

Written Answers to Questions

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to arrive not later than two weeks after publication of this report.

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Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 15 November 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Programme for Government

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will publish the delivery plans for the Programme for Government.

(AQW 17810/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): Accessible, online Delivery Plans are published on the Executive's website. In addition, all Assembly Committees are provided with departmental Delivery Plans through normal business proceedings.

Waterways Ireland and the Loughs Agency

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will announce the appointment of the Chief Executive of (i) Waterways Ireland; and (ii) The Loughs Agency.

(AQW 22444/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 19 June 2013, NSMC appointed Dawn Livingstone as Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland at its Inland Waterways meeting. This appointment was announced on 19 June 2013 in the Joint Communiqué of that meeting.

On 26 April 2013 the Chief Executive of the Loughs Agency, Mr Derick Anderson, advised of his intention to retire. The two sponsor departments and the Loughs Agency Board are working together to identify his successor and the NSMC will be asked to approve the preferred candidate when identified. An interim Chief Executive is in place pending the conclusion of the recruitment process.

Support Service for Victims and Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why there has been a delay in awarding the tender for the Support Service for Victims and Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse.

(AQW 23072/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In January 2012, arrangements were put in place for victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse to make full use of the counselling support services provided by Lifeline. Lifeline's professional counselling services are freely available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by telephone and in confidence on 0808 808 8000.

A contract was awarded to Contact NI on 12 June for services comprising three elements:

- Firstly, counselling for victims and survivors who are not in crisis – including for those referred by Lifeline counsellors to a specialist counselling service such as Addiction NI or Nexus and awaiting an appointment with the specialist provider.
- Secondly, caseworker support to assist individual victims and survivors in relation to benefits, housing, personal finance, debt management, education, liaison with victim support and searching for personal records.

- Thirdly, a co-ordinator who will ensure the provision of seamless support to victims and survivors, including responding to referrals and enquiries, organising non-crisis counselling, making referrals to the caseworker service, making follow-up service calls to victims and survivors and tracking referrals.

These are bespoke services, designed and created especially for victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse. They are over and above what is currently available through the mainstream health, social services and justice provision.

These services came into effect on 1 August.

Breaches of Company Law

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether a breach of company law, by failing to file accounts, precludes an organisation from receiving funding from their Department.

(AQW 23347/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Failure to file accounts does not preclude an organisation from receiving funding from the Department.

International Relations Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given the trade and educational links being actively pursued with the BRIC countries, for their assessment of the need to develop an international relations strategy.

(AQW 23791/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are increasing our efforts to build relationships with the world's leading economies. This overseas work is starting to pay dividends and we aim to continue to meet influencers and business representatives to promote trade, tourism, inward investment, education, university and government links.

In order to capitalise on these opportunities we will be bringing a draft International Relations Strategy to the Executive in due course.

Executive Strategy for Children and Young People

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the need for a statutory duty on Departments to cooperate on children's budgeting to help the delivery of the Executive Strategy for Children and Young People.

(AQW 27271/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Through the Children and Young People's Strategy, the Executive has committed to making a real change in the lives of our children and young people. The Executive recognises that a co-ordinated approach with departments and agencies working together is critical to tackling the deep-seated problems which many of our children face.

With the establishment of Delivering Social Change,(DSC) we have put in place a comprehensive delivery framework which will co-ordinate action between departments in order to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages, improve children and young people's health, well-being and life opportunities and break the long-term cycle of multi-generational problems. The announcement of an additional £26 million for the initial six signature programmes last year and the more recent announcement of an additional £1.6 million reflect the importance the Executive attaches to tackling these issues.

In recognition of the need for a cross-cutting approach, Delivering Social Change is led by the DSC Ministerial Sub-Committees for Children and Young People and the DSC Executive Sub-Committee on Poverty and Social Inclusion which are led by Junior Minister Bell and Junior Minister McCann and include all Executive Ministers.

In addition, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is taking forward a co-ordinated, cross-sectoral approach to the planning and delivery of children's services on the ground. These approaches offer a real opportunity to significantly improve outcomes for children and young people.

We are aware that there are likely to be significant difficulties in attempting to disaggregate or ring-fence expenditure on children within budgets generally. However we are currently assessing the possibility of running a pilot to track expenditure on children's budgets in a very specific area for a limited period to assess the approach before considering wider application. We believe this will represent a practical approach to progressing the aims of the Children and Young People's Strategy as well as improving children's lives.

Disused Police Stations: Community Groups

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what assistance their Department can offer to community groups seeking to purchase disused police stations in order to retain the buildings within the community.

(AQW 27380/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM regeneration powers apply to the former military sites we manage and do not extend to disused Police Stations.

The Department provides funding for community groups through a number of programmes for various activities. These schemes are by way of open application and are dependent on meeting the published criteria.

Consultation Responses Received

Mr Ross asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail how many public consultations their Department has carried out since 2007, broken down by issue; and to detail the number of responses received per consultation.

(AQW 27428/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The consultations undertaken by OFMDFM since 2007 and the number of responses received are as follows:

Year	Type of consultation	Details	Number of responses received
2007	Workshops with groups of marginalised, hard to reach children	Collating the views of Children and Young People	No records available.
Jul - Sep 2007	Public	Consultation on implementing EU equality obligations under the Gender Goods and Services Directive	243
2007	Public	Public Authorities Reform	22
2007 - 2008	Public	Programme for Government	In excess of 9,500 responses

Year	Type of consultation	Details	Number of responses received
2008	Public	Draft equality impact assessment carried out at a strategic level on the Programme for Government and the Budget and Investment Strategy	334
May - Aug 2008	Public	Review of Civic Forum	60
Aug 2008	Public	Consultation on Strategy for Victims and Survivors	44
Dec 2008	Public	Disability Discrimination (Transport Vehicles Regulations)	27
2009	Workshops, Conference and On-line Questionnaire all aimed at Children and Young People	Review of 2008-11 Action Plan taking account of UN 2008 Concluding Observations	In excess of 400 children and young people consulted at events – Approx 25-30 Children's groups provided written responses after the events
2009	Open Public & Invitational	Sustainable Development Strategy	66
Aug 2009	Public	Consultation on a Victims and Survivors Service	29
2009	Open public consultation	Consultation on establishing an Older Peoples Commissioner	80 written responses received; over 400 people participated in consultation events.
2010	Interested Parties / Public	Consultation on Budget 2010	69
2010	Public	Public Assemblies, Parades and Protests	410
June 2010	Sectoral	"World Cafe" Discussion for Women's Groups and Organisations	4 events were held and a total of 104 people took part.
2010	Open Public, Invitational and Sectoral	Sustainable Development Implementation Plan	35

Year	Type of consultation	Details	Number of responses received
Aug 2010 - Oct 2010	Public and Sectoral	Consultation on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration	288 written consultation responses.
Dec 2010 -Feb 2011	Public	Consultation on the Child Poverty Strategy 2010	49 written responses were received. Reports were also compiled on four children's events which consulted over 90 children and young people and on ten focus groups with (a total of 64) parents.
Dec 2010 - Feb 2011	Online at OFMDFM website. Four focus groups with children and young people.	Consultation on the Play and Leisure Implementation Plan	41 written responses & 93 children and young people consulted in 4 public events
2011	Public	OFMDFM Equality Scheme	10 written responses were received.
Mar 2011	Public and sectoral meetings	Historical Institutional Abuse taskforce consultation	33 written responses received.
2011-2012	Strategic Investment Fund Consultation	Consultation on proposals for Social Investment Fund	A total of 597 were engaged in the consultation by the closing date of 23rd December 2011. In relation to this, a total of 328 responses were formally submitted to the Department during the consultation period.
2011-2012	Open Public, Invitational and Sectoral	Programme for Government 2011-15	432
April - Aug 2012	Public	Consultation on Disability Strategy	95

Year	Type of consultation	Details	Number of responses received
September 2012	Racial Equality Strategy and Minority Ethnic Development Fund – in Derry and Belfast	To allow sectoral representatives a chance to suggest shape and delivery of the MEDF and to comment upon content of a revised Racial Equality Strategy.	6 individual responses, one co-ordinated response from 13 groups and representatives* and 20 groups attended. * the sector tends to present a unified response from a number of groups.
June and Oct 2012	Two half-day Delivering Social Change Public Consultation events	Key Stakeholder Workshops	The first event was held in Belfast and the second in Craigavon. The overall (combined) number of people who attended both events was approximately 115.
Oct - Dec 2012	Sectoral	Consultation on implementation of the European Court of Justice judgement on gender neutrality in the pricing of insurance premiums and benefits	13 written responses
2012-13	Sectoral	Minority Ethnic Development Fund	6 individual responses, one co-ordinated response from 13 groups and representatives on 20 groups attended.
Dec 2012 -Mar 2013	Public	Consultation on “Towards a Childcare Strategy”	A total of 65 written responses were received from statutory and voluntary sector organisations, day care providers and individuals. In addition, 6 public consultation events were held.
Mar - May 2013	Public	Consultation on the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Rules	15 written responses received.

Year	Type of consultation	Details	Number of responses received
2013	Workshops with organisations working with children and young people	Review of Draft Child Rights Indicator Framework	The workshop did not seek individual responses. The discussions at each workshop were summarised and fed into the development of the child rights indicator framework
2013	Workshops with organisations working with children and young people	Consultation on response to UNCRC	Approx 140 children and young people consulted.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr A Maginness asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, considering the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) Scheme 6 (Financial Assistance) programme is currently budgeted to support 1,750 applications and for the period 2012-13 and VSS received over 2,500 applications for financial assistance, what action they intend to take to address the funding shortfall.

(AQW 27465/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In order to address additional demands resulting across a number of schemes throughout the Victims and Survivors Programme (VSP) the Department submitted a bid in the October Monitoring round. We are pleased to confirm that this funding has been secured.

Special Advisers: Termination of Appointment

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have terminated the appointment of any of the Special Advisers in their Department since the Civil Service (Special Advisers) Act 2013; and if so, when the appointments were terminated.

(AQW 27492/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department does not comment on individual personnel matters.

UK Diplomatic Cables

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what access their Department has to UK diplomatic cables.

(AQW 27679/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our Department has access to UK diplomatic cables.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office sends telegrams on condition that a mailbox with the appropriate security level is provided for their receipt and that they are distributed to officials as appropriate within departments, respecting the security classification.

Children and Young People

Miss M McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps their Department is taking to safeguard children and young people.

(AQO 4889/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The establishment of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland in September 2012 demonstrates the Executive's commitment to ensuring that children grow up in a safe environment.

It represents the outworking of a commitment in the Safeguarding Children cross-departmental statement on the protection of children and young people.

Safeguarding Children, which was developed by our Department on behalf of the Executive, is an important and wide ranging statement on the protection of children which is indicative of the high priority the Executive gives to the issue of child protection and the safeguarding of children.

It contributes to achieving the outcomes in the Executive's Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People and in particular to the outcome of all children and young people 'living in safety and stability'.

In addition, our Department is specifically working to identify opportunities for cross-departmental actions in relation to child internet safety. This includes undertaking a gap analysis involving six departments. This seeks to identify current actions being taken by these departments to address child internet safety, including any gaps as well as future actions they are considering. That work is due to be completed shortly.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Wells asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many planning appeals have been reopened since 2010 after a Decision Notice was issued by the Planning Appeals Commission; and under what circumstances does the Planning Appeals Commission have the authority to reopen the consideration of a planning appeal after it has held the hearing and issued a Decision Notice.

(AQW 27800/11-15)

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

Childcare Strategy

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when a final childcare strategy will be published.

(AQO 4887/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Junior Minister Bell and Junior Minister McCann recently launched Bright Start – the Executive's Programme for Affordable and Integrated Childcare. Bright Start is an important first step towards a comprehensive and sustainable Childcare Strategy. Over the coming months we want to test how well our key first actions perform and we want to listen further to everyone with an interest in the Strategy. A more substantive strategy will be developed during the first year of operation under the strategic framework.

VAT: Hospitality Sector

Mrs McKeivitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions have they had with their Westminster counterparts on the need for a Value Added Tax reduction for the hospitality sector, following the news that the Irish Government is to retain the 9 per cent VAT rate.

(AQO 4888/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This issue was debated in the Assembly on 10 September 2012 and a Motion was passed which called on the Executive to pursue the case with HM Treasury for a reduced rate of VAT for tourism related products and services here.

Following this, the former Finance Minister wrote to the Exchequer Secretary, David Gauke MP, on this basis and he responded on 16 October 2012.

Social Investment Fund

Mr D Bradley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Social Investment Fund.

(AQO 4891/11-15)

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

Social Investment Fund

Lord Morrow asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Social Investment Fund.

(AQO 4892/11-15)

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

Executive Office: China

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they envisage the Executive Office will open in China.

(AQO 4893/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We announced our intention to open an Executive Office in Beijing during a statement made to the Assembly on 3 June 2013, following meetings with senior government officials whilst in Beijing.

The Chinese Government has confirmed its commitment to developing a productive relationship with us and a presence in China would help to promote positive actions in China.

Officials have been in discussion with the appropriate government and diplomatic bodies and we hope to have an office in operation next year.

Together: Building a United Community

Mr McCarthy asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress they are making in implementing the commitments in Together: Building a United Community to ensure that good relations considerations are mainstreamed into the revised arrangements under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQO 4894/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Good progress is being made in beginning the process of implementing the commitments in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

Design teams are taking forward the headline actions, through a co-design phase with other statutory, voluntary and community groups, and will be bringing forward proposals in the near future.

The design teams are aware of the revised arrangements under the Review of Public Administration. Our officials have been liaising with officials from the Department of the Environment, and will be examining closely the best way to ensure good relations considerations are mainstreamed into the revised arrangements.

Our continuing support for the District Councils Good Relations Programme will also ensure the issue of good relations remains at the forefront of all Councils' considerations.

Programme for Government 2011-15

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the progress of each of the programmes in the Programme for Government 2011-15 in addressing regional imbalance.

(AQW 27933/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Achieving balanced sub-regional growth is a cross-cutting principle embedded in our Programme for Government, guiding our efforts to rebuild and rebalance the economy.

In addition, there are a number of specific commitments in the Programme for Government that contribute directly to the achievement of this principle. These include commitments to:

- Develop the One Plan for the regeneration of Derry/Londonderry, incorporating the key sites at Fort George and Ebrington;
- provide financial and other support across government to ensure the success of the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013;
- progress the upgrade of key road projects and improve the overall road network to ensure that by March 2015 journey times on key transport corridors reduce by 2.5%;
- develop a strategic plan for the Agri-food sector;
- bring forward a £13 million package to tackle rural poverty and social and economic isolation;
- advance the relocation of the Headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to a rural area;
- upgrade the Coleraine to Derry/Londonderry railway line;
- invest over £500 million to promote sustainable modes of travel; and,
- deliver at least 30 schemes to improve landscapes in public areas to promote private sector investment in our towns and cities.

Progress on delivering against our commitments has been positive to date. The latest available information on progress against all of our Programme for Government Commitments has been shared with the OFMDFM Assembly Committee and will be available at:

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/work-of-the-executive/pfg-budget-economic-strategy/pfg/strategic-online-report-2011-2015.htm>.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the measures their Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27951/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department does not incur any costs in relation to car parking spaces.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Single Farm Payments: Inspections

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of farms that have been inspected more than once in relation to Single Farm Payments, broken down by area, in each of the last eight years.

(AQW 27873/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): In accordance with the rules governing the administration of the Single Farm Payment (SFP) Scheme, my Department must carry out land eligibility on-the-spot checks on at least 5% of applicants each year. These checks, which verify the eligibility of claims under scheme rules, are selected from the total SFP claim population either at random or by the use of risk criteria.

In addition to these land eligibility checks, DARD is also required to check at least 1% of SFP applicants to ensure that the Cross-Compliance requirements are met. The Cross-Compliance checks are carried out by 3 Competent Control Authorities namely the NI Environment Agency in respect of the environmental SMRs, DARD Veterinary Service in respect of the animal related SMRs and DARD Service Delivery Group in respect of GAEC and the Food and Feed Law and Placing of Plant Protection Products on the Market SMRs. Each Competent Control Authority selects applicants to be inspected in respect of the area of Cross-Compliance falling under its control again using a random and risk methodology.

The figures shown below represent those farm businesses that have had more than one inspection in any calendar year on separate dates within that year. For example, a land eligibility inspection and a cross compliance inspection on separate dates within the same year has been counted as a multiple inspection and is included in the figures. However, a land eligibility and cross compliance inspection carried out on the same day and by the same inspection team has not been included. Likewise two separate cross compliance inspections completed on separate dates i.e. NIEA and Veterinary are counted and included in the figures.

County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Antrim	96	148	153	115	126	114	98	94
Armagh	49	62	111	89	95	85	86	81
Down	119	130	136	133	139	138	115	119
Fermanagh	34	84	64	73	61	89	72	68
Derry/Londonderry	87	88	79	95	78	86	86	82
Tyrone	118	147	143	148	155	151	134	119

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Diary Council: Milk Cup

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the steps her Department is taking to secure the future of the Milk Cup following the decision by the Dairy Council to withdraw sponsorship.

(AQW 27671/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Responsibility for the funding of events, including the Milk Cup, lies in the first instance with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

However, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, will be meeting with the organisers of the Milk Cup in due course to discuss potential support in future years.

Netball: Support

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what support has been provided to netball, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 27753/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided total funding of £433,000 directly to Netball over the last three financial years, up to 31 March 2013. The details are as follows:-

Financial Year	Exchequer Funding	Lottery Funding	Total
2010/11	£129,591	-	£129,591
2011/12	£149,652	-	£149,652
2012/13	£123,757	£30,000	£153,757
Grand Total			£433,000

In addition, Sport NI, through the Active Communities programme, invests in a netball coach post based in the Down/Newry and Mourne District Council areas which equates to a pro-rata investment of £136,000 over the period 2010-2015.

Netball: Additional Support

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether additional support will be provided to netball.

(AQW 27755/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Further to the support to netball outlined in AQW 27753/11-15, I can confirm that Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, will provide investment totalling of £542,160 of Lottery Funding to the Governing Body of netball, Netball NI, for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2017. The purpose of this investment is to improve athlete performance. In addition, Sport NI will provide £104,000 Exchequer Funding to Netball NI during 2013/14 under the Athlete Investment Programme, Coaching Legacy Programme and International Events Programme.

Further Exchequer Investment of £488,000 is planned for the development of the National Badminton Centre at Lisburn Racquets Club, with work is due to take place in 2014/15. Netball NI is located in the Centre and is also likely to benefit from this investment.

Windsor Park Stadium

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the progress of the redevelopment of Windsor Park Stadium.

(AQW 27764/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The IFA IST tenders were returned on 23rd September 2013 and are currently being assessed with regard to compliance to budget and specification. In addition DCAL are working with the IFA to be assured that appropriate governance and accountability structures are in place.

Provided that these issues are resolved and that significant delays around any legal challenges are avoided, then the Windsor Park development can remain on programme.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the measures her Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27823/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the last 4 years, DCAL reduced its car parking dependency by some 67%, from 128 to 42 spaces. The 42 spaces are reviewed on an annual basis and allocated in accordance with the Department's essential user policy.

DCAL also arranged for Translink to visit the Department's two principal sites in Belfast – Causeway Exchange and PRONI – to encourage a greater number of its staff to use public transport. When

attending business meetings in the greater Belfast area, staff are encouraged to avail of public transport and use the Translink smart-link travel cards held by the Department's facilities unit.

Members of Holywood Library

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of members of Holywood Library, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 27916/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The number of active members of Holywood Library in each of the last three years is as follows:

	01-Apr-2011	01-Apr-2012	01-Apr-2013
Hollywood Library	2,606	3,006	3,029

Number of Civil Service Posts in Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many Civil Service posts existed in her Department on 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2013 at (i) Administrative Assistant; (ii) Administrative Officer; (iii) Executive Officer 2; (iv) Executive Officer 1; (v) Staff Officer; (vi) Deputy Principal; (vii) Grade 7; and (viii) Grade 6 levels, broken down by local council area.

(AQW 27945/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The information requested in respect of DCAL is contained in the tables attached at Annex A. The data provided reflects the position at 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2013 by local Council area, expressed as Full Time Equivalents (FTE).

Vacancies are included in the tables and recorded by grade level. For completeness, the tables include Industrial and Senior Civil Service (SCS) posts. The Department has no grade 6 posts.

