what additional measures are being put in place to help cope with difficult road and pavement conditions during the coming winter.

(AQW 26413/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: 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. I have placed a copy of the review 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 improve the reliability 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 arrangements with 24 of the 26 District Councils to salt city and town centre footways during times of prolonged ice and snow. I have written to the Chief Executives of the remaining two councils to encourage them to come on board.

Footpath Schemes: Millisle Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new footpath schemes are planned for the Millisle area.

(AQW 26421/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 26015/11-15.

Footpath Schemes: Donaghadee Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new footpath schemes are planned for the Donaghadee area.

(AQW 26423/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 26015/11-15.

Footpath Schemes: Groomspoint Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new footpath schemes are planned for the Groomspoint area.

(AQW 26424/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 26015/11-15.

Footpath Schemes: Conlig Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new footpath schemes are planned for the Conlig area.

(AQW 26426/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 26015/11-15.

Footpath Schemes: Holywood Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new footpath schemes are planned for the Holywood area.

(AQW 26427/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 26015/11-15.

Bicycle Storage Facilities at Stations

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 25681/11-15, to detail the stations in which bicycle storage will be expanded; and the number of new spaces that are being considered at each.

(AQW 26440/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink will be focusing their resources on locations that are currently recognised as close to capacity. Namely Bangor, Belfast Central, Lisburn, Lurgan and Moira rail stations. Translink will liaise with customers at local stations to establish the required level of expansion.

Translink intend to commence work on this project at the end of this year, therefore it is not yet possible to quantify the number of spaces that are being considered at each location.

Buses Stopping in Cycle Boxes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of complaints received by (i) his Department; and (ii) Translink regarding buses stopping in an a cycle box.

(AQW 26453/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has received no complaints about vehicles stopping in areas reserved for cyclists, however, a number of queries have been raised about the usage and enforceability of this provision.

Translink has received complaints on this issue, which relate to an Ulsterbus vehicle and two Metro vehicles.

Enforcement of Cycle Boxes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions he has had with the PSNI on enforcing cycle boxes.

(AQW 26454/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have had no discussions with the PSNI about enforcing advance stop lines at junctions. However, my officials have discussed the general issue of advance stop lines with the PSNI's Road Policing Unit.

Buses Stopping in Cycle Boxes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures are in place to ensure that bus drivers do not park in cycle boxes.

(AQW 26455/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In terms of contravening an advanced stop line, Rule 178 of the Highway Code refers (<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/highway-code.pdf>) - Motorists, including motorcyclists, MUST stop at the first white line reached.

The responsibility for enforcement rests with the police, and they can and do enforce against drivers contravening an advanced stop line. In terms of parking, my Department's traffic attendants will enforce against any vehicle found parked in contravention of any on-street restriction.

Cycling Infrastructure

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the new departmental cycling unit will have the remit to promote and deliver the creation of improved and dedicated cycling infrastructure.

(AQW 26464/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The promotion and delivery of improved and dedicated cycling infrastructure is one of a number of cycling related issues that officials within my Department's new cycling unit will be giving consideration to.

The Member may also be aware that my Department's Travelwise Initiative promotes sustainable travel including cycling, by way of a series of marketing campaigns across the year, and seeks to raise awareness of the general public as well as the school population, of the benefits of cycling by delivering events such as Bike Week and Bike To School Day. Cycling is also encouraged as an important element of Workplace Travel Plans with organisations and companies throughout Northern Ireland.

I recently launched the Active School Travel Programme, which will provide a programme of cycle and walking skills training to pupils in up to 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.

Bicycle Storage Facilities at Train Stations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration his Department has given to developing secure covered bicycle storage facilities at train stations, that are monitored by CCTV, similar to those used by Mersey Rail.

(AQW 26493/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The majority of Translink facilities are monitored by CCTV. Translink have agreed to carry out an appropriate feasibility study looking at alternatives that may be available for the future.

Penalty Charge Notices: North Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development for a breakdown of the street locations of Penalty Charge Notices issued in North Belfast, in each of the last twelve months.

(AQW 26522/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not compile figures in relation to Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) on a Constituency basis and it would require a lengthy and resource intensive exercise scrutinising individual PCN records held on the IT system to obtain the information requested.

However, information in relation to PCNs issued in a specific street can be provided, on request, from my Department's Roads Service.