ANNEX A

DCAL POSTS BY GRADE AND DISTRICT COUNCIL – 1 JAN 2012

District Council	Grade Level (includes grades analogous to General Service)								Total ¹
	Indu- strial	AA	AO	E02 / E01	SO	DP	G7	SCS	
Ballymoney	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	8
Belfast	0	17.42	47.32	53.95	60.62	34.42	21.72	6 ²	241.45
Craigavon	0	1.27	3	3	1	0	0	0	8.27
Down	5	0	0.6	3	1	0	0	0	9.6
Fermanagh	6	0	0.5	4	0	0	0	0	10.5
Moyle	7	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	13
Total (rounded)	23	19	53	70	64	34	22	6	291

1 excludes statisticians on loan from DFP's NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

DCAL POSTS BY GRADE AND DISTRICT COUNCIL – 1 JAN 2013

District Council	Grade Level (includes grades analogous to General Service)								Total ³
	Industrial	AA	A0	E02 / E01	S0	DP	G7	SCS	
Ballymoney	9	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	12
Belfast	0	15.42	46.06	54.5	56.44 ⁴	46.18	22.81	6	247.41
Craigavon	0	1.27	3	3	1	0	0	0	8.27
Down	5	0	0.6	2	1	0	0	0	8.6
Fermanagh	5	0	0.5	4	0	0	0	0	9.5
Moyle	4	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	9
Total (rounded)	23	17	52	69	59	46	23	6	295

2 excludes 1 Grade 3 seconded at the time to NI Policing Board

3 excludes statisticians on loan from DFP's NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

4 excludes 1 Staff officer on outward secondment

Lough Neagh: Salmon

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many salmon have been caught in the rivers leading from Lough Neagh, in each of the last two years, broken down per quarter of year.

(AQW 28072/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The salmon catch data retained by the Department derives from anglers annual returns for the salmon carcass tagging scheme. Annual salmon catch data for the main Lough Neagh tributaries, for the last two years for which records are complete, are detailed in the table below.

River	2011	2012
Ballinderry	1	0
Blackwater	7	2
Upper Bann	7	9
Maine	49	38
Moyola	10	6
Sixmilewater	6	5

This information is not held on a quarterly basis but all salmon were taken during the fishing season from 1 March to 31 October.

Department of Education**Phoenix Integrated Primary School**

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 27020/11-15, what is the timeline for a decision on the approval of the business case.

(AQW 27706/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Department has concluded its consideration of the business case and the school authority has been notified of the Department's approval to proceed with the procurement of the works.

Ballyclare Primary School

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to outline the plans for the building and improvements of Ballyclare Primary School.

(AQW 27735/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education & Library Board identified a new build for Ballyclare Primary School as one of its priorities for major capital investment.

While Ballyclare PS will be disappointed that it was not included in my capital investment announcements, this in no way implies that it will not be considered for funding at a later stage within the on-going area planning process. The reality is that many schools are in need of investment and are competing for limited capital funding.

I will continue to examine the case for capital investment across the estate and proposals for Ballyclare PS will be considered with other priorities as part of any future capital announcement.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Units

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the location of each Autism Spectrum Disorder unit in South Down; and (ii) the number of pupils who attend each unit.

(AQW 27738/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South-Eastern and Southern Education and Library Boards have advised that the location of units dedicated solely to supporting pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and the number of pupils who attend these units, in South Down, are as follows:

Unit	Number of Pupils
Kilkeel Primary School (Autism Specific Class)	7
Cumran Primary School, Downpatrick (Two units)	11

Pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education (i) how E-Learning can increase inclusion and participation for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); and (ii) what steps his Department is taking to improve the educational experience of both pupils with ASD and their teachers.

(AQW 27739/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that there are many ways in which e-learning can increase inclusion and participation for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

E-learning has consistently been shown to deliver substantial gains in the education of pupils with ASD due to their congruence with particular strategies of individualised learning as well as more inclusive/participative activities.

Some of the most beneficial uses of e-learning for pupils with ASD are outlined below:

- to open and maintain social and educational links between pupils with ASD in different schools;
- to help pupils to develop life skills;
- to allow pupils who are unable to attend school to maintain contact with staff and peers and to continue to access some aspects of the curriculum during their period of absence;

- to provide an alternative and/or additional medium for pupils to obtain information about a school prior to starting the school. For example, some schools have enabled pupils to have virtual tours of the school helping pupils to become familiar with the school setting;
- to enhance communication of pupils with ASD and provide greater motivation to communicate with staff and peers using augmentative and/or visual applications;
- to use the natural visual strengths of pupils with ASD to develop their creativity for example, through design, software development, story writing, video-making, music and art.

With regard to part (ii), responsibility for the provision of services and support for children and young people with ASD rests with the education and library boards.

Although there may be some variation between boards in relation to the specific detail of service support, the following provision forms part of the boards endeavours to improve the educational experience of both pupils with ASD and their teachers.

1 Assessment and diagnosis

Boards' autism services work in partnership with health colleagues in relation to the identification of children and young people with ASD through local multi-disciplinary assessment arrangements. This facilitates effective partnership working between education and health practitioners.

2 Training

Boards provide a comprehensive training programme to staff in mainstream schools to build capacity to support children with ASD. Training is delivered in nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools across all key stages.

In addition, specialist training is provided to teachers and classroom assistants who work directly with children who have ASD. Programmes cover developing social skills, promoting life skills or applying behaviour principles to help with the teaching and management of pupils with ASD in classroom and school settings. Cluster group training is also provided for teachers who work in specialist settings such as autism-specific learning support classes within mainstream schools.

3 Individual pupil support

This includes:-

- setting autism-specific targets in individual educational plans;
- planning for pupils going through significant transitions;
- follow up support for pupils or their teachers/assistants or parents to help sustain and monitor progress or revise strategies during periods when the child is experiencing increased difficulties;
- engagement with parents to increase the consistency between school and home in relation to appropriate strategies; and
- support from classroom assistants to meet the needs of specific pupils.

4 Specialist provision in the primary and post-primary sectors

Although most children and young people access support and provision in mainstream school, more specialist provision can be accessed in autism specific classes attached to mainstream and special schools.

5 Links with other bodies

The Inter-board ASD Service links with the Middletown Centre for Autism in planning and delivery of specialist training to schools. Middletown's outreach staff provide intensive support for a number of children with complex difficulties. Advice and guidance is delivered to children through support in their home, school and community, direct support in their school placements or through a whole school approach.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse: Awareness

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to make children aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

(AQW 27748/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department recognises the vitally important contribution which schools make in raising awareness in children and young people of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and a number of measures are in place in this regard.

Through the revised curriculum, opportunities are provided for children and young people to develop the knowledge and skills to deal with issues such as drug and alcohol abuse. At primary school this is provided through the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Area of Learning and, at post-primary school, through the Learning for Life and Work Area of Learning.

The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) receive funding to enable them to provide a range of training and support to teachers and schools which can include training in relation to drugs and alcohol abuse. In addition, the funding allocated by my Department to the ELBs and the Youth Council for youth provision may be utilised, as part of an overall youth development programme, to support drugs and alcohol awareness sessions for young people where these are deemed appropriate.

The Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS), which is directly funded by the Department, provides professional counselling to children and young people at vulnerable times in their lives, including those experiencing difficulties as the result of drug and alcohol abuse. It is available to all post-primary schools. In addition, information for pupils developed through the i-Matter programme is issued to all post primary schools and includes information on 'drugs, alcohol and smoking' and details or sources of further information and help.

The Department has provided drugs guidance for schools and all grant-aided schools are required to include, in their prospectuses, a statement of the school's policy on education in relation to the misuse of drugs and alcohol. The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has been commissioned by the Department to review and update the current drugs guidance for schools. It is intended that this work, which will commence during 2013/14, will be completed during 2014/15.

Shared Education: Community Consultation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, in relation to his statement of 22 October 2013 on shared education, (i) how communities are being consulted on whether they want shared or integrated education models; (ii) whether parents' views are canvassed; (iii) if so, how the views are canvassed; and (iv) what weight is given to parents' views compared with the views of Principals and Boards of Governors. [R]

(AQW 27797/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Local support and the confidence of parents will be critical to the implementation of any new shared and integrated models. It is therefore for school managing authorities to engage with parents as well as the wider community to make the case for change and highlight the educational benefits of such proposals.

It will be a matter for the school managing authorities to determine the most appropriate means of obtaining the views of the main stakeholders.

Any firm proposal will then be incorporated into the area planning process and area plans will be widely consulted upon. I have publicly encouraged communities to let their views be known particularly on shared and integrated models that could result in sustainable provision in an area were schools are currently unviable.

Throughout the process all views are considered and decisions are based on the educational merits of a proposal.

School Enhancement Programme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education which schools applied for the School Enhancement programme and met the criteria but were not listed for funding in his recent announcement.
(AQW 27811/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There were 70 applications from schools for funding under the School Enhancement Programme (SEP) which is designed to enable the refurbishment or extension of existing schools.

I announced recently that 51 schools have been informed that their applications have been successful at the first stage of assessment. The schools have been asked to prepare economic appraisals as part of the next stage of the assessment process. Unfortunately, 16 applications did not meet the criteria against which the projects were judged.

Decisions on funding will be made when the economic appraisals for the selected projects have been assessed. It is anticipated that those decisions will be made in the New Year. The scale of the potential investment in the SEP underlines my continuing commitment to improving the schools estate.

Schools' Boards of Governors

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the timescale for the reconstitution of schools' Boards of Governors.[R]
(AQW 27812/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The timescale proposed for the reconstitution of school Boards of Governors is set out below.

Schools & education stakeholders notified	June 2013
Governor recruitment campaign	October 2013 to June 2014
Consultation with existing DE & ELB Governors	November 2013 to June 2014
Consultation with existing Boards of Governors	
Consultation with Sectoral Interests	
Consultation with new applicants	
Transferor nominations to controlled schools	January to March 2014
Trustee nominations to maintained schools	
Election of Parent and Teacher Governors	
Appointment of ELB & DE Governors	January to June 2014
Completion of any outstanding appointments	September to December 2014
Induction training for new Governors	

Current arrangements for the reconstitution of school Boards of Governors may be subject to change due to the Education Bill which amends the procedures for making governor appointments.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to outline the measures his Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.
(AQW 27825/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Department of Education staff have access to car park spaces in a number of locations – Rathgael House, Waterside House and Forestview. However, the Department does not incur any expense as these are provided through DFP Properties Division as part of the Government Estate.

Child Sexual Exploitation Inquiry

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education how his Department will engage with the Child Sexual Exploitation inquiry, given that schools and youth clubs could present the best opportunity to increase resilience among children and young people against abuse and grooming.[R]
(AQW 27841/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have agreed in principle to the Education and Training Inspectorate enjoining the expert led Child Sexual Exploitation Inquiry. I wished to see the Terms of Reference before formally agreeing to the Department's involvement. I have now received the Terms of reference, am currently considering them and will respond to the Health Minister in due course.

Teachers: Accumulated Leave Entitlement

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Education who is responsible for the administration and payment of teachers accumulated leave entitlement during periods of maternity leave and long term sickness absence.
(AQW 27860/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Teachers' accumulated leave entitlement during periods of maternity leave and long term sickness absence is administered by their employer/employing authority. In respect of teachers paid through the Department's Teachers' Payroll System, the Department will, on instruction from the relevant employer/employing authority, effect any payment required. This is the responsibility of the individual employer for teachers in the Voluntary Grammar Sector.

Atlantic Philanthropies

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what work his Department is doing with Atlantic Philanthropies and the Office of the First and deputy First Minister to put in place an additional funding programme to support integrated education.[R]
(AQW 27875/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are currently no plans for the Department of Education to work with Atlantic Philanthropies and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister to consider an additional funding programme to support integrated education.

Schools: Guidance on Integration

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether he will make it a priority for his Department to bring forward guidance on integration that schools and communities may wish to explore and to ensure that integrated education is encouraged in the guidelines on the development of Area Plans.[R]
(AQW 27877/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has already produced a document entitled "Transformation – An Information Pack for Schools". The purpose of this pack is to explain what is meant by integrated education (i.e. the education together of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils) and transformation, identify key issues which are likely to arise and how they might be addressed. The pack also outlines the legal and administrative processes and requirements and provides details of the various sources of advice and assistance available.

The need to encourage and facilitate integrated education is already recognised in the area planning process. The Terms of Reference for the area planning work state that it should take account of the Good Friday Agreement and the statutory position in relation to integrated education. They also include an explicit objective to "identify realistic, innovative and creative solutions to address need, including opportunities for shared schooling on a cross sectoral basis".

Also, the NI Council for Integrated Education is represented on the steering group established to support the Department in taking forward work to co-ordinate and oversee the continuing development of the area planning process and the area plans.

Cycle-Sheds and Bicycle Parking Facilities at Schools

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to support the provision of cycle-sheds and bicycle parking facilities at schools.

(AQW 27880/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Many schools in the north of Ireland already have cycle parking facilities provided at the request of the school and in line with initiatives such as the Travelwise 'Safer routes to school' initiative and to comply with the relevant DOE Planning Service parking standards.

The Department is currently revising the secondary school section of the Schools Building Handbook. This revision includes a new section relating to the provision of cyclist facilities including cycle storage and the site layout designed to allow safe access for cyclists. When the revision has been finalised an update will be published on the Departments website

Child Sexual Exploitation Inquiry

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education how he will ensure that (i) the Education and Training Inspectorate are fully informed on the Child Sexual Exploitation inquiry as well as learning and applying the lessons learnt from the inquiry at the earliest opportunity; and (ii) his Department is advising staff working in schools and the Youth Service on equipping children and young people to avoid and deal with predators. [R]

(AQW 27918/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have agreed in principle that the Education and Training Inspectorate enjoin the Child Sexual Exploitation Inquiry and wished to see the Terms of Reference before formal agreement. I am now considering the Terms of Reference. The ETI already work with the other inspectorates involved in the Inquiry and are informed of progress with the Inquiry.

Safeguarding all children is a priority within education. The framework for staff in schools and the youth service to prepare children and young people to protect themselves from all forms of harm and promote resilience is in place through the personal development strands of the relevant curricula. I will ensure that all learning from the Inquiry is applied across the education sector to ensure that the current arrangements are as robust and effective as possible.

Number of Civil Service Posts in Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education how many Civil Service posts existed in his Department on 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2013 at (i) Administrative Assistant; (ii) Administrative Officer; (iii) Executive Officer 2; (iv) Executive Officer 1; (v) Staff Officer; (vi) Deputy Principal; (vii) Grade 7; and (viii) Grade 6 levels, broken down by local council area.

(AQW 27946/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of full time equivalent (FTE) Civil Service posts as at 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2013, broken down by local Council area was as set out below.

Grade	1 January 2012			1 January 2013		
	North Down	Derry	Castle-reagh	North Down	Derry	Castle-reagh
AA (and Analagous Grade)	30.44	18.5	0	28.40	18.44	0
AO (and Analagous Grade)	64.8	52.57	0	64.91	54.46	0
EO II (and Analagous Grade)	65.42	23.93	0	66.85	23.96	0

Grade	1 January 2012			1 January 2013		
	North Down	Derry	Castle-reagh	North Down	Derry	Castle-reagh
EO I (and Analogous Grade)	46.96	10.68	0	47.38	10.08	0
SO (and Analogous Grade)	71.84	4	1	75.13	3	1
DP (and Analogous Grade)	75.95	3	0	88.39	2	0
G7 (and Analogous Grade)	34.1	1	2	37.61	1	2
G6 (and Analogous Grade)	61	0	0	60	0	0

CCEA A-level Chemistry Candidates

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 27626/11-15, to place a list in the Assembly library, anonymised as necessary to protect individual identities, of the final marks given to all CCEA A-level chemistry candidates in the summer 2013 series multiple choice paper.

(AQW 28033/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment has provided the following information.

Table 3 below shows marks achieved in AS Units 1 and 2 multiple choice sections and Table 4 (below) shows marks achieved in A2 Units 1 and 2 multiple choice sections, both from the summer 2013 examinations series.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF CANDIDATES ACHIEVING EACH MARK IN THE MULTIPLE CHOICE ELEMENT OF UNITS AS1 AND AS2.

Mark Achieved	AS Unit 1 Multiple Choice Number of candidates	AS Unit 2 Multiple Choice Number of candidates
10	269	238
9	400	462
8	365	439
7	257	357
6	182	247
5	111	182
4	61	105
3	31	69
2	14	24
1	3	6
0	1	1
Total number of candidates	1694	2130

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF CANDIDATES ACHIEVING EACH MARK IN THE MULTIPLE CHOICE ELEMENT OF UNITS A21 AND A22

Mark Achieved	A2 Unit 1 Multiple Choice Number of candidates	A2 Unit 2 Multiple Choice Number of candidates
10	244	38
9	286	247
8	197	375
7	111	283
6	65	137
5	32	59
4	15	17
3	11	6
2	2	1
1	2	1
0	0	1
Total number of candidates	965	1165

Education Bill

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what areas of the Education Bill have yet to be agreed by stakeholders and political parties.

(AQW 28069/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education Bill completed its Committee Stage on 8 April. Having considered the Committee's report, including the views of stakeholders, the main areas of concern appear to relate to the autonomy of schools in relation to governance and employment matters.

I propose to bring forward amendments at Consideration Stage that will address the outstanding concerns, whilst reflecting the Heads of Agreement issued by the First Minister and deputy First Minister in November 2011.

Key Stage 1: Baseline Assessment

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to introduce baseline assessment at the beginning of Key Stage 1.

(AQW 28097/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current arrangements allow teachers to use a range of assessment

techniques that suit the nature of the work being assessed and the purpose of the assessment, including assessment for "baseline" purposes.

In the first year of Key Stage 1, teachers are required to assess and report on the Cross-Curricular Skills. While this should be done with reference to the Levels of Progression (LoPs), they do not have to assign a numerical level. It should be noted that these skills will also have been assessed in the Foundation Stage and that non-statutory progression frameworks are available to assist teachers in this process. This is intended to provide the first element of a coherent framework within which the progress of an individual pupil and/or a cohort can be monitored.

Teachers are also required to assess and report to parents on a pupil's progress in the Areas of Learning and the Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities). This assessment should be carried out in accordance with the school's own assessment policy, giving them the flexibility to suit the needs, interests and abilities of their pupils.

Department for Employment and Learning

Public Consultations

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how many public consultations his Department has carried out since 2007, broken down by issue; and to detail the number of responses received per consultation.

(AQW 27525/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): A total of 42 public consultations have been undertaken by my Department since 2007 and a total of 1,447 responses were received. I have placed a detailed breakdown of responses in the Assembly Library and on the DEL website on <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

Youth Unemployment

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for her proposals to address youth unemployment.

(AQO 4947/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Executive's Pathways to Success strategy is comprehensive evidence based approach that underpins my Department's ongoing efforts to combat the scourge of youth unemployment. Within the Pathways to Success strategy there are a range of key programmes, in particular, the Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF) that is specifically designed to address youth unemployment. It will help young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training through a broad range of provision including mentoring, vocational qualifications, personal development, motivational and life skills and employability skills.

Collaboration and Innovation Fund

Over £9.2 million will be made available to 24 organisations from the community, voluntary and educational sectors to help over 6,100 unemployed young people from December 2012 to March 2015.

The Pathways for Young People Allowance is available to eligible young people participating on Collaboration and Innovation project activity. The Pathways allowance is designed to ensure that there are effective incentives in place for eligible young people participating on provision funded by my Department. Young people could receive a minimum of £10 or a maximum of £25 per week depending on hours attended. Parents of CIF participants that are 16-17 years old will also receive child benefit at the appropriate rate.

Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS)

LEMIS is an initiative designed to help and assist unemployed people in the community overcome those issues that may be preventing them from finding and keeping a job. The service is provided by local community employment organisations in the Belfast area, Derry, Strabane, Newry & Mourne, Moyle and Cookstown District Council areas.

In addition to these areas, LEMIS is also available on an outreach basis throughout Northern Ireland to individuals with a common employability barrier to employment, i.e. young people (16-24 years) not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), people that are homeless, ex-offenders/ex-prisoners, people with a history of drug/alcohol misuse and care leavers. Employment Advisors will travel to meet clients with a common employability barrier in their local area.

To provide additional support to the Pathways to Success Strategy, in November 2012, LEMIS re-focused its referral process with a greater emphasis being placed on recruiting young people that are NEET.

The Pathways for Young People Allowance is also available to eligible young people participating on LEMIS. The Pathways allowance is designed to ensure that there are effective incentives in place for eligible young people participating on provision funded by my Department. Young people could receive a minimum of £10 or a maximum of £25 per week depending on hours attended. Parents of LEMIS participants that are 16-17 years old will also receive child benefit at the appropriate rate.

Learner Access and Engagement (LAE)

The LAE programme provides opportunities for non-statutory organisations (mainly, but not necessarily, voluntary and community groups) to provide learner support for adults through a contractual arrangement with a FE College. The learner support will be targeted at adults, aged 19+, who are 'hard-to-reach', not in work, who hold no more than one qualification at level 2 or above, and who may have barriers to learning, to encourage them to undertake suitable further education to help prepare them for employment or further learning.

Similarly, the LAE NEET Pilot Programme (also known as the Community Based Access Programme) enables learners aged 16 to 18, who are not currently in employment, education, training, nor Essential Skills (ES) provision, and who hold no more than one qualification at level 2 or above, to acquire learner support to enable them to progress from entry level/ level 1 to level 2 ES provision into mainstream FE or other government-funded training programmes.

Both the mainstream Learner Access and Engagement Programme, and the LAE NEETS Pilot Programme, commenced in September 2013.

Community Family Support Programme (CFSP)

The initial CFSP pilot is a 'Pathways to Success' initiative designed to focus on the needs of 44 disadvantaged families from January to June 2013 in the targeted areas of Belfast (West & East), Strabane, Cookstown and Newtownabbey.

The CFSP was originally designated as a signature project (Pathways to Employment for Young People) for Delivering Social Change in October 2012. I have been able to secure additional resources to enable the pilot to be up-scaled and rolled out across Northern Ireland. The intention is to replicate the original model and increase the target number of families participating on the programme to 720. The programme has a funding allocation of £4m for October 2013 – March 2015.

Steps to Work (StW)

StW is my Department's main adult return to work programme, the aim of which is to assist people to find and sustain employment. StW is a flexible programme which offers opportunities for subsidised employment, work experience, qualifications, training and assistance for those interested in self-employment. The programme is available to anyone who is aged 18 years or over (16 in the case of lone parents) and who is unemployed or economically inactive, irrespective of whether or not they are in receipt of benefit.

In November 2012, First Start, a 26 weeks waged initiative, for young people aged 18 to 24 who are unemployed for 6 months or more was added to the programme.

More recently, the StW programme has been flexed to support the delivery of the Youth Employment Scheme through the introduction of a Work Experience and Skills Development Strands.

Training for Success (TfS)

Through its TfS programme, the Department offers a guaranteed training place for all unemployed 16-17 year olds who do not wish to remain in, or are not able to benefit from, mainstream education or further education. (The guarantee is extended for young people with a disability or from an in-

care background up to the ages of 22 and 24 respectively. The programme is delivered through four components:

- (i) Skills for Your Life – a programme of up to 52 weeks training to address the personal and development needs of young people who have disengaged from learning and/or have significant obstacles.
- (ii) Skills for Work Level 1 – a programme of up to 52 weeks training to help young people gain skills and vocationally related qualifications level 1 to be able to gain employment, an apprenticeship, or into further education
- (iii) Skills for Work Level 2 – To ensure that those who have been assessed as being capable of achieving a vocationally related qualification at level 2, but who have not yet secured employment are prepared for future progression to employment as an Apprentice.
- (iv) Skills for Work Level 3– This is a progression only route for young people who have completed the level 2 programme and who have not been able to find work but who are still within the 16-17 guarantee.

The Department provides a Pre-Entry Training Support referral for school-leavers with learning, or other disabilities. Clients are referred, after parental/ guardian consent, by the Department's Careers Advisers to contracted specialist support providers specialising in disability and learning support; these include Disability Action, the Cedar Foundation, Sensory Learning Support and Ulster Supported Employment. This process aims to ensure that support needs and training are identified and put in place as soon as possible after commencement of training.

All TfS participants receive a non means-tested Educational Maintenance Allowance of £40 per week, assistance towards the costs of travel and, where applicable, childcare and lodgings. Specialist Support funding of up to £1,000 annually can be accessed for participants requiring help with their training. An enhanced training fee is also payable to a Training Supplier in order to provide significant additional input of resources such as specialist equipment.

Youth Employment Scheme

The focus of the Youth Employment Scheme that I announced in July 2012 is on early intervention for young people aged 18 to 24. It is a voluntary scheme offered through local Jobs and Benefits Offices from the point of claim. The specific aim of the intervention is to help young people gain work experience, develop additional skills and achieve recognised relevant qualifications.

Young people are able to avail of work experience to enhance their employability skills and prospects of employment while at the same time claiming unemployment benefit.

This initiative seeks to build a covenant between employers, government and young people through which each will make a commitment to addressing personal, social and economic development in a new and innovative way. Other jurisdictions in Britain and Ireland have put measures in place to address youth unemployment but none match the scale of intervention provided in Northern Ireland. The elements of the Youth Employment Scheme are as follows:

Work Readiness Assessment

Building on the work the Employment Service already delivers, an initial detailed diagnosis of need is carried out and recommendations made on how to address any employability and job search skills gaps identified.

Skills Assessment

Young people will also be offered further careers advice from a qualified Careers Adviser, where appropriate, to identify possible further training opportunities.

Gaining Experience

A Work Experience Programme lasting 3 to 8 weeks offers opportunities for young people to experience the world of work. Participation is voluntary and young people retain benefit entitlement and will be given opportunities to further develop employability skills and trial particular types of work.

Skills Development Strand

A longer work experience opportunity including skills training is also available. Young people can obtain additional relevant qualifications during a 6 month period of work experience. Participants receive £45 per week in addition to their benefit entitlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employers that can offer full time jobs to young people are able to avail of an enhanced employer subsidy of £5,750 a year. They must provide training to allow the young people to develop their skills and gain relevant qualification while in employment.

A Post Implementation Review has resulted in some revisions and these are effective for participants joining the scheme from 30th September 2013. The details of the revisions are as follows:

- participants on Work Experience will receive the equivalent of their benefit plus £15.38 per week;
- a payment of £250 will be made to a young person that completes their training and achieves a qualification under the Skills Development strand of the Youth Employment Scheme;
- the Skills Development and Enhanced Employer Subsidy elements will continue to be promoted primarily to employers within the Jobs Growth Sectors opportunities. However, where an opportunity is offered outside these sectors where there is a clear prospect of a job outcome these will not be refused; and
- Steps to Work Lead Contractors will be engaged to source training for employers offering Skills Development opportunities and will administer these placements on behalf of the Department.

I trust that you will agree that the approach taken to address youth unemployment across Northern Ireland is both extensive and comprehensive to take account of the importance that both the Executive and I attach to overcoming youth unemployment.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the measures his Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27826/11-15)

Dr Farry: All car parking spaces used by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) are leased and managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). DEL does not operate outside this arrangement and so does not incur any direct expenditure on car parking.

The Department is fully supportive of DFP's commitment to achieve a reduction year on year in the number of leased car parking spaces provided to all departments by surrendering the stipulated number of car parking spaces each year.

The Department encourages the use of public transport as an alternative to using cars through its participation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Translink Annual Commuter Travelcard Scheme which allows staff to apply for an advance of salary to purchase an annual Translink Commuter Travelcard at a discounted rate. Repayments are spread across twelve months and deducted directly from salaries.

The Department also supports the NICS Cycle to Work Scheme which enables staff to buy a bicycle. Monthly payments are made through a salary sacrifice arrangement. When requested and where accommodation is available, lockers and / or shower facilities have been provided.

Disability Employment Service

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the current position of the Disability Employment Service.

(AQW 27897/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Disability Employment Service is an integral part of my Department's Employment Service. Its specific role is to support and assist people with health conditions and disabilities to progress towards, move into and stay in employment.

In doing so, the Disability Employment Service provides a range of programmes and services including Work Connect, Workable, Access to Work, Job Introduction Scheme and the Condition Management Programme. It also has a team of Occupational Psychologists who work directly with clients with disabilities and who also play a key support role with the Employment Advisers working in the Jobs and Benefit offices and JobCentres.

A strategic review of the Disability Employment Service is currently being undertaken. To inform this review, an overarching Disability Employment Strategy is being developed. A working group has been established to take the work on the strategy forward, with membership comprising of officials from the Disability Employment Service and a number of key representatives from local disability organisations. This is testament to the very positive relationship and partnership working that exists between my Department and the disability sector.

The direct involvement of the disability organisations will enable my Department to gain a deeper insight into the specific employment related needs of people with disabilities. In addition, a number of user engagement events have been scheduled throughout Northern Ireland, to ensure that the views of people with disabilities are also considered as part of the development of this strategy.

The Disability Employment Service will continue to play a key role, working with key partners and stakeholders to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with the tailored support and assistance they need to help them achieve their employment goals.

Code of Good Conduct in Research

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what assurances he can give to the general public and university undergraduates, that the invention of a book is not acceptable behaviour under any Code of Good Conduct in Research.

(AQW 27939/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is a signatory to the Concordat for Research Integrity which sets out how the research community should deal with any alleged misconduct in a transparent, fair and robust manner.

It is up to higher education institutions to handle any allegations of misconduct and to monitor, and where necessary improve, the suitability and appropriateness of the mechanisms in place to provide assurances over the integrity of research.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Companies in Possession of Petroleum Licences

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the final deadline by which each company currently in possession of a petroleum licence must commence drilling in order to retain their licence.

(AQW 27615/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The terms of a Petroleum Licence, including the Licensee's obligation to carry out the specified work programme, are set out in the **Petroleum Production Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987** as amended by the **Petroleum Production**

(Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. Unless my Department in any particular case decides otherwise, the Licensee must fulfil the work programme within the Initial Term of five years in order that the Licence may continue into the Second Term for a further five years. The work programmes of all four current petroleum licences in Northern Ireland specify that, subject to obtaining all the necessary permissions, the company must drill an exploration well in the Initial Term, i.e. by the following dates:

PL1/10 InfraStrata plc and partners	3 March 2016
PL2/10 Tamboran Resources Pty Ltd	31 March 2016
PL3/10 Rathlin Energy Ltd	14 February 2016
PL5/10 Providence Resources plc	21 February 2016

Where a licence contains a 'drill or drop' work programme, as is the case for PL1/10, PL2/10 and PL5/10, the Licensee must inform the Department before the end of Year Three that it intends to drill an exploration well or the Licence will terminate at the end of Year Three, unless the Department exercises its discretion under paragraph (2) of Clause 2 of the Petroleum Production (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

Policy Levers: Energy Prices

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the policy levers within her Department which affect energy prices.

(AQW 27790/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Strategic Energy Framework (SEF) sets the direction of energy policy in Northern Ireland for the period 2010 through to 2020. The SEF includes a section on affordability and, in particular, recognises the importance of assessing the impact of new policy and projects on energy costs.

Energy policy covers a wide spread of issues including those associated with gas, electricity, sustainability, and security of supply. It also has to manage, to best effect, binding legislation and targets emanating from Europe which impact on energy costs.

The Utility Regulator also has an important role to play in relation to energy costs. It is the case that retail energy prices are largely driven by wholesale energy costs which are set on global markets, and retail tariff reviews and price controls for the electricity and gas sectors in Northern Ireland are set by the Utility Regulator.

Increase in Energy Prices

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the action she has taken to deal with increasing energy prices.

(AQW 27791/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has no role in the regulation or setting of energy prices which are mainly driven by wholesale costs set on global markets. Retail tariff reviews and regulatory price controls for the gas and electricity sectors are matters for the Utility Regulator.

I am of course concerned about energy price increases and the impact on both domestic and business consumers, hence my Department works with the Regulator and the energy sector to improve competition and provide options for consumers to reduce bills by switching supplier.

The Utility Regulator reports that there are currently five active suppliers in the domestic electricity market in Northern Ireland. There is also competition in the Greater Belfast gas market and within the large industrial and commercial sector of the gas market outside Belfast, which will be fully opened from April 2015.

I also await the outcome of the of the ETI Committee review of electricity policy and pricing, including any recommendations the Committee may make.

Moyle Interconnector and the Proposed Second North/South Interconnector

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the current status of (i) the Moyle Interconnector; and (ii) a proposed second North/South Interconnector.

(AQW 27792/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Moyle electricity interconnector is currently operating at 250 megawatts transfer capacity which is around 50% of its full capacity. Mutual Energy Ltd, owners of the Interconnector, is actively pursuing an "interim" repair which should restore it to full capacity by mid-2014. Work is also underway on a longer term repair which should be in place by 2017, and will require two new low voltage cables to be laid alongside the existing Moyle cables.

The NIE planning application for a second North South interconnector was referred to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) by the Department of Environment (DOE) in March 2012. The enquiry was adjourned pending submission of a revised environmental statement by NIE. This was submitted to the DOE in April 2013 and a new public consultation was launched in September 2013. It is now a matter for the DOE to complete the public consultation phase and make arrangements for resumption of the PAC enquiry.

Mobile Infrastructure Project

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the Mobile Infrastructure Project.

(AQW 27808/11-15)

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 and is advising that two nominal sites have been identified in the North Antrim constituency for the location of mast infrastructure to address mobile not-spots.

The project supplier Arqiva and its sub-contractor, Harlequin, have been conducting further searches to identify the optimum siting of mast equipment in the nominal locations and are reporting that the response from the local community and site providers has been positive.

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/supporting-pages/improving-mobile-coverage>.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the measures her Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27882/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment does not own or rent any parking spaces and therefore has no expenditure for them.

The buildings and any associated parking spaces occupied by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment are part of the NICS government estate and are owned and managed by Department of Finance and Personnel.

Northern Ireland Electricity's Capitalisation Practice

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the input that her Department has had in the investigation into Northern Ireland Electricity's capitalisation practice which

has been referred to the Competition Commission following the rejection of the Utility Regulator's price control.

(AQW 27930/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department submitted a response to the Competition Commission following the Utility Regulator's referral of the Northern Ireland Electricity price control determination.

This submission has been published on the Competition Commission website and can be accessed at: http://www.competition-commission.org.uk/assets/competitioncommission/docs/2013/northern-ireland-electricity-price-determination/130604_department_of_enterprise_trade_and_investment.pdf

Jobs Fund

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the success of the Jobs Fund since it was introduced by InvestNI.

(AQO 4945/11-15)

Mrs Foster: From its launch in April 2011 to 31st March 2013, the Jobs Fund promoted a total of four thousand, five hundred and sixty seven new jobs throughout Northern Ireland and created two thousand, six hundred and eighty nine jobs.

This represents performance 5.4% above the promoted jobs target and 12.2% above the created jobs target during the first two years of the scheme.

Office Accommodation

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether there is a shortage of the high quality office accommodation required to attract new investors.

(AQO 4946/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The availability of suitable office space is an important part of our investment proposition.

I am conscious that concerns have been raised over the current level of availability of high quality office accommodation and the potential impact it might have on Northern Ireland's attractiveness as an investment location.

However Invest NI considers that the current level of availability of Grade A office space is not negatively affecting its ability to secure investment projects.

Job Creation: Armagh

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the measures her Department can take to provide job creation opportunities in Armagh City and District.

(AQO 4948/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My department and Invest NI continue to work with companies across Armagh City and District to help them grow and create new employment opportunities.

Between 2008 and 2013, Invest NI made over seven hundred offers of assistance worth nearly £8 million to companies in the Armagh area, generating total investment in the district of £46 million. This has contributed towards the promotion of six hundred and ninety seven new jobs in companies such as John Mackle, Tayto and John Woods.

In November 2011, I launched the Boosting Business campaign which provides a range of support both financial and advisory, to help businesses cope with the impact of the downturn. A key element of the campaign is the Jobs Fund which aims to help boost employment creation in the shorter-term. As of 31st March 2013, there were twelve Jobs Fund business investment projects at various stages of development across the Armagh district which should lead to the creation of one hundred and thirty nine new jobs, fifty eight of which were already in place. The Fund had also provided support to fourteen young people who were not in education, employment or training to set up their own business

and had assisted a further four residents in the district's Neighbourhood Renewal Areas to establish their own businesses.

Another significant recent initiative has been the European Union's Local Economic Development measure, where Invest NI has been working closely with Armagh City and District Council and the South East Economic Development group to progress fifteen initiatives to support local business in the Armagh area. These initiatives have a total value of £3 million and it is hoped that ultimately they will help lead to further job creation across the area.

I would like to assure you that we will continue to do all we can to help encourage new employment opportunities in Armagh and across Northern Ireland.

Energy: SME Assistance

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance is available for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in relation to the management of energy resources.
(AQO 4949/11-15)

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

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

Tourism

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what opportunities she had to promote local tourism during her recent visit to South Africa.
(AQO 4950/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During my visit to South Africa in September, I hosted a networking event in Johannesburg for thirty top South African tour operators. I also gave interviews to key media representatives, highlighting the great success that Northern Ireland is currently enjoying and promoting Northern Ireland as a compelling holiday and business travel destination.

I also attended a Northern Irish Connections reception where I met over one hundred Diaspora from or affiliated with Northern Ireland including university alumni, sports networks, and business and tourism contacts.

Flights: Germany/Belgium

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what actions she has taken in the last twelve months to secure direct flights to Germany and Belgium.
(AQO 4951/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department is in regular dialogue with airlines and Northern Ireland's airports, to help bring new air services to Northern Ireland and to promote demand for existing services. This includes the potential for new routes to important business and inbound tourism markets in mainland Europe. However, while under development, these discussions are of a commercially sensitive and confidential nature.

Energy: Price Freeze

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether it is possible to freeze local energy prices.
(AQO 4952/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Wholesale energy prices are set on international markets. Agreement of tariffs is a matter for the Regulator. My Department cannot direct the Regulator to implement a freeze on prices. In setting tariffs, the Regulator must consider the impact that a freeze would have on the commercial viability of suppliers who would remain exposed to volatility in wholesale energy prices. Any significant change in wholesale energy prices could also result in large tariff increases for consumers at the end of the price-freeze period.

Small Business Saturday

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what she is doing to promote Small Business Saturday.

(AQO 4953/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Small Business Saturday event being held on 7 December 2013 is being led by an independent national campaign supported by small businesses. It provides an opportunity for small businesses to raise their profile and to generate business by encouraging communities to support them at a key time in the shopping calendar.

I want to support all businesses, but as regards this initiative Invest NI is considering how they might contribute, taking into consideration their existing promotional and marketing activities.

Economic Strategy: Fiscal Levers

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her analysis of the fiscal levers which could be devolved to complement corporation tax to enhance the development and implementation of the local economic strategy.

(AQO 4954/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Work is ongoing between the Executive and the UK Government to examine the potential to devolve other fiscal powers that could support the Economic Strategy goal of growing the private sector.

Whilst there are many taxes which could potentially benefit Northern Ireland, we need to focus on those which are likely to have the greatest economic impact and where there is a clear rationale for devolution – such as Corporation Tax and long-haul APD which impacts our competitiveness relative to the Republic of Ireland.

We must also not lose sight of the need to develop those areas already within our control, such as skills and infrastructure, which are essential for supporting both local and foreign investment.

Department of the Environment

Wind Turbines

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the planning applications for (i) single; and (ii) multiple wind turbines on agricultural land in (a) North Antrim; and (b) Northern Ireland.

(AQW 22405/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Table 1 below details the number of single wind turbine and wind farm applications received¹ from 2008/09 to 31 August 2013², on agricultural land³, in North Antrim⁴ and in Northern Ireland.

TABLE 1

		2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014
North Antrim	Single wind turbine	13	9	86	78	47	27
	Wind farm	1	1	5	4	0	1
	Total	14	10	91	82	47	28
Northern Ireland	Single wind turbine	157	97	571	626	572	245
	Wind farm	14	9	15	10	5	12
	Total	171	106	586	636	577	257

Notes:

- 1 All applications received in the period may not have had a decision issued within the same time period. Applications received may also include some applications that are subsequently withdraw
- 2 Latest available fully validated renewable energy information
- 3 The dataset was arrived at by taking the relevant applications from the Renewable energy database and then selecting those which intersect DARD farm polygons
- 4 Area refers to the North Antrim parliamentary constituency

Appendix A includes the details of each of these planning applications, a copy of which has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Dereliction Funding

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions his Department has had with other Departments in relation to dereliction funding.

(AQW 25253/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In the course of developing the Dereliction Intervention Programme, DOE officials held discussions with DSD officials to ensure a common understanding of our roles. This was to safeguard against the possibility of overlaps in either funding or physical terms.

The ongoing grant process is assisted by the Department's planning staff, who have a good local understanding of potential interfaces with the work of other departments.

Planning Conditions: Breaches

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what is the timescale between a reported breach of planning conditions and his Department ensuring that there is compliance with the relevant planning conditions.