Penalty Charge Notices: North Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Penalty Charge Notices have been (i) issued; (ii) paid; (iii) successfully appealed; and (iv) unpaid in North Belfast, in each of the last twelve months.

(AQW 26523/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not maintain an analysis of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued on a constituency basis.

TEN-T Core Network

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail what progress has been made in having Derry designated as a Core Node on the TEN-T Core Network.

(AQW 26545/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Despite intensive and high level lobbying on the part of my Department, the European Commission has decided that Londonderry does not meet the required criteria for designation as a Core Node.

While the exclusion of Londonderry from the Core Network is disappointing, it is important to recognise that on a regional level, the outcomes of TEN-T negotiations are positive for Northern Ireland.

In this context, the securing of an 'isolated network' status by my Department within the TEN-T negotiation process, has provided Northern Ireland with hard won exemptions in terms of compliance with mandatory improvements to network standards. It is these exemptions that have guarded Northern Ireland from very significant levels of compulsory expenditure; which we successfully argued was unjustifiable.

Furthermore, my Department has successfully negotiated the inclusion of Londonderry on the TEN-T Comprehensive Network and this will provide opportunities to compete for funds from within the Connecting Europe Facility funding mechanism.

Gully Covers at Craigdarragh Road, Helen's Bay

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 25173/11-15, when Roads Service installed large gully covers at Craigdarragh Road, Helen's Bay.

(AQW 26547/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service installed the large gully gratings at Craigdarragh Road, Helens Bay, whilst completing carriageway resurfacing works during the 1999/2000 financial year.

Funding for the Magilligan to Greencastle Ferry

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has been approached to provide funding for the Magilligan to Greencastle ferry.

(AQW 26615/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department received a request for financial support from Limavady Borough Council and Donegal County Council in February 2010 which was turned down as my Department has no legislative or direct operational responsibility for the service.

Areas at Risk of Flooding

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the areas that are at risk of flooding and require flood alleviation work to be completed.

(AQW 26619/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has developed The Strategic Flood Map (NI) which shows the areas that are considered to be at risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and surface water. This map was first launched in 2008 and is available on the DARD Rivers Agency website. I am advised that Rivers Agency, under the terms of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973 has an ongoing programme of flood alleviation works.

As Minister for Regional Development I am responsible for Roads Service and Northern Ireland Water, both of which have important roles in ensuring effectual drainage of our roads and sewerage networks and that they continue to function when we experience heavy rainfall.

My Department continues to work with DARD Rivers Agency and other bodies to coordinate our efforts to alleviate flooding.

Translink and Associated Projects: Funding

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Regional Development how much of his Department's budget funds Translink and associated projects.

(AQW 26627/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's current budget for 2013-14 includes planned funding of £98.3 million for Translink of which Public Service Obligation is £25.4 million and Bus / Rail Concessionary Fares £38.5 million. This equates to 11.4% of my Departments total budget for 2013-14. This may change as a result of monitoring rounds in-year.

Active Travel Bill

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to introduce legislation, taking into account jurisdictional differences, that would share the aims and objectives of the Active Travel Bill in Wales.

(AQW 26640/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Welsh Active Travel Bill would place obligations on local highway authorities to enhance the provision on roads for walking and cycling and to provide for maps of active travel routes. As responsibility for road traffic and pedestrian issues here rests with my department, I am not persuaded of a need to introduce similar legislation.

The aims and objectives of the Welsh Active Travel Bill are similar to those of the Active Travel Strategy, which I launched earlier this year. The Strategy aims to put walking and cycling at the heart of our local transport arrangements and create an environment where it is safer and more practical to walk and cycle.

I have also established a new cycling unit to ensure cycling issues and initiatives are progressed in a more coherent and coordinated manner across my Department, in partnership with local government, voluntary bodies, public transport operators and the health and education sectors.

Bus Stops at Castledawson Roundabout

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the scheduled bus services that use the bus stops at Castledawson roundabout on a daily basis going to or from (i) Belfast; (ii) Londonderry; and (iii) Magherafelt.

(AQW 26646/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The following Ulsterbus services serve the Castledawson roundabout.