(AQW 26433/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Enforcement is a key priority for the Department and it investigates all complaints into alleged breaches of planning control and prioritises each complaint. The priority given is determined by the guiding principle that any action in response to an actual breach of planning control should be proportionate to the harm it causes.

The Department has discretion to take enforcement action when it regards it as expedient to do so. In determining the most appropriate course of action in response to an alleged breach, the Department will take into account the extent of the breach and its potential impact on the environment.

The priority given is determined by the guiding principle that any action in response to a breach of planning control should be proportionate to the harm it causes.

Departmental staff work within a number of Performance targets for Breaches of planning control measured against 3 Categories. Priority 1 cases reflect the most serious cases with shorter deadlines.

Key Performance Targets include;

- discuss and agree a course of action for 95% of Priority 1 cases within 2 working weeks of receipt of the initial complaint;
- discuss and agree a course of action for 60% of all other cases within 8 working weeks and 95% within 12 working weeks of receipt of the initial complaint;
- bring 70% of cases to a target conclusion within 39 working weeks (9 months) of receipt of complaint.

Driver and Vehicle Agency Medical Section

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many medically qualified members of staff are employed by the Driver and Vehicle Agency; (ii) how driver licence applicants' private medical records are managed; (iii) whether the same confidentiality safeguards are applied as those applied by the Health Service; and (iv) how these safeguards are guaranteed.

(AQW 26751/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In response to each of the questions above:

- (i) The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) do not directly employ medically qualified staff. Applications for driver and taxi driver licences which require medical investigation are referred to the Department of Finance and Personnel's Occupational Health Service (OHS), who are contracted by the Department to provide professional medical advice.
- (ii) Medical records provided in connection with a driving licence application are processed by a dedicated section within DVA Driver Licensing in Coleraine. The records are treated as confidential and are accessible only by the staff who have a business need to view them and where expert medical opinion is required, by OHS doctors or consultants contracted to provide specialist medical advice to OHS.

Documents are transferred between DVA and OHS by secure courier in sealed containers, which are opened only by OHS medical staff or staff in the DVA Driver Licensing Medical Section. Medical records posted to DVA by licence holders or applicants are opened only by staff in the medical section, provided the envelopes in which they are sent have been appropriately marked by the sender.

Medical records are retained in accordance with the DVA Driver Licensing Retention and Disposal Schedule. Where the records are identified for destruction, they are destroyed by secure shredding within the Coleraine County Hall grounds before incineration.

- (iii) All staff working in the Driver Licensing medical section are required to sign a confidentiality declaration which prohibits the unlawful access to, or disclosure of, sensitive personal data, including medical records. This declaration is in addition to the requirements of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Data Security Policy and the NICS Code of Ethics. All staff are given appropriate training to ensure that they carry out their duties in accordance with the Department's data protection policies. OHS doctors and staff are required to sign and adhere to a separate confidentiality agreement.

Wind Turbines

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment when he will answer AQW 22405/11-15.

(AQW 26851/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Table 1 below details the number of single wind turbine and wind farm applications received¹ from 2008/09 to 31 August 2013², on agricultural land³, in North Antrim⁴ and in Northern Ireland.

TABLE 1

		2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014
North Antrim	Single wind turbine	13	9	86	78	47	27
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Notes:

- 1 All applications received in the period may not have had a decision issued within the same time period. Applications received may also include some applications that are subsequently withdrawn
- 2 Latest available fully validated renewable energy information
- 3 The dataset was arrived at by taking the relevant applications from the Renewable energy database and then selecting those which intersect DARD farm polygons
- 4 Area refers to the North Antrim parliamentary constituency

Appendix A includes the details of each of these planning applications, a copy of which has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Taxi Firms and Representative Bodies

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the taxi firms or representative bodies that he has met since taking office.

(AQW 26998/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have met with representatives of taxi companies and bodies, and other interested parties since taking office. I have met representatives of Belfast Public Hire Taxi Drivers and Belfast Taxis CIC (Community Interest Company), the owners of Value Cabs and Fonacabs, taxi stakeholders in Derry and representatives of consumer groups with an interest in the taxi industry. A further meeting with taxi stakeholders from Derry is being arranged for late October.

I will also ensure that my officials continue to be available to engage with key stakeholders in the taxi industry and those who represent the views of consumer groups as we progress reform of the taxi industry.

Single-Tier Taxi System

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact on service users should the single-tier taxi system proposal be implemented.

(AQW 27214/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The single-tier taxi system provided for in the Taxi Act (NI) 2008 will allow all taxis to ply for hire anywhere in Northern Ireland. Consumers will find increased availability of taxis to use and have greater choice in which taxi they can choose to use, and there will be reduced confusion around which activities individual classes of taxis are permitted to undertake. The benefits to the consumer will be

most noticeable within Belfast City Centre, as more taxis will be able to ply for hire within City limits, facilitating transport particularly from licensed premises after closing.

Consumer and disability groups support the implementation of single tier licensing. In its response to the Department's consultation earlier this year on the implementation of single tier licensing, the Consumer Council stated that it believes that the change to a one-tier system will prove beneficial for passengers in providing more choice. The Council has been consistently supportive of the Taxis Act as a whole, considering that the proposed legislative changes will increase consumer protection from over-charging and ensure that customers will benefit from increased safety measures. Disability groups such as the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and Disability Action are also supportive of a single tier system as they believe it will simplify access to taxis for disabled consumers. Improving vehicle accessibility has been one of the key priorities for IMTAC during the taxi reform programme.

Single tier licensing will also enable the Department to take more effective enforcement against illegal taxi activities, which is an issue those in the taxi industry as a whole are very concerned about.

Single-Tier Taxi System: Users with a Disability

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment what are the cost implications of the single-tier taxi system for service users with a disability, particularly those with wheelchairs or walking aids, in relation to public hire taxis, who operate a flat fee, against the private hire companies who can charge more than double the fee of public hire taxis for passengers using wheelchairs or walking aids.

(AQW 27264/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A single-tier taxi system will allow all taxis to ply for hire anywhere in Northern Ireland, removing the distinction between public and private hire taxis.

At the same time, a separate set of Taximeter Regulations will be introduced which will set a maximum fare tariff for all taxis in Northern Ireland. These regulations will ensure that no taxi is able to charge a wheelchair user or customer with a walking aid any more than the maximum fare regardless of the size and type of vehicle being provided. This will protect all consumers from overcharging and provide costs savings against charges currently levied by some private hire companies to customers requesting a larger taxi vehicle.

An additional protection will be provided in that drivers will not be able to engage the taximeter until the passenger is in the vehicle and ready to depart, and this must be disengaged immediately on arrival at the destination. Therefore any time required for passenger assistance will not lead to an increased journey cost for the consumer.

Outsourcing of Department's Functions

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of the Environment whether he intends to outsource any of his Department's functions in a bid to achieve efficiencies.

(AQW 27291/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department recognises the potential for achieving efficiencies through outsourcing where this is cost-effective. However, whilst there are currently no plans to outsource specific departmental functions, the Department will keep under review and investigate opportunities for outsourcing to deliver efficiencies.

UNESCO Report on the Proposed Development at Runkerry

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what actions he has taken following the publication of the UNESCO Report on the impact of the proposed development at Runkerry on the World Heritage Site status of the Giants Causeway.

(AQW 27394/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The position of the former Minister was that he did not accept the validity of the Report of the Advisory Mission to the Giants Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site which was presented to the annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee in June this year. That remains my position and I do not accept or intend to act upon the recommendations made by the Committee as a result of the Mission Report, until the legitimate questions and concerns identified by the Department about the preparation of this report have been addressed.

Special Area of Conservation: Minerals Permissions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 25467/11-15, how many times minerals permissions have been reviewed to assess the environmental impact on a newly declared candidate Special Area of Conservation or other designations of international importance, since 2000. **(AQW 27412/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: The Department has not reviewed any previously granted minerals permission to assess impact on SAC's or international designations since 2000. Existing designations and potential for environmental impact will have been taken into consideration by the Department as part of the planning process for minerals applications.

Retrospective Planning Application A/2009/0400/F: Refusal

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the date the deemed refusal for retrospective planning application A/2009/0400/F became effective; and (ii) 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 27413/11-15)**

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 no letter issued at the time, my officials are now writing to the agent to advise of the deemed refusal and the portal will be updated to reflect this position.

Anaerobic Digester

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) any plans his Department has seen relating to a possible anaerobic digester opposite the Chimney Corner on the Antrim Line, Mallusk; (ii) who has been consulted regarding the anaerobic digester; and (iii) the current stage of this application. **(AQW 27425/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: The Department received a valid planning application for the development of an Anaerobic Digestion Plant at a site 220m North East of 9 Park Road, Mallusk on 20th April 2012.

The application was advertised in the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News, the News Letter and Andersonstown News Group on 4th May 2012. Belfast City Council, as owners of the adjacent City of Belfast Playing fields at 2 Park Road, Ballyvesey, were notified of the application. No objections to the proposal were received.

During the processing of the application, the Department consulted with:

- Land and Resource Management (NIEA)
- Water Management Unit (NIEA)
- Industrial Pollution & Radio Chemical Inspectorate (NIEA)
- Veterinary Service (DARD)
- Veterinary Service (Animal By-Products) (DARD)
- Environmental Health (Newtownabbey Borough Council)

- Roads Service
- NI Water

None of the above consultees expressed concerns with the proposal. An opinion to approve the application was presented to Newtownabbey Borough council on 13th May 2013 and Council agreed with this recommendation. Planning permission was granted on 14th May 2013.

Planning Permissions: Discharge Consents

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 26495/11-15, in relation to the 24 planning permissions, whether all had been approved prior to discharge consents being granted.
(AQW 27482/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In relation to the 24 planning permissions; one of these was approved following the discharge consent date.

Peatlands: Restoration

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment what targets have been set for peatland restoration; and what resources will be allocated to carry out this work.
(AQW 27570/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My predecessor wrote to the Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon, on securing benefits from UK peatlands in July this year. In the letter he offered continued support to the further development of the Peatland Code including the identification of suitable peatland restoration projects in Northern Ireland. He also stated that the Department was working with DARD to help improve the natural capital of peatlands through implementation of agricultural policies.

We have since supported the launch of the trial phase of the UK Peatland Code in September and emphasised the need for peatland restoration to be included in recent RDP consultation. Staff in my Department are currently working closely with DARD on the development of the new agri-environment schemes.

Within my Department some resources have been allocated to peatland restoration e.g. planning regulation, research and survey, designated site management and partnership projects and helping develop the UK peatland code in Northern Ireland and DARD agri-environment policies. However, more work is required before targets for peatland restoration can be set.

My Department has commenced working with the devolved administrations to develop an EU Funding proposal under the LIFE Programme. The main focus of this bid across the administrations will be peatland restoration.

Peatlands: Restoration

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he has taken with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that agri-environment schemes deliver peatland management and restoration.
(AQW 27571/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My predecessor wrote to the Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon, on securing benefits from UK peatlands in July this year. In the letter he offered continued support to the further development of the Peatland Code including the identification of suitable peatland restoration projects in Northern Ireland. He also stated that the Department was working with DARD to help improve the natural capital of peatlands through implementation of agricultural policies.

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My Department has commenced working with the devolved administrations to develop an EU Funding proposal under the LIFE Programme. The main focus of this bid across the administrations will be peatland restoration.

Peatlands: Restoration

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to implement the Peatland Code; and if so, when.

(AQW 27572/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My predecessor wrote to the Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon, on securing benefits from UK peatlands in July this year. In the letter he offered continued support to the further development of the Peatland Code including the identification of suitable peatland restoration projects in Northern Ireland. He also stated that the Department was working with DARD to help improve the natural capital of peatlands through implementation of agricultural policies.

We have since supported the launch of the trial phase of the UK Peatland Code in September and emphasised the need for peatland restoration to be included in recent RDP consultation. Staff in my Department are currently working closely with DARD on the development of the new agri-environment schemes.

Within my Department some resources have been allocated to peatland restoration e.g. planning regulation, research and survey, designated site management and partnership projects and helping develop the UK peatland code in Northern Ireland and DARD agri-environment policies. However, more work is required before targets for peatland restoration can be set.

My Department has commenced working with the devolved administrations to develop an EU Funding proposal under the LIFE Programme. The main focus of this bid across the administrations will be peatland restoration.

Planning Application E/2013/0093/F

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on planning application E/2013/0093/F.

(AQW 27612/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Work is currently ongoing in processing this application. My officials are completing the EIA Determination and have sought the advice from the relevant environmental bodies.

Environmental Impact Assessment: Planning Application E/2013/0093/F

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether his Department is conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on planning application E/2013/0093/F; and if so (ii) when and where details of this EIA will be published; and (iii) why this information was not made publically available before the deadline for public submissions to the planning application.

(AQW 27614/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The application automatically falls within the thresholds of Schedule 2:2(D) of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 2012 and the Department is automatically required to determine if the application is required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Details of the Departments EIA Determination will be published when the determination is completed and will be placed on the planning portal for public viewing.

The information has not been made publically available because the EIA Determination is not complete. The Department accepts public submissions up until the application being presented to Council therefore it is not considered that the public have been subject to any prejudice.

Number of MOT Centres

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of MOT centres.
(AQW 27646/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are 15 MOT centres at various locations across Northern Ireland.

Information regarding each test centre can be found on the NIDirect website via the following link:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/motoring/mot-and-vehicle-testing/about-the-mot-scheme/where-are-the-test-centres.htm>

Operating Cost of Each MOT Centre

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the operating cost of each MOT centre.
(AQW 27647/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) does not hold the information in the format requested, as not all operating costs are held at test centre level. There are operating costs which are held and managed centrally in relation to test centres operations including the maintenance of MOT equipment, the test booking system and accommodation maintenance. Consequently, total operating costs are not available for each MOT Centre.

However, the analysis of total operating cost of £34.4m for Driver and Vehicle Testing as a whole can be found in the DVA Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013.

<http://dvtboucweb1/dvl/publications/AnnualReports/DVA%20annual%20report%20accounts%20-%202012%202013.pdf>

Lorry MOT Tests

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of lorry MOT tests completed in each of the last three years.
(AQW 27649/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The number of lorry MOT tests completed in each of the last three financial years (1 April -31 March) is set out below.

LORRY VEHICLE TESTS 2010-11 TO 2012-13¹

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Full Test	26,270	25,476	23,955
Retest	8,914	8,823	7,657
All Tests	35,184	34,299	31,612

1 Note: Figures are the latest DOE/DVA Official Statistics.

Motorbikes: MOT Tests

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the requirements for motorbikes to complete a MOT test.

(AQW 27667/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) conducts MOT tests on motor bicycles in compliance with The Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003. The Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 requires motor bicycles to be tested from 4 years old, and annually thereafter. The Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 provide for making an appointment and conducting the test. These Regulations also prescribe the statutory requirements for motor bicycles.

The prescribed statutory requirements primarily provide for an assessment of the vehicle's registration number and frame number, lights, brakes, wheels, tyres, steering, speedometer, horn, stand, petrol tank and silencers. In addition, the vehicle is subject to a general maintenance assessment to ensure it is unlikely to be a danger on the road.

Upper Glenelly Valley: Windfarm

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact on the landscape character of the Upper Glenelly Valley of the SSE proposal for a windfarm in that area; and the precedent it will set for applications in other conservation areas.

(AQW 27682/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has not yet received a planning application for a wind farm in the Glenelly Valley from SSE but is aware of future proposals for a large wind farm within the Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty by the same company.

Should the application subsequently be received, it will be subject to the full assessment under relevant planning policies and guidance, including the impacts on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area.

NIEA: West Tyrone

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Tourist Board, whether he will under take a review of the work of the NIEA in West Tyrone and fund a management scheme for heritage sites and monuments in the area.

(AQW 27683/11-15)

Mr Durkan: NIEA is working closely with NITB and others to enhance the economic and social benefits from our heritage across Northern Ireland. NIEA Officials are working with NITB, in a constructive way, regarding the promotion of heritage in County Tyrone in general. Various members of staff in the NIEA Historic Monuments Unit are engaged in meetings with NITB to develop a marketing strategy for the heritage of the county, clustering sites together and tying this in to the promotion of tourism and business.

In 2012 the Historic Monuments Council, the statutory advisory body to the Department on historic monument matters, undertook a visitation survey of monuments in State Care. NIEA has prioritised work taking account of the recommendations in the associated report. In addition, specialist advisors are being procured to develop specifications for work at various monuments throughout Northern Ireland. Newtown Stewart Castle and Harry Avery's Castle are included in this programme of work.

Rather than divert resources to a review process, I have asked NIEA to ensure that this partnership work is actively continued.

NIEA staff has been, and will continue to be, engaged with Strabane Council, plus various community groups in West Tyrone, to develop and facilitate heritage-led community schemes in the area. Staff

would welcome any proposals that would lead to increased community engagement at historic monuments in general.

TUPE Arrangements

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the transfer of council Chief Executives under the Review of Public Administration, for how many years, after 2015, will TUPE arrangements be in place; and whether these arrangements will be the same as those for the transfer of other posts.

(AQW 27715/11-15)

Mr Durkan: TUPE regulations provide protection for all employees against changes to their terms and conditions of employment as a result of a transfer of an undertaking. Provision has been made to apply TUPE protections to staff transferring from the current 26 to the new 11 councils. There is no time limit set in respect of the application of TUPE. TUPE will apply equally to all affected staff, regardless of position or grade.

Equipping Enforcement Officers with Cameras

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27215/11-15, how much it has cost to date to equip enforcement officers with cameras and to train them on procedures in gathering and submitting such evidence.

(AQW 27716/11-15)

Mr Durkan: DVA Enforcement staff are issued with a digital camera to enable collection of photographic evidence which may be used to preserve an accurate record of evidence encountered during an investigation. Currently the cost of a camera and an SD card is approximately £51.78.

Training on procedures associated with gathering and submitting evidence is incorporated into one of seven modules that form part of The Advanced Certificate in Investigative Practice which is the standard training provided to all enforcement officers. Training for the certificate includes a module based on the gathering of data both written and photographic and how to ensure evidence collected during the course of an investigation is in strict accordance with Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998. The current cost to train an enforcement officer for The Advanced Certificate in Investigative Practice is £3,500 per person.

Driver and Vehicle Agency Medical Section

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether staff representing the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) Medical Section have medical qualifications; (ii) how many of these staff are employed within the DVA Medical Section; and (iii) to detail (a) for how long; (b) where; and (c) how information relating to the medical records of members of the public are stored.

(AQW 27741/11-15)

Mr Durkan:

- (i) and (ii) The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) does not employ medically qualified staff. Applications for driver licences which require medical investigation are referred to the Department of Finance and Personnel's Occupational Health Service (OHS) who are contracted by the Department to provide professional medical advice.
- (iii) (a) The Agency recently agreed a new Retention and Disposal Schedule in relation to medical records associated with a driver licence application. The schedule stipulates that medical records are retained for a period equal to the duration of the licence, plus one year, commencing with the date of the decision to grant a licence. Where the application is refused, the medical records are retained for a period of up to 10 years, but may be destroyed earlier if a further application is considered and determined within this period; and
- (b) and (c) The records are stored securely in DVA Driver Licensing Medical Section in County Hall, Coleraine and access to these records is restricted to Medical Section staff. Historic records

are stored on an electronic database, access to which is strictly limited to DVA Driver Licensing Medical staff.

Driving Licences: Older People

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment whether the methodology for issuing Driving Licences locally is the same as that in the rest of the United Kingdom; and if not, to outline the differences, particularly in relation to confidential and personal medical records belonging to older people.

(AQW 27744/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The methodology for issuing driving licences in Northern Ireland is the same as that applied in Britain.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency Properties: Hedge Spray

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether hedges on property owned by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency are sprayed by contractors with substances to kill weeds and control hedge growth; (ii) whether the weeds which the spray was originally designed to kill are now becoming resistant; and (iii) whether this spray is responsible for the destruction of vegetation and habitat of Queen Bees, or animals.

(AQW 27745/11-15)

Mr Durkan:

- (i) It is not normal practice to spray hedgerows with substances to kill weeds and control hedgerow growth on property owned by my Department and managed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). Officials have advised me that they are aware of a single instance where a herbicide has been used by NIEA to control weeds in a hedgerow. In this case the herbicide was applied carefully by trained NIEA staff to control the invasive and environmentally damaging alien plant species, Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

This plant spreads rapidly by underground rhizomes and forms a dense thicket which smothers out native vegetation and has little value for wildlife. It is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 making it... 'an offence to plant or otherwise cause it to grow in the wild.' Because of its capacity to penetrate structures and displace native vegetation, policy on disposal of Japanese knotweed material places a duty of care on all waste producers to ensure it is disposed of to a landfill site licensed to receive it. There is also a duty of care to prevent spread to adjacent land.

Japanese knotweed found growing in a hedgerow at Brackagh Moss Nature Reserve near Portadown was sprayed with glyphosate. (This plant has also been controlled where found growing in non-hedgerow situations on Department lands, including Roe Valley Country Park.)

NIEA has encouraged others to control Japanese knotweed and advised how this can be achieved. DRD Roads Service has been encouraged to spray knotweed growing on road verges, where it may be growing through hedgerows.

No chemicals have been used by NIEA on the sites it manages to control the growth of the hedgerows themselves.

- (ii) NIEA officials are not aware of Japanese knotweed building up any resistance to glyphosate.
- (iii) Officials in DARD have advised that glyphosate is a widely used and non-residual herbicide which is approved for use under statutory regulations, including European Regulation (EC) 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market. Before approval, all plant protection products undergo rigorous efficacy and safety evaluation, including mammalian and eco-toxicology. This evaluation indicates that glyphosate has a very low mammalian toxicity and is considered to be relatively harmless to non-target invertebrate species, including bees.

Provided it is used in accordance with the instructions and legal limits specified on the product label, glyphosate is not considered to have any significant adverse environmental impacts. It is, however,

recognised that glyphosate-based herbicides have the potential to affect non-target plants adversely if not applied carefully by the spray operator. NIEA takes the view that the environmental damage caused by the knotweed is more serious than any unintended impacts on other plants and wildlife of the careful application of glyphosate.

Taxis: Digital Cameras

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the cost of the digital cameras installed for the enforcement of the new taxi legislation; (ii) the location of each camera; (iii) whether these cameras have been used to detect any infringements of other legislation; and (iv) if so, how many successful prosecutions have resulted.

(AQW 27751/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Driver and Vehicle Agency do not have fixed cameras installed in relation to the enforcement of road traffic legislation and currently do not have any plans to install cameras for the enforcement of the new taxi legislation.

Single Tier Taxi System

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment how he will ensure that the proposed single tier taxi system will be equitably applied throughout Northern Ireland.

(AQW 27754/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The legislation which will implement a single tier taxi system in Northern Ireland will apply equally to all taxis, regardless of their geographical location. The legislation will remove the existing distinction between public hire taxis operating in Belfast and those operating throughout the rest of Northern Ireland.

The proposed maximum fare tariff will impose only a maximum limit on taxi fares; operators will be free to adjust their fares in response to local economic conditions, provided that their fares do not exceed the statutory maximum fare.

Aside from the requirement that only taxis approved as wheelchair accessible will be permitted to stand on taxi ranks in Belfast, all the new regulatory provisions will apply equally across Northern Ireland.

Entertainment Licences: Enforcement

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the guidance his Department provides to councils on the enforcement of the terms of entertainment licences issued; and for his assessment of the issues of public safety and overcrowding at the Jamboree in the Park event in Fintona, County Tyrone on Saturday 2 November 2013.

(AQW 27781/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Entertainments licences are issued by councils under Article 3 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. Entertainment licences may be issued in respect of places, indoor and outdoor, where categories of entertainment specified in schedule 1 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 are provided. Examples of such entertainment are theatrical performances, music or contests such as boxing.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 provides that an entertainments licence may contain terms, conditions and restrictions regarding matters such as regulating the conduct, days and hours of use, maximum numbers of attendees and general arrangement of the place;

In addition councils are required to have regard to any model terms, conditions and restrictions issued by the Department, but they are not obliged to comply with them.

Paragraph 1.05 of the Model Terms, Conditions and Restrictions for Indoor Entertainments provides that the numbers of persons on the premises at any one time shall not exceed the maximum number stated in the licence and a system of accounting and recording numbers should be kept.

When required by councils, admission to indoor places of entertainment providing concerts shall be by ticket only. If some tickets are for sale at the entrance then their number shall be limited to that which, together with the tickets sold in advance, does not exceed the maximum number stated in the licence.

In terms of stewarding such events, unless the performance warrants a higher level of supervision, the number of attendants shall not be less than one for every 100 persons in a place without seating.

The enforcement of licence conditions is a matter for the council which issues the licence; in the case referred to, this was Omagh District Council.

Councils: Levels of Debt

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to assist councils tackle their levels of debt.

(AQW 27788/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are controls in place to ensure that local government does not over-stretch in terms of borrowings. In line with Section 13 (1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, “a council shall determine and keep under review how much money it can afford to borrow.” A council may not borrow money if doing so would result in a breach of the limit determined by it under Section 13. This is examined each year by the Local Government Auditor as part of the audit process.

In terms of the expenditure of current councils in the run up to April 2015, I have issued a direction and guidance on expenditure controls for Statutory Transition Committees. This gives Statutory Transition Committees the power to examine and approve three year capital plans and revenue expenditure forecasts in their constituent councils.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010, taken together with the Departmental direction, provides that councils must seek the consent of Statutory Transition Committees before:

- making a disposal of land where consideration exceeds £100,000;
- entering into a capital contract where consideration exceeds £250,000; or
- entering into a non capital contract where consideration exceeds £100,000.

This is to ensure that the current 26 councils cannot enter into new contracts that will have an impact on the finances of the newly created councils without first seeking permission from the Statutory Transition Committee. This power will also be applied to the new councils during the period when they will be operating in shadow mode from end May 2014 – March 2015.

Private Hire Taxis: Breaches of Regulations

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment how many private hire taxi drivers have had their licences revoked due to breaches of regulations, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27815/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department’s licensing system does not differentiate between private hire and public hire drivers. The figures provided below are for all licensed taxi drivers whose licences have been revoked due to their loss of repute.

Year	Number of Taxi Drivers whose licence was revoked
2012/13	56
2011/12	40
2010/11	51
2009/10	56
2008/09	49

The figures are provided from Agency records and do not form part of published and validated DOE Official Statistics.

Review of Public Administration: Local Councils

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of his decision not to move the Planning Bill, what planning powers will transfer to local councils under the Review of Public Administration; and by what mechanism will these functions be transferred.

(AQW 27850/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 which received Royal Assent on 4 May 2011, provides the legislative basis for the transfer of the vast majority of planning functions and decision making responsibilities to councils. This includes the preparation of local development plans, development management, enforcement, and other additional planning controls for listed buildings, conservation areas, trees, advertisements and hazardous substances. These functions will transfer on commencement of the relevant sections of the 2011 Act.

Therefore, not moving the Planning Bill to Further Consideration stage will not adversely impact upon the transfer of planning powers to councils in 2015.

Driver and Vehicle Agency Staff Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment to provide a copy of the report compiled by senior Driver and Vehicle Agency staff following video-footage taken of private hire taxis by enforcement officers at Ravenhill Rugby Grounds, Mount Merrion Avenue entrance on 23 August 2013.

(AQW 27856/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department recently assessed the manner in which taxi services were being provided at Ravenhill rugby ground to ascertain whether there were any breaches of the current taxi legislation and to help inform the Department's policy position for enforcement.

The observations of enforcement officers were not captured in a separate formal report but rather formed part of the overall consideration of the Ravenhill arrangements, which included seeking legal clarification and advice from the Departmental Solicitors' Office. After careful deliberation, the Department determined that the provision of taxi services at Ravenhill rugby ground was compliant with the requirements of the Taxis Act (NI) 2008 and other related legislation.

My Department's interpretation of the legal position as regards provision of taxis at Ravenhill was issued on 21st October 2013 and is attached for information.

Single Use Plastic Bag Levy

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment, in the context of the single use plastic bag levy, for his assessment of the studies by Professor Hugh Pennington, Emeritus Professor of Bacteriology at the University of Aberdeen, who has been investigating the use of hessian bags-for-life, and has concluded that they pose a threat to public health.

(AQW 27869/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am aware of the research carried out by Professor Pennington and of the similar research carried out by the University of Pennsylvania.

Any potential risk to public health must of course be taken seriously. Professor Pennington's research – and other similar studies - highlight the need for care in use of carrier bags – whether or not those bags are new or reused bags. With this in mind, in developing the policy in Northern Ireland, my Department worked closely with the Food Standards Agency - to ensure that there were adequate safeguards to protect the health and safety of consumers.

The Northern Ireland carrier bag legislation therefore contains exemptions for specific products on the grounds of hygiene and food safety and the protection of both goods and consumers. In relation to food, the legislation provides certain exemptions. Sellers will not have to apply the levy to:

- (i) bags used to contain unpackaged food for human or animal consumption;
- (ii) bags of a certain size used solely to contain packaged uncooked meat, poultry or fish; and
- (iii) bags used to contain takeaway hot food or hot drinks.

The exemption for raw meat, poultry and fish reflects the particular food safety issues around these products and the potential for cross-contamination if they are not handled carefully.

The Department believes that the legislation as drafted provides sufficient protection for consumers. There is however a broader food safety message, which applies whether or not carrier bag charging is in place. In general people should always take reasonable care when handling products such as raw meat; this is emphasised in guidance given by the Food Standards Agency in July 2013. These guidelines entail packing raw meat and fish separately from food that is ready to eat, keeping a separate carrier bag for holding raw meat and fish and disposing of the bag if there has been any spillage of raw meat juices.

Single Use Plastic Bag Levy

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment, in the context of the single use plastic bag levy, for his assessment of the research by the University of Pennsylvania which found that there had been a 25 per cent rise in hospital admissions and a 46 per cent increase in deaths from food-borne illnesses after San Francisco banned plastic bags.

(AQW 27870/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am aware of the research carried out by the University of Pennsylvania and of the similar research carried out by Professor Pennington of the University of Aberdeen.

In relation to the University of Pennsylvania research, it has been acknowledged that these increases may have a number of causal factors – and are not necessarily related to the plastic bag ban. However, any potential risk to public health must of course be taken seriously. With this in mind, in developing the policy in Northern Ireland, my Department worked closely with the Food Standards Agency - to ensure that there were adequate safeguards to protect the health and safety of consumers.

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is in place. In general people should always take reasonable care when handling products such as raw meat; this is emphasised in guidance given by the Food Standards Agency in July 2013. These guidelines entail packing raw meat and fish separately from food that is ready to eat, keeping a separate carrier bag for holding raw meat and fish and disposing of the bag if there has been any spillage of raw meat juices.

Withdrawal of Application A/2009/0400/F

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27481/11-15, whether (i) the note on 24 June 2010 recorded that the application was to be withdrawn; and (ii) letters issued to the applicant and the Derry Planning Office on 28 June 2010 confirmed the formal withdrawal of A/2009/0400/F.

(AQW 27976/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I can confirm that file reference A/2009/0400/F contains a note of a meeting between officials agreeing to the withdrawal of this case.

A letter issued to the agent and to the Area Planning Office on 28 June 2010 advising that the application had been withdrawn.

I can advise that a letter issued to the agent on 5 November 2013 advising that this application is in fact deemed refused.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport: Private Car Parks

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment what was the outcome of his meeting with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport on the issue of private car parks.

(AQW 28052/11-15)

Mr Durkan: When I met the Parliamentary Under Secretary of Transport, Robert Goodwill, MP on 6 November, the meeting dealt exclusively with DVLA's proposals to centralise vehicle licensing in Swansea and to cut 300 jobs in DVA. However, after my meeting with Mr Goodwill, I met Mr Patrick Troy, the chief executive of the British Parking Association, which represents virtually all of the companies that enforce car parking in private car parks here.

At my meeting with Mr Troy, I emphasised the need for BPA to ensure adherence by members to the Association's Code of Practice, which deals with all of the matters of concern raised by Members during the recent debate. I was assured that the BPA will do so if they receive specific complaints about inappropriate behaviour and I would urge Members to send any evidence of inappropriate behaviour to the BPA for investigation.

I also raised the lack of an independent appeals process in Northern Ireland. I pointed out that the scheme for England and Wales could easily be extended to cover Northern Ireland and that the cost to BPA members of running the scheme would be very modest. Over 50% of cases appealed are determined in favour of the appellant, indicating both that it is a fair system but also that the enforcement companies are indeed making mistakes.

Mr Troy undertook to make the case to the members of the BPA for extending the appeals system to Northern Ireland and I will follow this up.

It was also agreed that officials from my Department will take part in meetings of the user group of BPA members operating in Northern Ireland to raise the concerns of Members and motorists.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Businesses: Closed, Ceased Trading or Bankrupt

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many businesses have (i) closed; (ii) ceased trading; and (iii) been declared bankrupt for each year for the most recent five years for which data is available.

(AQW 27242/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The Office for National Statistics produces estimates of the number of Northern Ireland businesses which have closed or ceased trading for any reason by calendar year. These estimates are shown in Table 1 and exclude public sector organisations, agriculture and businesses which are not VAT and/or PAYE registered. The latest available estimates are for 2011.

TABLE 1: NUMBERS OF NORTHERN IRELAND BUSINESSES WHICH HAVE CLOSED OR CEASED TRADING FOR ANY REASON¹, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010 ²	2011 ²
Total Business Deaths ³	3,760	4,180	5,170	5,235	4,950

Source: ONS Business Demography, 2011

- Information on the reason for closing or ceasing trading is not available from this source.
- Estimates for 2010 and 2011 are provisional and subject to revision. ²Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5

The number of sole trader businesses that have been declared bankrupt and the number of Limited Companies which have gone into liquidation or Administration in each of the last 5 financial years is available from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (NI) and has been provided below:

Financial Year	Sole Trader Business Bankruptcies
2008/09	640
2009/10	643
1010/11	859
2011/12	790
2012/13	586

Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (NI)

LIMITED COMPANIES

Financial Year	Compulsory Liquidations	Creditors Liquidations	Voluntary Administrations	Total
2008/09	151	74	37	262
2009/10	174	105	82	361
2010/11	248	113	76	437
2011/12	216	120	79	415
2012/13	208	135	74	417

Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (NI)

Air Passenger Duty on Short Haul Flights

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the decision by the Dublin government to abolish air passenger duty on short haul flights.

(AQW 27349/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I continue to regard Air Passenger Duty (APD) as an unfair tax that disproportionately affects regions in the UK and Northern Ireland in particular where alternative transport options are more limited and where the option of travelling from Dublin exists.

However, given that the current €3 rate of APD in the Republic of Ireland is already lower than the £13 UK short haul rate, the Irish Government's elimination of this tax is unlikely to have a significant effect on our competitive position in this regard.

Civil Service Pension Future Delivery Project

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the potential savings or cost of each option in the Outline Business Case for the Civil Service Pension Future Delivery Project.

(AQW 27540/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Civil Service Pensions are in the process of replacing their IT systems due to the impending termination of existing contracts. In line with the NI Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation, all feasible options for replacement must be considered. The Outline Business Case for the Civil Service Pensions Future Service Delivery Project is still in development. The potential savings or costs of the various options under consideration are not available at this stage.

Waterside House: Jobs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) whether confirmation has been given to staff that jobs will be lost at Waterside House; (ii) the minimum number of job losses projected by his Department; and (iii) what prior consultation, including with staff, was carried out.

(AQW 27661/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Civil Service Pensions are in the process of replacing their IT systems due to the impending termination of existing contracts. In line with the NI Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation, all feasible options for replacement must be considered. Trade Unions and staff working in Waterside House have been advised that less staff will be required. This is because the new system will be an integrated system, which will both pay and administer pensions and will have self service facilities. Precise staffing implications are not yet known. Trade Unions and staff in Civil Service Pensions have been consulted by Management since the Civil Service Pensions Future Service Delivery Project was established in December 2012.

Northern Ireland Civil Service Pensions

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the options for future service delivery of civil service pensions.

(AQW 27662/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Civil Service Pensions are in the process of replacing their IT systems due to the impending termination of existing contracts. In line with the NI Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation, all feasible options for replacement must be considered, including installing a new system or moving to a managed service to pay and administer pensions.

Northern Ireland Civil Service Pensions

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are plans to outsource the administration function of Northern Ireland Civil Service Pensions.

(AQW 27663/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Civil Service Pensions are in the process of replacing their IT systems due to the impending termination of existing contracts. In line with the NI Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation, all feasible options for replacement must be considered, including installing a new system or moving to a managed service to pay and administer pensions. All options will be considered, as part of the Outline Business Case which is still in development.

Civil Service Pensions Staff

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether business cases relating to the future of civil service pensions staff have been shared with Trade Union representatives.

(AQW 27664/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Civil Service Pensions are in the process of replacing their IT systems due to the impending termination of existing contracts. In line with the NI Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation, all feasible options for replacement must be considered. The Strategic Outline Business Case, which establishes the need for replacement, has been shared with Trade Union representatives. However the Outline Business Case for the Civil Service Pensions Future Service Delivery Project is still in development.

Peace III and Peace IV Funding

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the potential gap between Peace III and Peace IV funding, what steps are being taken to ensure that initiated work and groups will be supported over this period.

(AQW 27769/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There are no plans to offer gap funding to projects engaged in Peace III who may also wish to participate in Peace IV.

Vacant Dwellings

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 27538/11-15, to detail how many of these vacant dwellings are (i) Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties; (ii) Housing Association properties; and (iii) privately owned properties.

(AQW 27894/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Of the 804 domestic dwellings in the North Down Borough Council area that were recorded as vacant at 30th September 2013 (i) two were recorded as Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties, (ii) six were recorded as Housing Association properties, (iii) 714 were recorded as privately owned properties and the owners of the remaining 82 properties are currently unknown.

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.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on Air Passenger Duty.

(AQW 27941/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Executive devolved the power to set the rate of Air Passenger Duty (APD) on direct long haul flights departing Northern Ireland airports and subsequently eliminated this on 1st January 2013.

DETI, with input from DFP, is currently undertaking a study to consider what more can be done to improve our air connectivity, including both APD and non-APD measures. However, I continue to regard

APD as an unfair tax, and given that the Government imposes and sets this tax, I firmly believe the onus is on them to address the negative impact it has on regions like Northern Ireland.

National Asset Management Agency Board

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) how many times he and his predecessor met with the NI Advisory Committee to the National Asset Management Agency board or with individual members of the committee; (ii) the issues discussed at these meetings including any agreed outcomes; and (iii) any plans for future meetings and the items to be discussed.

(AQW 27994/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I met with the NAMA Chairman and members of the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee for the first time since taking office on the 7th October 2013. We discussed a broad range of issues around NAMA's management of its Northern Ireland assets, including the importance of ensuring that they are released at a suitable time without having a negative impact on the market. We also discussed the NAMA schemes that are available that offer financial assistance to develop NAMA assets.

I understand my predecessor met with the NAMA Northern Ireland Advisory Committee on six occasions between August 2010 and April 2013, and like him, I plan to continue this regular engagement to discuss current issues around the Agency's activities in Northern Ireland.

Green Investment Bank

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any dialogue between his Department and the Green Investment Bank regarding the availability of funds for energy efficiency measures and initiatives in the public sector buildings stock.

(AQW 28004/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I am not aware of any discussions between my officials and the Green Investment Bank in respect of public sector estate energy efficiency measures.

Green Investment Bank funding must be additional to the market and is provided on a commercial basis. It is important to recognise that the Northern Ireland departments could not access this loan funding directly without HM Treasury imposing a corresponding reduction in our DEL budget.

October Monitoring Round and Capital Reallocation Exercise

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide a breakdown by Department for (i) the amount of funds surrendered as part of the October Monitoring Round and Capital Reallocation Exercise; (ii) the original designated use for those funds; and (iii) how those funds will now be used.

(AQW 28024/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Statement to the Assembly on 21 October 2013 announced the outcome of both the October Monitoring exercise and the Capital Reallocation Exercise for 2014-15. All departmental reduced requirements and the allocations made were detailed in the tables which accompanied my Statement. Factors other than reduced requirements contributing to the funds available for allocation were detailed in my Statement.

The tables are now published with my Statement on the DFP website and can be accessed at the following link <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/statement-on-2013-14-october-monitoring>

European Investment Bank: Borrowing

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline (i) any discussions his Department has had with the European Investment Bank; and (ii) the legislative basis that prevents the Executive from borrowing directly from the Bank as part of national borrowing.

(AQW 28025/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My officials are aware of an ongoing dialogue between the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the University of Ulster in relation to the Jordanstown Campus relocation to Belfast city centre.

There is no legislative barrier that prevents the Executive borrowing directly from the EIB. However, any such direct borrowing would score against Public Sector Net Debt and HM Treasury would therefore reduce the Executive's Capital DEL accordingly. This means that the Executive would in fact be worse off because we would have to pay interest on the borrowed capital. There are, however, undoubtedly opportunities for other sectors within Northern Ireland to avail of EIB funding and I am keen to explore how this may finance regional infrastructure improvements.