- Service 110 Cookstown ~ Magherafelt ~ Antrim ~ Belfast
- Service 127 Magherafelt ~ Portglenone ~ Ballymena
- Service 176/116 Magherafelt ~ Maghera ~ Kilrea ~ Coleraine
- Service 210 Cookstown ~ Magherafelt ~ Randalstown ~ Belfast Express

- Service 212 Belfast ~ Dungiven ~ Derry~Londonderry Express
- Service 389b Maiden City Flyer Shuttle

Water Meters: South Antrim

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development how many water meters have been installed in South Antrim, in each of the last five years

(AQW 26666/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the number of water meters installed in South Antrim, in each of the last five financial years, is as detailed in the table below. These figures have been determined by reference to the property addresses and post codes within the South Antrim constituency and they include all water meter installations irrespective of reason (newly connected properties, existing properties not previously metered, and renewal of existing meters).

Financial Year	Number of Meters Installed
2008/09	645
2009/10	309
2010/11	656
2011/12	566
2012/13	316

Corran Integrated School: Parking Spaces

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development on what basis, in connection with a current planning application, do an extra 17 parking spaces be deemed sufficient by Roads Service to cater for Corran Integrated school, Larne, which has quadrupled in population over 20 years.

(AQW 26694/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is satisfied the car parking numbers indicated on the latest layout drawing comply with requirements within Planning Policy Statement 3.

Corran Integrated School: Bus Turning

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development on what basis, in connection with a current planning application, does Roads Service approve of a 53 seater bus reversing, several times a day, from Blackcave North, Larne into the turning circle entrance to Corran Integrated School, given the inability of the bus to turn on site; and what regard has there been to the safety considerations.

(AQW 26695/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not given approval for the reversing manoeuvre of a 53 seat bus from Blackcave North, Larne into the turning circle to Corran Integrated School.

Consideration of safety is paramount in my Department's assessment of this planning application, and indeed of any such application.

Speed Limit of Less Than 30 mph in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the roads that have a designated speed limit of less than 30 mph in South Antrim.

(AQW 26719/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not hold the information you require on a Parliamentary Constituency basis. If you require information on particular roads or streets, please contact the relevant local Roads Service Section Office who will be able to assist you.

Dualling of the A8 Larne Road

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress on the dualling of the A8 Larne Road.

(AQW 26726/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am pleased to advise that construction of the 14km of dual carriageway on the A8, between Coleman's Corner Roundabout and Ballyrickard Road, is now 13 months into a 34 month programme and is currently on schedule to open to traffic by Spring 2015.

Car Parking Problems in Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development what further work is planned to alleviate car parking problems in Coleraine, before the commencement of the proposed new multi-story car park in the town centre.

(AQW 26727/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are approximately 2,600 parking spaces available for public use in and around Coleraine town centre, including those in private car parks at the Tesco and Dunnes supermarkets. Of these around 25% are on-street, mostly unrestricted and are well used.

Spare capacity is available in the more peripheral car parks, including those at Railway Road and Waterside and the introduction of Variable Message Signage has helped to manage car park usage throughout the district. My Department has plans to further upgrade this system.

In addition, on the Saturdays before Christmas, my Department, in association with Coleraine Borough Council and Translink, plans to introduce a Park & Ride facility to further support local business.

As advised in my reply to AQW 26232/11-15, should you have any specific concerns regarding this issue, please contact the local Roads Service officials, who will be happy to discuss these matters with you in more detail.

Measuring the Number of Miles Cycled

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 25776/11-15, whether he would consider measuring the number of miles cycled by constituency or council area for future surveys.

(AQW 26819/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) is a population survey and uses a methodology which is designed to provide representative geographic coverage across Northern Ireland. Population surveys are designed to report at national level and can only be disaggregated into large geographies such as Belfast Local Government District (LGD), East of NI and West of NI, as currently published in the TSNI. They are not designed to provide information at LGD level.

A6 Randalstown to Toome Dualling Scheme

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the A6 Randalstown to Toome Dualling Scheme.

(AQW 26842/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Direction Order and Environmental Notice to Proceed for the Randalstown to Castledawson scheme (of which the Randalstown to Toome scheme forms a part) were confirmed in March 2011. The Vesting Orders remain in draft and will be made after funding for the scheme has been confirmed.

The Inspector's Report on the November 2007 Public Inquiries into the Toome to Castledawson portion of the scheme recommended that detailed plans for the construction of the dual carriageway as designed should be progressed, and the recommended changes to the published proposal, to connect the dual carriageway to Annaghmore Road and Bellshill Road at Castledawson, be considered as a separate issue.