Shared Services

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the potential for a reformed local government to work with central government on shared services projects.

(AQO 4980/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I believe that there are opportunities for a reformed local government to work with and benefit from central government experience of shared services. The shared services in my own department have already had some engagement with local Councils, in relation to IT Shared services and communications.

Extending our shared services to new customers is a complex matter, given the differing needs and nature of public sector organisations and we will continue to evaluate each opportunity on a case by case basis.

Equal Pay

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on progress to deliver an equal pay settlement to PSNI, Northern Ireland Office and Department of Justice staff who were not part of the original settlement.

(AQO 4971/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I am conscious of unnecessarily raising expectations through signalling any deviation from the position previously stated in relation to PSNI and former NIO staff, as it could easily be misinterpreted and turn out to be unhelpful and ultimately unproductive. Nonetheless, I am currently carefully considering the matter and I will update the Assembly in due course.

Cross-Border Cooperation

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline his future strategy for co-operation and engagement with the Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan, TD.

(AQO 4982/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: We have a number of areas of common interest with the Republic of Ireland including the economy, banking and other fiscal matters. I agreed with Minister Noonan when I first met him in August that we would meet regularly to engage on such areas of common interest. I met him again when he was here in September, and at the NSMC Plenary meeting last week.

Departmental Spending

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what role he plays in monitoring spending programmes in other departments to ensure that money is being released for the purposes intended in the Programme for Government.

(AQO 4975/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Officials within my department, monitor departmental spending performance on a monthly basis and challenge departments where profiles of spend are not deemed to be satisfactory. Any areas of particular concern will be brought to my attention.

Of course, the in-year monitoring process provides a formal system for reviewing spending plans and places an onus on departments to surrender reduced requirements above the £1 million de-minimis threshold as soon as they become known. This provides the Executive with an opportunity to reallocate available resources in line with its priorities at that time.

Budgets

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how, and for how long, money can be retained at the centre.

(AQO 4976/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The 'Centre' plays a fundamental role in the careful management of the Northern Ireland Budget. In Budget planning it is often necessary to retain funds outside of departmental budgets in advance of Executive allocation decisions, or indeed because those funds cannot be attributed to one specific department.

Funding can remain at the 'Centre' throughout the financial year, although it is good practice to ensure that there are minimal funds at the conclusion of January Monitoring to facilitate maximum departmental spend. This is important since the Executive is subject to the constraints of the Budget Exchange Scheme in terms of carry forward of resources from one year to the next.

Civil Service: Salaries

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what was the total cost of salaries for established civil servants in the Northern Ireland Civil Service in each of the last three years.

(AQO 4977/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The total cost of salaries for 2010/11 was 1,007 million pounds, for 2011/12 it was 960.4 million pounds and 2012/13 was 960.7 million thousand pounds.

These figures include a small number of people who are not classed as civil servants.

Lending Data

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what engagement he has had with the British Bankers Association on the provision of lending data for Northern Ireland.

(AQO 4978/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I met with Anthony Browne, Chief Executive of the BBA, on the 11 September 2013 to discuss how the quarterly SME bank lending data they provide my Department with can be improved.

The current dataset relates to the activities of the four main banks operating locally. I asked for this to be widened to include other banks with a presence in Northern Ireland and 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 my officials have been liaising with the BBA on this matter. The BBA is now working with the banks to develop this dataset.

Employment

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many EU and non-EU nationals are currently in employment in Northern Ireland.

(AQO 4979/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There were an estimated 1 782,000 EU nationals and 13,000 non-EU nationals aged 16 and over in employment in Northern Ireland, based on respondents' reported nationality in the April – June 2013 Labour Force Survey (LFS), conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

¹ Since the LFS is a sample survey, these estimates are subject to sampling variation.

Digital Roll-out

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the roll out of more public services on digital channels.

(AQO 4981/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My department, through the NI Direct Digital First programme, has been working over the last year to increase the number of public services that are available to citizens through digital channels such as the nidirect website (16m visits pa), SMS text service (200,000 messages pa) and social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook).

The following online digital services are currently being developed with planned go-live dates in 2013/14:

- 1 **OFMDFM Social Investment Fund** – online grant management solution to support proposed scheme;
- 2 **DFF General Registrar Office Genealogy NI** - online portal for searching and purchasing documents;
- 3 **DFF Land & Property Services CAMEO 2** - online portal for searching and purchasing of digital and paper maps; and
- 4 **DSD Landlord Registration** – online registration and fee payment by private landlords.

In addition, work has commenced on other online digital services planned for delivery during 2014/15.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the likely impact of the decision to remove Air Passenger Duty in the Republic of Ireland on air travel in Northern Ireland.

(AQO 4983/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Firstly let me say that I continue to regard Air Passenger Duty (APD) as an unfair tax that disproportionately affects regions in the UK and Northern Ireland in particular where alternative transport options are more limited and where the option of travelling from Dublin exists.

However, given that the current €3 rate of APD in the Republic of Ireland is already lower than the £13 UK short haul rate, the Irish Government's elimination of this tax is unlikely to have a significant effect on our competitive position in this regard.

Budgets: Current/Capital

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how HM Government's switch from current to capital budgets will impact on Northern Ireland.

(AQO 4984/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I believe that the continued skewing of available resources to the capital budget should be viewed positively. The constrained resource position, whilst providing its own particular challenges, should be a catalyst for a continued savings agenda that will ensure that the Executive's resources are put to optimum use. It also means that genuine public sector reform is now an urgent imperative as we will need to deliver better services with less.

We will, of course, also benefit from the additional capital through the Barnett formula. This will allow us to invest in our regional infrastructure; secure long term economic returns; and create immediate construction sector employment opportunities.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Multiple Sclerosis Specialist Nurses

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of multiple sclerosis specialist nurses employed in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 27728/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The numbers of specialist multiple sclerosis nurses employed by each HSC Trust are shown in the table below.

HSC Trust	Headcount	Whole-time Equivalent
Belfast	7	6.1
Northern	1	0.8
South Eastern	0	0.0
Southern	2	2.0
Western	2	1.5

Source: Health & Social Care Trusts

Notes

- 1 Patients in the South Eastern HSC Trust access specialist multiple sclerosis nursing support from the Belfast Trust.

Multiple Sclerosis Specialist Nurses

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the (i) support; (ii) services; and (iii) treatments available to patients from a multiple sclerosis specialist nurse in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 27729/11-15)

Mr Poots: All patients in Northern Ireland diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis have access to the specialist MS nursing service.

This specialist MS nursing support delivers a range of treatments and services including information for newly diagnosed patients, advice regarding disease modifying therapy, initiation and monitoring of disease modifying therapy, referral to Allied Health Professionals and voluntary agencies and liaising with a patient's GP.

In addition the MS nursing service provides home visits, ward visits, assessments for new treatments and a telephone advice line. The service will also support patients who have progressive MS and are not eligible for disease modifying therapy. Patients can also access the service to assist in preparing benefit claims.

Furthermore the service undertakes clinical audits, nursing research and the education of Trust staff. In summary, the specialist MS nursing service provides information, support and advice for any aspect of the disease.

Multiple Sclerosis Nurse Advice Line

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number, and nature, of complaints concerning the multiple sclerosis nurse advice line made to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, since it came into operation.

(AQW 27733/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast HSC Trust have received 3 formal complaints about the multiple sclerosis (MS) nurse advice line since it came into operation, all of which related to difficulty accessing the MS advice line.

Greenmount Agricultural College, Antrim

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Northern Health and Social Care Trust has leased Greenmount Agricultural College; and if so, how much is being paid for the lease each year.

(AQW 27759/11-15)

Mr Poots: I will answer both these questions together as they are inter-related.

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has not leased Greenmount Agricultural College and has no plans to do so.

The Business Services Organisation has been given approval to acquire a short term lease of Greenmount House in Ballymena.

Greenmount Agricultural College, Antrim

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for what purpose does the Northern Health and Social Care Trust intend to use Greenmount Agricultural College.

(AQW 27760/11-15)

Mr Poots: I will answer both these questions together as they are inter-related.

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has not leased Greenmount Agricultural College and has no plans to do so.

The Business Services Organisation has been given approval to acquire a short term lease of Greenmount House in Ballymena.

Antrim Hospital: Bretten Hall

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Chief Executive of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust has confirmed that the reason for choosing Bretten Hall as the new premises for senior management is the unwillingness of the doctors in Antrim Hospital to walk in the open air to meet with Trust staff in Bush House.

(AQW 27761/11-15)

Mr Poots: This was not one of the criteria used by the Northern Trust when evaluating alternative options for locating its Senior Management Team.

Review of a Ban on Statutory Care Home Admissions

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when a decision will be made on the review of a ban on statutory care home admissions.

(AQW 27766/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has advised that it is currently monitoring the impact of the policy of non admissions to statutory residential care homes for older people and will keep the situation under review.

A document will issue from the HSC Board, in the near future, on the current and future accommodation needs of older people. This will be a consultation document to ensure that individuals, families and the wider public have their say.

Future of Local Care Homes

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what concerns, raised by attendees at the recent public meeting in Belfast, will the Health and Social Care Board consider before making decisions on the future of local care homes.

(AQW 27767/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) held a public meeting on 29th October 2013. This was an opportunity to listen to the views expressed by individuals and organisations. The HSCB is taking time to carefully consider all the comments that were raised at this meeting. These comments will inform the forthcoming consultation document on the current and future accommodation needs of older people.

The publication of this consultation document will be important. I am keen that individuals, families and the wider public have their say, before future decisions are made about local care homes.

Review of a Ban on Statutory Care Home Admissions

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what factors will be taken into account in the review of a ban on statutory care home admissions.

(AQW 27768/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has advised that it is currently monitoring the impact of the policy of non admissions to statutory residential care homes for older people and will keep the situation under review.

A document will issue from the HSC Board, in the near future, on the current and future accommodation needs of older people. This will be a consultation document to ensure that individuals, families and the wider public have their say.

Safeguarding Board: Thematic Review

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the thematic review into Child Sexual Abuse conducted by the Safeguarding Board.

(AQW 27782/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) is being directed, under the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to conduct a Thematic Review into the 22 cases of child sexual exploitation that are the subject of the ongoing PSNI investigation. The Act also requires my Department to consult with the SBNI on a Direction made under the Act. Consultation on the Direction is still ongoing.

The Thematic Review is a complex piece of work in the sense that it interfaces directly with an ongoing police investigation. There are a number of issues that need to be thought through comprehensively to ensure that the Thematic Review will not interfere with the ongoing police investigation. These issues are the focus of ongoing consultation with the SBNI.

Delivery of Domiciliary Care

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether regional guidance exists for the delivery of domiciliary care.

(AQW 27784/11-15)

Mr Poots: In May 2008 my Department issued Regional Access Criteria for Domiciliary Care. The Criteria provide a framework for a more consistent approach to eligibility and fairer access to domiciliary care and advises that, where the level of risk to a service user is identified as critical or substantial, domiciliary care should be delivered. Where risk is identified as moderate or low, HSC Trusts have discretion about providing domiciliary care.

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority 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.

Provision for IVF Treatment

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made in increasing the provision for IVF treatment.

(AQW 27786/11-15)

Mr Poots: Currently Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland provides one publicly funded IVF treatment to those who meet the criteria and, from 1 April 2012, one frozen embryo transfer is also offered to new referrals who meet the clinical criteria.

It is recognised that some regions across the UK provide a greater number of treatment cycles than the available resources currently permit in Northern Ireland. Access criteria in Northern Ireland, which were developed following public consultations in 2006 and 2009, are however wider than in some other regions of the UK, eg offering treatment to couples who already have a child, thus allowing more people to avail of publicly funded treatment.

To increase the number of individual treatments provided within current funding could limit the number of women who could access the service.

Health Care Workers: NVQ Level 2

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any regulatory or statutory requirements for health care workers to have an NVQ Level 2.

(AQW 27818/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are many different regulatory and statutory qualification requirements for health care workers depending on their specific role across the health service, for example clinical professionals are required to hold specific professional qualifications set out by their regulatory bodies (GMC, NMC etc).

In relation specifically to health care support workers there are no regulatory or statutory requirements to hold a NVQ Level.

Employers may recruit staff with other non-vocational qualifications and previous experience and it is the responsibility of HSC employers to establish appropriate clinical governance arrangements to ensure that all staff, whether qualified or not, only undertake tasks for which they are fully trained and deemed competent. Health care support workers deliver care to patients as part of a competent multi-professional health and social care team.

The Belfast Trust, for example, has developed an educational framework for health care support workers to support the development of the competencies identified as necessary to function effectively and safely within the care environment. Similar arrangements are in place across the other HSC Trusts.

Costs of a Second Full Cycle of IVF

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the costs of making a second full cycle of IVF available to eligible patients.

(AQW 27836/11-15)

Mr Poots: I intend to answer questions AQW 27836/11-15, 27837/11-15 and 27838/11-15 together. Although the information requested is not available I can advise that the Health and Social Care Board invests £3 million per year in infertility services, which includes Ovulation induction (OI) by oral medication (Clomiphene citrate / gonadotrophins) and Intrauterine insemination (IUI) as well as IVF and ICSI.

Costs of a Second Full Cycle of IVF

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the costs of making a third full cycle of IVF available to eligible patients.

(AQW 27837/11-15)

Mr Poots: I intend to answer questions AQW 27836/11-15, 27837/11-15 and 27838/11-15 together. Although the information requested is not available I can advise that the Health and Social Care Board invests £3 million per year in infertility services, which includes Ovulation induction (OI) by oral medication (Clomiphene citrate / gonadotrophins) and Intrauterine insemination (IUI) as well as IVF and ICSI.

Costs of a Second Full Cycle of IVF

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the costs of removing the cap on the number of frozen embryos transferred as part of an IVF cycle.

(AQW 27838/11-15)

Mr Poots: I intend to answer questions AQW 27836/11-15, 27837/11-15 and 27838/11-15 together. Although the information requested is not available I can advise that the Health and Social Care Board invests £3 million per year in infertility services, which includes Ovulation induction (OI) by oral medication (Clomiphene citrate / gonadotrophins) and Intrauterine insemination (IUI) as well as IVF and ICSI.

G8 Summit: Western Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail the cost of the G8 summit in Fermanagh to the Western Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) how these costs were accrued; (iii) whether the Trust has been reimbursed by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) for these costs; and (iv) whether the HSCB has been awarded costs by any other agency.

(AQW 27861/11-15)

Mr Poots: Projected costs by the Western Health and Social Care Trust in the region of £415,000 were submitted to DFP as part of a June monitoring bid for unexpected pressures relating to the preparedness for the G8 Summit. This amount was secured and was allocated by the HSC Board to the Western Trust.

Costs incurred by the Western Trust were in the main staffing costs across a range of services, including medical, nursing, pharmacy, radiology, laboratory, older people, mental health and women & children. There were also costs associated with providing support services, ICT, Estates and general preparedness such as on call arrangements, training equipment, signage and relocation of services.

On evaluation of the full costs associated with preparedness for the Summit, the Western Trust has advised the HSC Board that it incurred costs in the region of £561,856. The additional costs are currently being considered by the HSC Board as a funding pressure.

The HSC Board has not been awarded costs by any other agency.

Acute Mental Health Beds: Western Health and Social Care Trust Area

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the siting of the acute mental health beds in the southern sector of the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 27863/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following the range of views expressed during the public consultation on the proposals for the location of a second in-patient acute mental health unit in the Western Trust area, I advised the Assembly on 19 March that further work was to be undertaken in respect of this matter before a final decision could be made. The Health and Social Care Board is in the process of carrying out this work and has advised that they expect to complete this and report to the Department by the end of December 2013.

Protect Life Funding

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a breakdown of the allocation of Protect Life funding awarded in each constituency.

(AQW 27866/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available by constituency. Funding under the Protect Life Strategy for local suicide prevention initiatives is allocated by the Public Health Agency and Health and Social Care Board to Local Commissioning / Health and Social Care Trust areas.

Tackling Suicide

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the benefits of adopting an international approach to tackling suicide.

(AQO 4989/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is important that international research into the causes of suicide and approaches to suicide prevention informs efforts to reduce suicide in Northern Ireland. In developing and implementing the Protect Life Strategy, my Department and its partners have made use of international evidence on effective practice. Indeed, a review of international evidence and best practice was commissioned specifically to inform the 2012 refresh of the Strategy.

We continue to look at the latest evidence from across the world. I recently opened the joint Irish Association of Suicidology and Contact NI international conference which showcased experiences and best practice from a number of countries.

Family Fund: Northern Ireland

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Family Fund, which helps children with disabilities and their families, operates in Northern Ireland; and how many families benefit from its work.

(AQW 27917/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Family Fund covers all of the UK and is funded by the Governments of all four UK Administrations. My Department contributes approximately £1.57m annually to support the Fund's work in Northern Ireland.

During the 2012/13 financial year, this funding provision allowed the Family Fund to support over 2,900 families with disabled children in Northern Ireland. The Fund was able to provide families with help to purchase a range of items such as beds, bedding, clothing, computers, games consoles, sensory equipment and specialist toys, day trips, family breaks, washing machines and other white goods.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the measures his Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27947/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department does not have a permanent renting or leasing arrangement in place for car park spaces for civil servants.

A short term lease arrangement for two car parking places currently exists and is due to end early next year.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Freedom of Information: Company B

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to Company B mentioned in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Freedom of Information response Fol/ 7037 dated 7 October 2013, to detail (i) the goods/services the company supplied and subsequently issued 11 separate invoices for, dated 3 July 2012; (ii) the circumstances whereby the Belfast Health and Social

Care Trust initially issued 11 separate low value purchase orders; and (iii) whether these transactions were carried out in full compliance with the Trust's Procurement policy/procedures.

(AQW 27986/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- i The goods supplied by Company B were uniforms for holiday relief staff.
- ii. I understand that the Trust did not issue 11 purchase orders. I am unable to comment on why Company B issued 11 invoices for the goods supplied.
- iii. As these goods were requisitioned and needed at short notice, the invoices were received by the Trust prior to the official order being raised. This aspect was not in accordance with the Trust's Procurement Process and therefore the Trust instigated its Post Purchase Procedures to address the situation.

Financial Accounts

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the Health and Social Care Trusts that are still to lay their financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 in the Assembly; (ii) the reasons provided for the delay; and (iii) the date by which he expects all accounts will be laid.

(AQW 27990/11-15)

Mr Poots: As at 8 November, all Health and Social Care Trusts have laid their financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 in the Assembly.

Legal Cases

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the evidence he has that the courts failed to act impartially in legal cases in which he has been involved in his role as Minister.

(AQW 28006/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not said that the Courts have failed to act impartially in cases in which I have been involved.

Paediatric Cardiac Services in Belfast

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will make an announcement on the future of paediatric cardiac services in Belfast.

(AQW 28019/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am continuing my discussions with the Republic of Ireland's Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly TD, to explore whether it would be possible to establish a two centre Paediatric Congenital Cardiac Services model within the island of Ireland to be located in Belfast and Dublin. My overriding concern is for the safety of these very vulnerable children and in obtaining the best possible treatment and care for them.

I am aiming to make my final decision on the future arrangements for this service as soon as possible.

Abortion: Guidelines

Mr B McCreagh asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the discussions he has had with his Department, his legal counsel and key stakeholders on the draft abortion guidelines.

(AQO 4994/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since the consultation closed there have been meetings with the families recently reported on by the BBC and the staff responsible for their health care. I have also had discussions with the

Minister for Justice and the Director of Public Prosecutions. Finally, discussions have taken place with senior officials in my Department and legal advisors.

The consultation has highlighted that a wide range of opposing views exist on the issue of termination of pregnancy guidance. This is a complex and emotive subject.

It is my intention to bring revised guidance to the Executive that adequately reflects the law and empowers health professionals to act within this difficult area.

Cardiac Ambulance at the Downe Hospital in Downpatrick

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the future of the Cardiac Ambulance at the Downe Hospital in Downpatrick.

(AQW 28067/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no longer a need for a cardiac ambulance service at the Downe Hospital as patients in the Ulster, Lagan Valley and Downe Hospitals areas who suffer the most severe form of heart attack will now benefit from a new Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) service to ensure speedy, life-saving treatment. Suspected heart attack patients will be assessed by Northern Ireland Ambulance Service staff. If they turn out to have a particular type of heart attack (STEMI), which affects approximately 40% of hospitalised heart attack patients, they will be taken straight to the Royal Victoria Hospital to have a blockage in the blood vessels around their heart removed using a balloon or stent. The experience in the Belfast pilot for this service, and in other parts of the UK where this process has been used, has shown that receiving primary PCI increases the prospect of survival, reduces longer term complications and shortens the length of time patients have to stay in hospital.