A planning application for an alternative junction layout at Bellshill Road was submitted at the end of June 2013 and is currently being considered by DOE Planning.

The Castledawson junction issue would not delay progression of the main scheme.

I have submitted a bid for funding for this scheme in the 2014/15 Capital Budget Exercise and the October Monitoring Round, which if successful, should allow construction to commence in 2014/15.

Queensbury Park, South Belfast: 20mph Speed Limit

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will consider implementing a 20 mph speed limit in Queensbury Park, South Belfast as a matter of urgency to ensure the safety of children living in the area.

(AQW 27018/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's officials recently updated an earlier assessment of Queensbury Park on the basis of an actual traffic volume and speed survey. Unfortunately, this indicated that Queensbury Park did not rank sufficiently highly, in relation to locations being considered on a prioritised basis for traffic calming measures and as such, Queensbury Park is not one of the areas to be taken forward under the initiative to provide signed only 20mph speed limits.

Department for Social Development

Meeting with Red Sky in June 2011

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 25480/11-15, to list any examples of instances where departmental officials raised concerns about attending a meeting with Red Sky in June 2011.

(AQW 26506/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The role of departmental officials with regard to their Ministers is at all times to act within the authority of the Minister to whom they are accountable and to support the Minister with clear, well reasoned, timely and impartial advice. It is my role as Minister to take decisions in the knowledge of that advice.

Purchase of Private Properties

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 25933/11-15, whether there are any instances where private properties have been purchased for amounts higher than those stated by recognised valuers.

(AQW 26533/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am aware of one instance where a housing association, with the prior approval of my Department, paid a higher amount than that stated by the valuer. The scheme cannot be named for 'commercial in confidence' reasons.

The valuation report quoted the already completed units as having an open market value of £2.37m, but because all were being bought together as one lot a discount was considered appropriate, giving a valuation of £1.96m. The housing association could not close the deal for less than £2.32m.

My Department operates a Total Cost Indicator performance measure for each individual new scheme. This measures the presented cost of a scheme against a cost indication of what the scheme should cost. This provides a value for money assessment of each individual scheme.

In this case, the indicative cost of purchasing these units was adjudged to be £2.6m and on that basis purchase of the units was considered to be value for money.

Where, by exception, it is necessary to work outside of the normal rules in order to secure an opportunity, value for money purchase in an area of high housing need, my Department has in place a robust approval mechanism in place which requires housing associations to seek Departmental approval in advance of proceeding. The rules were properly followed and applied in this exceptional case.

Appointment of New NIHE Chief Executive

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development what are the arrangements and respective roles of (i) the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE); and (ii) his Department in the upcoming appointment of the new NIHE Chief Executive.

(AQW 26541/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The appointment of the Chief Executive of the Housing Executive is a matter for the Board of the Housing Executive, however, under the Management Statement Financial Memorandum which has been agreed between the Housing Executive and the Department, the Board in the Housing Executive will appoint a new Chief Executive in consultation with the Department and set objectives and remuneration terms linked to these objectives for the Chief Executive which give due weight to the proper management and use of public monies.

The Department is also required to provide guidance to the new Chief Executive in taking up their appointment as Accounting Officer. The Department may send observers to any stage of the recruitment process.

Support Grade Band Staff

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what was the average annual salary of staff in the Support Grade Band on 1 April 2013.

(AQW 26606/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At 1 April 2013 the average salary for staff in the Support Grade Band 1 grade was £20,886 and the average salary for staff in the Support Grade Band 2 grade was £16,708

Redeveloped Area of the Village, South Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the redevelopment of the Village, South Belfast, whether he will consider giving preference to residents living in the Improvement Area in the allocation of new or refurbished homes, before offering these houses to people on the general housing list.

(AQW 26651/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are no grounds for giving preference to residents living in the improvement area. Special conditions attach only to those whose properties were vested within the redevelopment area and it is right that they have priority status to return to the area in which they previously lived.

All social housing in Northern Ireland is allocated in line with the Housing Selection Scheme which points applicants and allocates social housing on a fair and equitable basis. All applicants are free to name their area of choice for housing. If residents living in the improvement area desire to live in the redevelopment area they need to apply to the waiting list for the area and their application will be assessed in the usual way.

So far, 46 allocations and offers have been made for the new homes coming on stream. Of those, 29 have been made to those priority groups either living in the redevelopment area or who have a guarantee letter to return.

Of the remaining 17 from the general waiting list, 7 are in respect of applicants from the improvement area. Applicants from the improvement area are therefore being included where their points justify that decision.

Redeveloped Area of the Village, South Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the redevelopment of the Village, South Belfast, for his assessment of the concern in the community that after Phase 3, there are no plans for a fourth phase; and what assurances he can give that in the absence of any private affordable houses being built on this site, he will take early steps to have social housing built on the site.

(AQW 26652/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It was always the intention to regenerate the Village with three phases of social housing followed by a fourth phase of private affordable housing. The Housing Executive has determined that three phases of social housing totalling 114 new homes will meet their current assessment of social housing need in the area.

The first two phases of 87 new homes are complete or nearing completion. The third phase of 27 houses will start in early 2014. Once planning approval is granted for the third phase, the Housing Executive will commence consultation with the local community about the provision of the affordable housing element.

I shall keep under review the need for additional social housing in the event of affordable housing not proceeding as anticipated.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Contractors

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development, pending the review of alleged overpayment to certain contractors by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, whether any payments that are now due to any of these contractors are currently being withheld.

(AQW 26664/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that there are a number of schemes that are deemed live and therefore monies are due on these schemes on an on-going basis. The experts acting for the Housing Executive and those for the contractors are carrying out a sampling exercise at present to determine the status of payments across the framework and the settlement of same.

Empty Homes in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Social Development how many of the 32,000 empty homes are in the South Antrim constituency; and how many of these homes are in (i) Ballyclare; and (ii) Antrim, broken down by electoral ward.

(AQW 26740/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Of the 32,000 empty homes 1,056 were in the South Antrim constituency. The table below shows the breakdown by electoral ward.

Council	Electoral Ward	Number Empty
Antrim	Toome	32
	Drumanaway	21
	Cranfield	22
	Randalstown	35
	Shilvodan	34
	Templepatrick	29
	Farranshane	8
	Springfarm	30
	Massereene	79
	Balloo	23
	Fountain Hill	21
	Steeple	10
	Stiles	16
	Greystone	5
	Parkgate	24
	Ballycraigy	17
	Clady	45
	Aldergrove	57
Crumlin	47	
Newtownabbey	Mallusk	90
	Doagh	35
	Ballyclare North	50
	Ballyclare South	67
	Ballynure	40
	Ballyrobert	37
	Hawthorne	18
	Ballyduff	8
	Carnmoney	12
	Mossley	12
	Burnthill	17
Lisburn	Glenavy	115
Total		1056

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.

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. 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.

Glen Dimplex NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has met with representatives of Glen Dimplex NI; and if so, when each meeting took place and who was present.

(AQW 26750/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I met with Neil Stewart, Managing Director, and Graeme Scott General Manager of Glen Dimplex at their premises in Portadown in 1 September 2011. I met with Neill Stewart, Managing Director Glen Dimplex, at my office in Parliament Buildings on 30 January 2012. I met with David Simpson, MP for Upper Bann, along with Neill Stewart and Neill Collins from Glen Dimplex on 8 August 2013. All meetings were also attended by officials.

Consultation on Community Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to list the respondees to the recent consultation on Community Asset Transfer; (ii) who will analyse these responses; and (iii) when a report on the implementation of these findings will be brought to the Committee for Social Development.

(AQW 26756/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A list of those organisations and individuals who responded to the recent consultation on Community Asset Transfer is attached below. The responses are currently being considered by officials in my Department who are due to make a presentation to the Committee for Social Development on 7th November 2013.

Respondent	Respondent
Armagh City and District Council	Early Years - the organisation for young children
Brendan Murtagh (Individual)	Fermanagh District Council
Belfast Buildings Trust	Focus on Family and Ballysally & Millburn Collaborative Partnership
Belfast City Council	Heritage Lottery Fund
Belfast Healthy Cities	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Big Lottery Fund	Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
Building Change Trust	Lisburn City Council
Carnegie UK Trust	Newry and Mourne District Council
Carrickfergus Borough Council	Newry and Mourne District Council
Causeway Communities Engagement Programme	NILGA
Charity Bank	Praxis Care
Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland	Rathlin Development and Community Association
Community Foundation NI	Rural Community Network
Community Relations Council	South Eastern Education and Library Board
Co-operative Alternatives	The Fermanagh Trust

Respondent	Respondent
Craigavon Borough Council	The Resurgam Trust
Derry City Council	VSB
Derry-Londonderry Strategy Board	

The following organisations contributed to a composite response submitted by Development Trusts NI.