Catheterisation Laboratory

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the need for a catheterization laboratory facility at the Ulster Hospital.

(AQO 4992/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has advised that there is a short term arrangement for the provision of diagnostic-only cath lab procedures at the Ulster Hospital. Patients diagnosed as requiring an interventional procedure are referred to the Belfast Trust. The continuation of this interim arrangement will be considered against: progress in implementing the expansion in capacity in the Belfast and Western Trusts; and, waiting times for access to this service across Northern Ireland.

DHSSPS: Arm's-Length Bodies

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on his plans to enhance the accountability of his Department's arm's-length bodies.

(AQO 4999/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am continuing to develop existing accountability arrangements to ensure that we hold our DHSSPS sponsored Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) to account on **all** aspects of their expected performance. Recent developments include:

- Introduction of more robust business planning and performance monitoring arrangements for all ALBs;
- Annual completion of a Board Governance Self Assessment Tool by all ALB Boards;
- Public Facing Accountability meetings with ALBs – 2 of which have been held to date, with a further meeting planned for November; and
- Visits to Services

Waiting Times: Anti-TNF Drugs

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress is being made in reducing the waiting times for patients requiring anti-TNF drugs.

(AQO 4987/11-15)

Mr Poots: We now spend more than £40m annually on anti-TNFs. The waiting time targets for biologic therapies are being substantially achieved. No patient has waited longer than 3 months for NICE approved anti-TNF therapies for rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis. In September only 8 patients were waiting longer than 3 months for anti-TNF therapy for plaque psoriasis, which is a new target I introduced in April this year. These figures compare favourably with the same time last year when 73 patients had waited longer than 3 months for anti-TNF treatment. Although this is significant progress I expect further improvement.

Care Homes

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he will ensure that the future quality of care in statutory and private care homes will be of the highest standard.

(AQO 4995/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is an independent arms length body which has overall responsibility for the registration and inspection of all care homes in Northern Ireland. This is in accordance with regulations and against minimum care standards published by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety. These minimum care standards ensure that the care being provided is of an acceptable high quality and standard.

Each home receives two inspections annually – one announced and one unannounced – with the aim of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all residents and encouraging improvement.

Where RQIA identifies concerns about a particular care home it may take enforcement action to ensure the safety, wellbeing and protection of those residents living in the care home. If the care being provided does not comply with standards, RQIA has powers of enforcement, which are granted under the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation)(Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Abortion: Guidelines

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the departmental and legal officials who contributed to the 2013 draft guidance on the termination of pregnancies.

(AQO 4996/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have asked a Working Group chaired by the Chief Medical Officer to develop guidance.

Membership of the group comprises the Chief Social Services Officer, a Senior Medical Officer and a Nursing Officer, with secretariat provided by the Department's Family Policy Unit.

Legal support to the Group is provided by representatives from the Departmental Solicitor's Office.

As the Minister, I will approve the content of any document I table for Executive agreement.

Sexual Assault

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available to victims of sexual assault or abuse.

(AQO 4997/11-15)

Mr Poots: In May 2013, Northern Ireland's first Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) known as The Rowan, opened its doors. This facility raises the standards of care for all victims (male and female adults and children) of sexual assault in Northern Ireland. The Rowan delivers a 24/7 service, 365 days per annum. The Centre offers a range of services for victims of rape or sexual assault including, a comprehensive assessment of their needs, a forensic medical examination, screening and treatment

for sexually-transmitted infections and treatment to help prevent HIV. The emotional needs and psychological wellbeing of the victim are also considered and if required an adult victim who self-refers to The Rowan will be supported in making a report to the PSNI.

The Rowan is unable to provide long term psychological or emotional support or counselling services to victims. However, The Rowan provides information and advice on accessing other specialist support services which are available from a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations.

My Department has also arranged the publication of an updated version of the Regional Directory of Services, which provides information on existing statutory and voluntary support services available throughout the province for victims of sexual assault and abuse. The Directory is available in electronic and hardcopy format.

Cystic Fibrosis

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he has taken to improve care for people diagnosed with cystic fibrosis.

(AQO 4998/11-15)

Mr Poots: Adult cystic fibrosis patients attend Belfast City Hospital's Cystic Fibrosis Centre and children attend the Unit at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. Both the adult and paediatric centres have a multi-disciplinary team of medical, nursing and allied health professionals to meet the needs of the patients. I announced on 12 March 2013 that Ivacaftor, otherwise known as Kalydeco, would be made available to suitable cystic fibrosis patients in Northern Ireland. Ivacaftor is the first in a new class of medicines that target the underlying cause of cystic fibrosis rather than simply treating the symptoms. There are now 32 cystic fibrosis patients being treated with the new drug ivacaftor, with a further 15 being assessed for their clinical suitability before they can start treatment. I can also advise that newborn screening for cystic fibrosis is part of the newborn blood spot screening programme, which is offered to all babies at 5 days of age.

Department of Justice

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Administrative Error

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice when AQW 24552/11-15 will be answered.

(AQW 26896/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The circumstances surrounding the release of the prisoner on 21 June 2008 were investigated by the Northern Ireland Prison Service in July 2013.

The risk assessment paperwork contained an administrative error which referred to the wedding in June 2008 as that of the prisoner's daughter rather than that of his niece. The investigation concluded that this paperwork was initiated by one of the administrative staff within LMU in Maghaberry but could not ascertain who initiated this paperwork and made the initial error.

The investigation concluded that the designation of the relationship between the prisoner and the bride was never a deciding factor and there had been no attempt on the part of the prisoner or any other individual to deliberately deceive or corrupt the process.

At the time of this prisoner's release there was a requirement for a multi-disciplinary risk assessment to be carried out on each occasion a prisoner left the prison. There was no requirement for them to interview the prisoner on each occasion.

I am satisfied that the Prison Service has conducted a thorough investigation into this matter.

Legal Aid Expenditure

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given the success of the Offender Levy, whether he will introduce a similar system whereby a levy is applied in cases where Legal Aid was granted, to help offset the overall Legal Aid expenditure.

(AQW 27702/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have no plans to introduce an offender levy to contribute to the legal aid fund at this time.

Release of Prisoner

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, considering the review into the circumstances and decisions to release convicted murderer Kenneth Douglas has been underway for almost two years, to detail (i) the Terms of Reference; (ii) the cause of the delay; (iii) who and what grade of staff are conducting the review; and (iv) whether the Public Protection Arrangements in Northern Ireland have been notified and if so, when.

(AQW 27708/11-15)

Mr Ford: A Review of the case management arrangements for Kenneth Douglas has already been completed by a Governor for the Northern Ireland Prison Service and an Assistant Director of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

The review of Mr. Douglas' case management was commissioned to consider:

- his case management since revocation of his life licence on 11 November 2010;
- the decision-making arrangements and information available at multi-disciplinary meetings on his progression to UTRs between 9 April and 25 July 2011;
- interventions provided both in custody and in the community to address his risk levels which gave rise to his return to custody;
- in liaison with the Chief Psychologist, to assess the impact of the risk assessment of "a high level of violent re-offending";
- the impact of the 22 August 2011 ACE assessment of "upper medium band";
- the reasons for use of hostel accommodation and subsequent approval to stay overnight with his grandfather from late November 2011;
- the impact of the 2 February 2012 ACE assessment that he was no longer presenting a risk of serious harm;
- the information available, and the decisions available to the multi-disciplinary case conference approving his entry to Phase 2 on 13 February 2012;
- the actual authorisation process and the factors taken into consideration to inform that decision;
- the impact of the 17 February 2012 Principal Forensic Psychology assessment that he presented low to medium risk of violent recidivism (again in consultation with the Chief Psychologist);
- the information available to, and the actual decision taken, to permit entry to Phase 3 on 23 April 2012;
- his supervision and management and reporting procedures whilst on Phase 3;
- impact of use of peer mentor support in the community;
- what else might have been considered in relation to his preparation in custody and whilst he was out in the community on Phase 3; and
- whether indications were obvious that should have informed an earlier decision on his potential recall.

Mr Douglas' case has not been reviewed within the Public Protection in Northern Ireland Arrangements.

Domestic Violence Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to domestic violence cases within the court system and following conviction, whether these are recorded as the basic charge, for example assault, threats etc, or specifically marked as domestic incident; and if not, whether he will consider amending this to ensure accurate recording and aggravating factors are highlighted.

(AQW 27718/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no specific offence of domestic violence. Charges before the court and convictions arising will relate to an offence as set out in legislation, for example assault occasioning actual bodily harm or threat to kill etc. These charges will also be recorded against any convictions arising from the court process. However, during the investigation stage, the PSNI identify offences with a suspected domestic violence motivation and this information is passed to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and considered during the decision to prosecute stage.

Appropriate cases are subsequently prosecuted by the PPS and any aggravating factors outlined to the court by the prosecutor. Charges are not specifically marked or recorded as a domestic violence incident on court records.

My officials are considering possible changes to the monitoring of domestic violence cases within the justice system and will consult the inter-agency Domestic and Sexual Violence Working Group on any proposals.

Children in Care

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people, per court division, are presently within the court system for inducing a child in care to run or stay away from a responsible person and/or keeping a child in care from a responsible person; and of these, how many alleged victims are involved.

(AQW 27725/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of defendants currently within the court system, by county court division, charged with offences associated with inducing a child in care to run or stay away from a responsible person and/or keeping a child in care from a responsible person. Information is provided from the Integrated Courts Operations System as at 5 November 2013.

There are 3 alleged victims involved in these cases.

County Court Division	Number of Defendants
Antrim	1
Ards	3
Craigavon	1
Total	5

Note: this includes one defendant appealing a conviction to the county court.

Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the second report by the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland into matters surrounding the death in custody of Frances McKeown in Hydebank Women's Prison, to detail (i) why this report was not published as per standard procedure in such cases; (ii) who made the decision to keep the report confidential; (iii) when the report is due to be published, with necessary redactions as required; and (iv) how many other reports by the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland have not been published.

(AQW 27727/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Ombudsman is an independent office holder and the Member may wish to write to him directly about this matter.

AccessNI Checks

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of Justice how many people have had more than one AccessNI check carried out on their behalf, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 27732/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below provides the available information. It shows the number of individuals who have received more than one AccessNI certificate in a single calendar year during each of the last three years calendar years:

Years (to date)	Number of individuals
January – December 2011	7,373
January – December 2012	11,411
January – November 2013	8,917

It should be noted that the figures include applicants who have received different types of disclosure, for example basic, standard or enhanced or who may have applied for entirely different types of work. Therefore the information on certificates may not have been identical in each case.

There may be a number of other individuals who have received more than one certificate in a single year, but AccessNI is unable to confirm this from the information available from the IT system. This could be the case where, for instance, different forenames have been used.

AccessNI Checks

Mr Wilson asked the Minister of Justice how many people have had more than five AccessNI checks carried out on their behalf, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27734/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below provides the available information. It shows the number of individuals who have received more than five AccessNI certificates in a single calendar year, during each of the past five calendar years:

Years (to date)	Number of individuals
January – December 2009	7
January – December 2010	11
January – December 2011	18
January – December 2012	14
January – October 2013	3

It should be noted that the figures include applicants who have received different types of disclosure, for example basic, standard or enhanced or who may have applied for entirely different types of work. Therefore the information on certificates may not have been identical in each case.

There may be a number of other individuals who have received more than five certificates in a single year, but AccessNI is unable to confirm this from the information available in the IT system. This would arise where, for instance, different forenames have been used.

Drugs Smuggled into Prisons

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to outline the steps taken by his Department to stop drugs being smuggled into prisons.

(AQW 27747/11-15)

Mr Ford: The physical measures in place to prevent illicit drugs coming into prisons include both routine and intelligence led searching, drugs dogs and visiting restrictions where appropriate.

The use of drugs within prison is monitored by mandatory drug testing and sanctions are taken against those who test positive for illicit substances.

Staff are trained to enable them to combat the smuggling and use of drugs. NIPS also work closely with the PSNI and a joint initiative to reduce the drugs supply within Maghaberry Prison is ongoing.

Review and Full Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 20359/11-15, to detail (i) when he expects the review to conclude; and (ii) when a full report be published.

(AQW 27762/11-15)

Mr Ford: A Review of the case management arrangements for Mr Douglas has been completed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

The report contains sensitive personal information. To publish this information would breach of the first and second data protection principles.

The report concludes that due process and the multi-disciplinary approach were evident throughout the case and the events which led to the return to prison of Mr Douglas could not have been pre-empted.

Levels of Domestic Violence

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice what support his Department provides to the PSNI to tackle rising levels of domestic violence.

(AQW 27789/11-15)

Mr Ford: While dealing with the reported incidents of domestic violence is an operational matter for the Police Service of Northern Ireland, my Department and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety have joint policy responsibility for tackling domestic violence and abuse. The PSNI is represented on the Regional Strategy Group for domestic and sexual violence and abuse (and its associated Sub-Groups). My Department liaises closely, therefore, with PSNI representatives on how agreed strategy and policy changes may impact on their operational roles.

Disciplinary Hearings under the Code of Conduct 2013

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the suggestion by Independent Arbitrators, Dr Carol Ackah and Liam Deane, contained at 13.4 of their December 2009 Report, that 'the use of an officer other than the Adjudicating Governor to present the NIPS management case at disciplinary hearings may serve to reinforce the impartiality of the decision maker', is to be incorporated into disciplinary hearings under the Code of Conduct 2013, particularly in cases of gross misconduct; and if not, to detail his rationale.

(AQW 27817/11-15)

Mr Ford: I note from previous questions asked by the Member that he has access to a copy of the new Professional Code of Conduct. I would refer him to Paragraphs 5.20 to 5.40 of the Code, which set out the procedures in place for disciplinary hearings. I would also refer the Member to the answers I gave to AQW/21007/11-15 and AQW/27299/11-15.

Sex Offender's Register

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in the event of a conviction under Section 64A of the Sexual Offences Order (NI) 2008 of knowingly engaging the sexual services of a trafficked victim, whether the offender will be placed on the Sex Offender's Register and monitored as such.

(AQW 27821/11-15)

Mr Ford: The offence at section 64A is a strict liability offence and the question does not arise as to whether the offender knew the victim had been subject to force. It is not therefore listed as a relevant offence, for the purposes of sex offender notification, in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

If knowledge of exploitative circumstances can be proved, the offender would be guilty of a non consensual sexual offence, such as rape or sexual assault, and, if convicted and sentenced as necessary, would then be subject to sex offender notification.

Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how applications can be made to the new £383,000 fund to support former part time police reservists; and (ii) whether this fund will be made available to reservists that did not benefit from the Gratuity Scheme.

(AQW 27828/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is envisaged that a number of policing charities will administer the new Part-time Reserve (PTR) Support Programme and applications will be made directly to them: officials from my Department are currently working to identify those charities. The programme will be available to all former members of the PTR, both RUC GC and PSNI; to members' dependants; and to the surviving partner of any member now deceased.

Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings Scheme

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total number of Prison Officers who have received the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme as a result of having to leave their homes.

(AQW 27854/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme (SPED) is a scheme which is owned and administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and is not a Northern Ireland Prison Service Scheme.

The table below outlines, by year, the number of Prison Officers who have availed of this scheme since 2010.

Year	No of Prison Officers
2010	1
2011	2
2012	1
2013	0

Prison Officers: Custody Officers

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of Prison Officers who have (i) been targeted; and (ii) received threats, since June 2012 following the introduction of new Custody Officers.

(AQW 27855/11-15)

Mr Ford: As this question relates to the personal security of prison staff it would not be appropriate to provide specific details.

Prison Staff: Code of Conduct 2013

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice why prison staff are not required to report receipt of a police caution for a criminal offence; and to detail why this requirement has been excluded from Section 10.1 of the Code of Conduct 2013.

(AQW 28083/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the answer I gave to AQW/27299/11-15.

Department for Regional Development

Spencer Street, Donaghadee: Parking

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he can take to stop commuters parking in residents spaces in Spencer Street, Donaghadee.

(AQW 26573/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): At present, there are no on-street “residents’ spaces” in Spencer Street, Holywood. Any driver may park their car in Spencer Street so long as it is road-legal, is not causing an obstruction and is not in contravention of any restrictions that may be in place at that particular location.

My Department is currently developing Residents’ Parking Schemes for parts of Belfast as well as discrete areas in Londonderry and Antrim. Along with scheme development, Departmental officials are currently drafting the necessary subordinate legislation to facilitate schemes and aims to have the first schemes delivered during 2014.

With regard to Holywood, I have asked officials to carry out an initial assessment of the eligibility of residential streets within Holywood town centre for a Residents’ Parking Scheme. Officials are currently preparing a consultant’s brief for a survey to be carried out in a number of streets in the town centre, which will issue shortly.

Flags and Other Materials Attached to Lamp Posts and Other Street Furniture

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 23850/11-15, what health and safety assessments his Department have undertaken on the dangers posed by the possible detachment of flags and other materials from lamp posts and other street furniture.

(AQW 27055/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has assessed that the possible detachment of flags and other materials from lamp posts and other street furniture could potentially distract or injure road users. Fortunately, there have been no significant incidents of this nature to date.

A more significant safety concern, as referred to in my earlier answer to the Member’s previous question AQW 23850/11-15, comes from large banners attached to street lighting columns, due to the effect of wind loading on the structural stability of the column.

While it is not feasible for my Department to routinely carry out individual assessments of all unauthorised attachments, it does respond and take appropriate action on any unsafe attachments that it becomes aware of.

Traffic Calming Measures: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how many traffic calming measures have been requested in North Down in each of the last five years; and of these, how many were agreed and implemented.

(AQW 27253/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department receives a large number of requests for traffic calming measures and details of the number of such requests are not held in a readily accessible format.

Average Daily Traffic Flow

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 25708/11-15, to detail the average daily traffic flow in each of the months provided at peak rush hour times.

(AQW 27472/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the average daily peak traffic flows from April to September 2011, the most recent year of data currently available, are provided in the table below:

AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC FLOW ON THE A26 LISNEVENAGH ROAD FROM APRIL 2011 – SEPTEMBER 2011

Month	Average Morning Peak Traffic Flow	Average Evening Peak Traffic Flow
April	2081	2767
May	2279	2828
June	2237	2700
July	1900	2670
August	2084	2971
September	2388	2905

Incentives to use the Train

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what incentives he is considering to encourage more people to use the train.

(AQW 27506/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Rail passenger journeys increased by 7 % in 2012/13 and figures to the end of September 2013 show an increase of 15% compared to the previous year.

Through a year-round programme of innovative marketing and promotional campaigns, by conventional advertising and use of social media, an extensive range of ticketing products are on offer to cater for Translink's wide customer base and to enable passengers to avail of flexible travel options to suit their needs.

In addition to the conventional products, Translink offers promotional web fares for Enterprise travel to Dublin, PLUSBUS tickets which allow passengers to travel by train and complete their journey by Ulsterbus Town or Metro Services, including the Airport Express Service (No. 600) to George Best Belfast City Airport.

Keeping pace with technology, rail passengers can avail of m-link, which facilitates the purchase of weekly, monthly and new 3-day flexi tickets via mobile devices.

Passengers travelling by rail can now avail of free wi-fi during their journey, making it easier to access the Internet for business and leisure purposes. This also applies to Enterprise services to Dublin.

Investment in customer information on Translink's website, particularly in relation to the use of mobile devices, Journey planner facility and real time information apps has also played its part in passenger growth.

In tandem with new rolling stock acquisitions, focus has been given to the quality of service offered to passengers, i.e. punctuality, presentation of trains and customer service.

Rail infrastructure developments have enhanced performance levels across the rail network, the most recent example being the completion of Phase 1 of the Coleraine to Londonderry track improvement project.

Translink have continued the upgrade of its rail stations and passenger facilities, including Park & Ride. The integrated bus and rail station at Antrim and the redeveloped rail station at Portadown make clear my commitment to further improve rail and bus transport.

Earlier this year, my Department carried out a public consultation on how we should prioritise future investment in Northern Ireland railways up to 2015. The extensive and varied response to the consultation is still being analysed against the prioritisation framework for wider regional transportation expenditure. I hope to publish a report on the railway analysis later in the autumn.

Bilingual Destination Signs

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 26234/11-15, to detail (i) when the decision was taken to introduce Irish language destination signs on the 10H service; (ii) the cost to provide bilingual destination signs; and (iii) whether he has any plans to change the signs to English only.