- Andersonstown Neighbourhood Partnership/UACF
- Belfast Met Group
- Bryson Charitable Group
- Colin Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
- Core Vision
- DTA Scotland
- East Belfast Partnership
- Falls Community Council
- Holywell Trust
- Lagan Canal Trust
- Locality
- New Community Network
- North Belfast Partnership
- Resurgam Trust
- UK Association of Building Preservation Trusts
- Upper Alton Community Forum
- Upper Springfield Development Trust

Seven submissions asked that their responses were held as confidential. Three anonymous responses were also received.

Consultation on Community Asset Transfer

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development when he will publish the results of the recent Community Asset Transfer consultation, and report to the Executive on introducing the necessary legislation, training, budgets and third sector support to ensure a swift implementation.

(AQW 26757/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The consultation on a policy framework for Community Asset Transfer ended on 23rd August. My Department is currently considering the responses. I intend to bring forward my proposals for a policy framework to Executive colleagues in the near future. The framework will address the key areas of conditions or ground rules for asset transfer, information and awareness, public sector asset management, skills development, funding and whether there is a need for legislation. I will also publish the consultation responses on the Departmental website.

Social Fund Enquiries

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 26352/11-15, why data on Social Fund enquiries is only available for Antrim and Lisburn.

(AQW 26771/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As part of an ongoing modernisation programme, the Social Security Agency has, over the past two years, been reorganising its telephony services. This has also involved installing a new network infrastructure, new telephony software and delivering the telephony service from a smaller number of centres. The new telephony service dealing with Social Fund enquiries is now operated from only six call handling centres, with each site supporting a number of Jobs and Benefits Offices. The six sites are Antrim, Lisburn, Falls Road, Knockbreda, Foyle and Omagh. Each of these centres support a number of other Jobs and Benefits offices.

Management information on the number of Social Fund enquiries handled by each centre is only available from the date the new telephony service became operational in that location. During the time frame requested in AQW 26352/11-15 (2012/13), Antrim and Lisburn were the only centres with the available information.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Staff Cycling to Work

Mr McKay asked the Assembly Commission, pursuant to AQW 25779/11-15, will they consider (i) measuring how many staff cycle to work; and (ii) commissioning a staff survey to ask what measures would encourage staff to cycle to work.

(AQW 26715/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission is committed to the Assembly being an exemplar organisation in respect of Sustainable Development and, as such, the Environmental Services Manager sits on the Stormont Workplace Travel Plan Consortium. This group looks at a range of issues including ways to encourage all people within the Stormont estate to use a more sustainable means of travel to get to and from work.

- (i) The staff survey, which was carried out in 2012, asked staff to confirm by what means they travel into work and this included cycling. At the time of the survey one member of staff indicated that they cycled to work.
- (ii) The Stormont Workplace Travel Consortium is in the process of finalising a survey which will be issued to all staff with the Stormont estate to determine by what means staff travel to and from work including cycling. The purpose of this survey is to determine what infrastructure is required to encourage staff to use a more sustainable means of travel.

I hope that this answers your question however if you require any further information please feel free to contact me directly.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 18 October 2013

(AQW 26479/11-15)

At May 2013, there were 28,750 Employment and Support Allowance claimants in the Support Group category.

The information requested is not available by parliamentary constituency.

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.

Employment and Support Allowance

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have been placed in the work-related activity group since the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance, broken down by constituency.

(Revised AQW 26478/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At May 2013, there were 25,050 Employment and Support Allowance claimants in the Work Related Activity Group.

The information requested is not available by parliamentary constituency.

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.

Employment and Support Allowance

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have been placed in the Support Group category since the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance, broken down by constituency.

(Revised AQW 26479/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At May 2013, there were 28,750 Employment and Support Allowance claimants in the Support Group category.

The information requested is not available by parliamentary constituency.

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.

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.

(Revised AQW 26502/11-15)

Mr McCausland: 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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