(AQW 27509/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Metro corridor service 10H has no Irish language destination signs.

Vertical Deflection Schemes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the vertical deflection schemes installed in each of the last five years; and of these, how many vertical deflection ramps were installed in each scheme and how much each scheme cost.

(AQW 27574/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department carries out a programme of Traffic Calming schemes each year. The overall objective of this programme is to improve driver behaviour and control traffic speed, in order to reduce the number of collisions, primarily those involving pedestrians and cyclists. These Traffic Calming schemes incorporate a number of traffic calming measures, not all of which involve the use of vertical deflection. The results of this work are published in the Road Safety Engineering Report, which is available online at the following web address: <https://applications.drdni.gov.uk/publications/document.asp?docid=19634>

Detailed of those traffic calming schemes provided within Northern Ireland, in each of the last five financial years, which consisted of some form of vertical deflection are provided in the following table:

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	No. of vertical deflection measures	Cost (£k)
2008/09	Ballymagarry Lane, Belfast	17	23.5
	Clarawood Park area, Belfast	14	37.5
	Coolnasilla Park area, Belfast	12	18
	Earlswood Road / Belmont Church Road area, Belfast	13	37.5
	Euston Street area, Belfast	17	37
	Kensington Road area, Belfast	21	35
	Lepper Street / Spamount Street area, Belfast	31	31
	Maryville Park / Myrtlefield Park area, Belfast	22	30

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	No. of vertical deflection measures	Cost (£k)
2008/09	North Boundary Street area, Belfast	12	18
	Sydenham Avenue area, Belfast	35	29
	Tamar Street / Witham Street area, Belfast	11	18
	Lower Braniel Road area, Castlereagh	21	30
	Wynchurch Road area, Castlereagh	12	18
	Causeway End Road area, Lisburn	19	7
	Lagmore Avenue & Dale area, Lisburn	13	8.5
	Magheralave Road area, Lisburn	16	73.5
	Skyline Drive area, Lisburn	29	45
	Barn Road / Elizabeth Avenue area, Carrickfergus	21	76.5
	Bracken Drive area, Newtownabbey	18	40
	Hazelburn Road area, Newtownabbey	9	20.5
	Drumhirk Drive area, Bangor	12	52
	Grays Hill area, Bangor	15	15
	Woodburn area Derry/Londonderry	28	20
	Bishop Street Area Derry/Londonderry	3	15
	Benview Estate. Derry/Londonderry	11	15
	Stiles Estate, Antrim	6	36
	Randalstown	26	36
	Seacliff, Larne	13	23
	Eastermeade, Ballymoney	5	17
	Gortgore Road, Greysteel	15	66
	Shore Rd, Cushendall	7	30
	Strangford Heights, Newtownards	6	12
	Derrymore Rd, Bessbrook	18	19
	Clonallen Rd, Warrenpoint	8	14
	Laurelvale	10	60.5
	Drunbreda Walk, Armagh	5	21.5
	Commercial Road, Banbridge	6	22.5
	Diamond Road, Dromore	5	28
	Donard View, Loughbrickland	5	7.5
	Bachelors Walk, Portadown	7	10
Cecil Street area, Portadown	15	29	

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	No. of vertical deflection measures	Cost (£k)
2008/09	Derrychara Area, Enniskillen	14	4.2
	Fountain Street Area, Strabane	17	22
	Ardstraw Village, SDC	11	21
	Mourne Park, Newtownstewart, SDC	17	14.5
	Killyclogher area, ODC	14	40
	Lambrook Road, Omagh	6	5.7
	Ballyronan Village	16	23
	Ardboe Village	22	32
	Blackpark Road, Toome	12	19
	Leckagh / Killowen, Magherafelt	21	22
2009/10	Alexandra Gardens area, Belfast	5	9
	Ballysillan Park area, Belfast	14	54
	Bilston Road area, Belfast	10	20.5
	Cabin Hill Park area, Belfast	6	8
	Friendly Street, Belfast	7	8
	Jellicoe Avenue area, Belfast	16	9.5
	Martinez Avenue area, Belfast	7	11
	Beechill Road area, Castlereagh	17	36.5
	Cairnshill Park / Burnside Park area, Castlereagh	14	21
	Merok Crescent area, Castlereagh	25	17.5
	Newtownbreda Road, Castlereagh	9	16
	Gregg Street area, Lisburn	8	21
	Hawthorne Way / Ollardale Park area, Ballyclare, Newtownabbey	6	12.5
	Castle Park Road area, Bangor	8	38.5
	Carnhill, Derry/Londonderry	11	5
	Knockwellan, Derry/Londonderry	14	15
	Rathenraw Antrim	17	29
	Toome Village	14	16.5
	Glynn	10	8
	Saul St/ Saul Rd Downpatrick	35	34
Circular rd, Castlewellan	4	12	
Cumber RD Drumaness	4	14	

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	No. of vertical deflection measures	Cost (£k)
2009/10	Victoria Ave Newtownards	7	18
	Dorans Hill Newry	18	13
	Scrogg Rd Kilkeel	19	20
	Cloughmore Rd Rostrevor	9	19.5
	Granemore Road, Keady	12	49
	Madden Row, Keady	9	20
	Newry Street, Rathfriland	8	20
	Seapatrick road, Banbridge	7	17
	North Circular Road, Lurgan	10	29.5
	Gortgonis Road & Plater's Hill, Coalisland	22	36.2
	Irvinestown	27	86
	Castletown Area, Strabane	20	27.4
	Mountfield Village, ODC	19	24.4
	Hospital Road North & Winters Lane, ODC	32	39.5
	Fintona Village, ODC	20	35
2010/11	Cupar Way area, Belfast	22	55.5
	Laurelhill Road, Lisburn	26	28
	Ballybog Road / Seymour Hill area, Lisburn	69	121
	Carnmoney Road North area, Newtownabbey	33	38
	East St / West St Newtownards	14	30
	Forkhill Village	15	48
	Eastway, Derry/Londonderry	2	25
	Hawthorn Terrace, Derry/Londonderry	14	12
	Church Rd, Randalstown	15	13
	Ballytromery Road, Crumlin	8	7
	Bridge Rd, Dunloy	8	15
	Greystone Estate Antrim	10	10
	Ardmore, Armagh	20	41
	Acton	8	20
	Mill Hill, Waringstown	11	235
	Hillview & Kilmacormick Road, Enniskillen	23	16.3
	Victoria Bridge Village, SDC	24	25
Lurganboy Rd, Castlederg, SDC	4	2.5	

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	No. of vertical deflection measures	Cost (£k)
2010/11	Parkview Rd, Castlederg, SDC	4	2.5
	Seskinore Village, ODC	11	11.3
	Queens Avenue, Magherafelt	10	32
	Milburn / Princess Terrace	17	29
	Northland, Moneymore	11	9
	Gortalowry, Cookstown	6	5
	Coolnafranky, Cookstown	3	3
2011/12	Bryson Street / Madrid Street area, Belfast	11	20
	Cambrai Street, Belfast	9	17
	Circular Road area, Belfast	21	104
	Newington Avenue area, Belfast	7	21.5
	Tudor area (Shankill), Belfast	16	37.5
	Braniel / Whincroft area, Castlereagh	7	17
	Glen Road / Roddens Crescent area, Castlereagh	26	36
	Manse Road, Carryduff, Castlereagh	14	17
	Ravenswood Park, Castlereagh	6	2
	Alexander Road area, Carrickfergus	53	75
	Regent Avenue area, Carrickfergus	25	22.5
	Rashee Park area, Ballyclare	16	33.5
	Abbey Ring area, Holywood	33	75
	Ballymaconnell Road South area, Bangor	22	28
	Church View / Spencer Street area, Holywood	13	19
	Skipperstone Road / Whitehill Drive area, Bangor	49	119.5
	Rosstown Road, Derry/Londonderry	16	15
	Bards Hill, Derry/Londonderry	13	15
	Hillfort Road, Derry/Londonderry	6	10
	Springtown Road, Derry/Londonderry	14	15
	Parkhall Estate, Antrim	9	15.5
	Linn Rd Upper Carncastle Rd Larne (Phase One)	8	43
	Bayview Road, Ballycastle	2	6
	Ballykinlar Village	7	20
New Harbour Rd Portavogie	12	22	
Mourne Esplanade Kilkeel	7	13	

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	No. of vertical deflection measures	Cost (£k)
2011/12	Forth rd/Dallan Rd Warrenpoint	12	35.5
	Ballygowan Road, Banbridge	16	40
	Huntly Road, Banbridge	8	58
	Annaclone	10	30
	Lower Toberhewny Rd, Lurgan	6	20.5
	Annagher Area, Coalisland	26	13.5
	Killen Village, SDC	14	12
	Drumquin Village, ODC	20	19
	Drumnakilly Rd, Carrickmore, ODC	7	6.5
	Sunningdale, Omagh	1	2
	Upperlands Village	12	16
	Tullagh Drive, Cookstown	6	5
	Fortview / Drumcree, Cookstown	13	10
	Grove Terrace / O'Hara Road	10	9
2012/13	Cranmore Park area, Belfast	21	42.5
	Island Street area, Belfast	7	44.5
	Lower Malone area, Belfast	29	113
	Sicily Park / Priory Park area, Belfast	29	38
	Prospect Heights area, Carrickfergus	25	30.5
	Devenish Drive, Newtownabbey	1	5.5
	Steelstown Road, Derry/Londonderry	16	10
	Ballycraig Estate Antrim	25	22
	Linn Rd Upper Carncastle Rd Larne (Phase Two)	11	43
	Circular Rd, Newtownards	13	43.2
	Mount Cres, Downpatrick	8	16.7
	Drumsill Park, Armagh	6	12
	Castle Hill, Gilford	7	20
	Ballynamoney Rd, Aghacommon	17	60
	Oakvale, Craigavon	4	8
	Glenholme Park, Lurgan	10	20
	Drumbeg / Drumbawn, Enniskillen	3	5.5
	Mullaghmore Road, Dungannon	19	46
Old Eglisk Road, Dungannon	3	3.3	

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	No. of vertical deflection measures	Cost (£k)
2012/13	Gallows Hill, Omagh	8	5.7
	Melmount Gardens, Strabane	4	3.7
	Ashbrook, Strabane	6	3.5
	Westland Road / Highfield, Magherafelt	33	25

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Penalty Charge Notices have been issued in Pay and Display car parks in North Down, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 27583/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued in Pay and Display car parks in North Down in each of the last two financial years are as follows:

Year	PCNs Issued
2011/12	2073
2012/13	2076

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of times a further appeal has been lodged against a Penalty Charge Notice one the initial appeal has been rejected, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27586/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the total number of representations against the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice, in Northern Ireland, for the last five financial years are provided in the table below. It is not possible to define how many of these have had a previous appeal.

PENALTY CHARGE NOTICE - REPRESENTATIONS

Year	Representations Received
2008/09	5199
2009/10	4611
2010/11	4419
2011/12	4373
2012/13	4178

Flooding in the North Down Area

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the steps being taken to address the risk of flooding in the North Down area.

(AQW 27587/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service, NI Water and DARD Rivers Agency all provide key infrastructure which contributes to drainage and alleviation of flood risk in the North Down area and throughout Northern Ireland.

All three bodies carry out cyclical inspection of sewer, road gully, culvert and designated water course infrastructure taking account of risk and weather conditions. Where necessary, remedial work is carried out to maintain the drainage infrastructure, for example, removing sewer blockages, cleaning gullies and ensuring that inlet grilles are operating properly.

Work to improve our drainage systems within the North Down area is currently being progressed at or around Donaghadee, Hollywood, Bangor and Millisle, and Rivers Agency will be providing a new sandbag store in Bangor in conjunction with North Down Council.

Unfortunately the risk of flooding cannot be absolutely eliminated and severe rainfall will always have the potential to overwhelm drainage systems. However, my Department and NI Water, along with Rivers Agency and other statutory agencies, will continue to work towards reducing the risk of flooding and mitigating the impact on people's homes and lives when it occurs.

Traffic Congestion in the Armagh City

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the studies that have been completed in relation to traffic congestion in the Armagh City area; and whether traffic conditions have been identified as an obstacle to economic growth.

(AQW 27588/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has undertaken a number of studies in the Armagh area to identify traffic progression issues as part of the work for the Sub Regional Transport Plan 2015, and to assess relative merit of improvements such as the East Link and North and West Link road proposals. Whilst the focus of such studies typically relates to improving traffic progression and safety, I recognise the important role that improving the road infrastructure has in supporting the local economy.

It is expected the provision of both the A28 Armagh East Link and the A3 Armagh North and West Link proposals will contribute to a reduction in the traffic on the city centre road network. In addition, as with all Strategic Road Improvement schemes, the choice of route should provide: value for money for all road users, reliable journey times and should benefit the regeneration areas of the wider economy as a whole.

However, progress of the design and development of these schemes will be dependent upon the completion of the statutory procedures, the scheme continuing to have a satisfactory economic appraisal and the availability of funding in future budget settlements.

My officials are also working closely with Armagh City and District Council, and their consultants, to determine how best to deal with traffic growth predicated as a result of the implementation of the Armagh Masterplan. This work is ongoing, with consideration of a one way gyratory system around The Mall, one of the key proposals being analysed, by way of a jointly funded traffic model for Armagh.

Working in partnership will allow any roads infrastructure related barriers to development to be identified at an early stage and, where feasible, plans put in place to mitigate the impact of this level of development on the performance of the existing roads network. This work can then be used to help inform the planning process as projects are brought forward in the appropriate manner.

New Cycling Group: Remit

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the remit of his Department's new cycling group.

(AQW 27623/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: From 1 November 2013, I have established a Cycle Policy Unit in my Department, tasked with better co-ordinating all cycle issues and working with other interested stakeholders to develop robust and sustainable strategies.

Senior officials are now considering how the new cycling unit could best complement work previously carried out in different parts of my department, to ensure cycling issues are progressed in a more coordinated manner and are given an increased focus and priority.

Road Surety Bonds: East Antrim

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 26961/11-15, to detail (i) the bank, developers representative or administrator that have received interest payments, including the amount paid to each; and (ii) the cost to his Department of handling (a) cash bonds; and (b) surety bonds.

(AQW 27653/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Any refunds due for the Cash Bonds detailed in my previous response to AQW 26961/11-15 have been paid back directly to the developer rather than a bank, representative or administrator. None of these refunds included interest as the rate is currently set at zero. There are no additional costs to the Department for handling surety bonds or cash bonds other than current Departmental Running Costs.

Installation of Water Meters

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 26666/11 and AQW 26667/11-15, how much has been paid to contractors for the installation of water meters, including the occasions where a contractor attended, but meters were not ready for installation, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27668/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that records of the amount paid to contractors for the installation of water meters are not held by constituency area and the information requested for South Antrim is therefore not available.

Recent Visit to London

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the groups he met during his recent visit to London.

(AQW 27673/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I observed the Barclays Cycle Hire scheme operating on the ground and meet with senior officials from Transport for London (TfL) and Serco, who are the company responsible for the management and development of the scheme under contract to TfL.

I further met with senior TfL officials to establish relationships, discuss traffic control measures and also discuss the Lord Mayor's vision for cycling in London. I also visited the Surface Transport and Traffic Operations Centre (Transport for London) which has overall responsibility for traffic management and enforcement in London and actively manages the movement of people and goods to keep the city moving.

Recent Visit to London

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the benefit gained by his recent visit to London, in terms of developing a local cycling transport policy.

(AQW 27674/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I met with senior officials from Transport for London who are responsible for the provision of the Barclays Cycle Hire Scheme and Serco, who are contracted to manage and develop the scheme.

The meeting took place at Serco's Penton Street operational hub where I was provided with a presentation on:-

- the key principals of developing and operating a bike hire scheme;
- the delineation of responsibilities between the Authority and the contracted operator;
- safety issues;
- design principles;
- usage patterns by time of day and gender and;
- key indicators for behavioral change by users

As you are aware, the Belfast Public Bike Hire scheme was one of the four active travel projects funded by my Department. The others being cycling infrastructure in Londonderry, Strabane and Craigavon.

Belfast City Council was awarded almost £700,000 in capital grant for the Belfast scheme. The intention is to provide around 300 bicycles at 25 docking stations in and around the core city centre.

The scheme is still in the development stage and it is the Council's intention to go out to tender in early November. The scheme should be operational by the Autumn of 2015. My officials who also attended the meetings are providing a project assurance role for the capital grant aspect of the scheme.

I further met with key personnel in Transport for London's headquarters at Palestra House. During this meeting I had discussions with senior TfL officials on traffic control measures and the Mayor's vision for cycling in London. I had the opportunity to meet with the Chief Operating Officer, Streets and Traffic, who is responsible for keeping London moving and helping to drive forward the Mayor's agenda to smooth traffic flow in the Capital.

Following the meeting I visited the Surface Transport and Traffic Operations Centre (Transport for London) which actively manages the movement of people and goods to keep London moving. This world class centre achieves this by traffic management planning for events, including major roadwork schemes, the use of real time traffic information, enforcement and the implementation of traffic signal contingency plans in response to events and incidents.

These meetings were extremely informative and established relationships with key personnel in Transport for London.

Replacement and Creation of Footpaths

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the budget allocated for the replacement or creation of footpaths in (i) 2013/14; and (ii) 2014/15; and to outline how many miles of footpaths this will cover.

(AQW 27696/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service undertakes an annual programme of footway reconstruction and resurfacing works, the composition of which is dependent upon the level of funding made available for this type of work.

I can confirm the initial allocation for footway resurfacing and reconstruction for 2013/14 was some £2.6 million. This figure is likely to change during the course of the financial year for a variety of reasons, including, for example, the receipt of and targeting towards footway maintenance of additional funding obtained as a result of successful bids during Monitoring Rounds.

Final decisions regarding allocations for 2014/15 financial year have yet to be made and therefore I am unable, at this stage, to state how much will initially be allocated to footway resurfacing and reconstruction.

My Department undertakes new footway construction through its annual programme of Local Transport Safety Measures (LTSM). These measures cover areas such as network development, traffic calming, collision remedial and pedestrian measures. Work on new footways is often carried out as part of an

overall scheme and, as such, the costs of the footway element is not allocated or captured separately. I should also explain new footway schemes are subject to an assessment process that is used to compare and prioritise schemes which ensures finite resources are directed at those schemes where the needs are greatest.

The LTSM budgets for 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years are £10.1 million and £10.3 million, respectively.

In 2013/14, it is planned to deliver some 2.8 miles (4.5km) of new footway.

Cost of Replacing a Street Light

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average cost of replacing a street light. **(AQW 27698/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised the average cost of replacing a street light is approximately £1,650. The actual cost of replacing street lighting will depend on site-specific factors such as the extent of work required, location and type of road and the type of equipment to be used.

Capital Funding Scheme: Footpaths

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the criteria for the allocation of a capital funding scheme to replace footpaths with tarmac. **(AQW 27700/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department has a statutory duty to maintain public footways in a safe and serviceable condition and operates a system of regular safety inspections to ensure that essential response maintenance is identified and completed, as necessary.

The cyclical safety inspections help to identify the condition of public footways, and this information is then used in the preparation and prioritisation of Roads Service's annual footway reconstruction and resurfacing programme.

In addition to the information gleaned from the inspections, other criteria such as footway usage, general surface condition, structural deformation, public enquiries and public liability claims are used to determine the programme of capital funding for footway construction.

Factors such as the size of the area, level of maintenance activity, degree of vehicle overrun and environmental considerations are taken into account when determining whether footpaths are replaced with either bitmac/asphalt or flagstones.

Parking Restrictions which Indicate No Return within Two Hours

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to parking restrictions which indicate no return within two hours, whether the time period starts when a driver leaves the parking space. **(AQW 27711/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: The legislation for limited parking bays defines the maximum period for which a vehicle can park, for example, one hour and the minimum period before a vehicle can return again to that parking space after it has moved, for example, two hours.

In practice, a Traffic Attendant will record the time a vehicle was observed in a parking space on their first visit, and if the vehicle is no longer there at the time of the second visit, the 'no return' period will apply from the time of the Traffic Attendant's first visit. This approach is adopted as the Traffic Attendant will not be aware at what specific time the vehicle vacated the parking space.

However, if the vehicle is still in that parking space on the Traffic Attendant's second visit, and the vehicle has not exceeded the maximum stay, then the two hour 'no return' period is started from the time recorded on the Traffic Attendant's second visit.

Level of Parking Spaces in Belfast

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the assessed level of parking spaces in Belfast; (ii) how many and the proportion of these that are available to the public; and (iii) how many and the proportion that are controlled by his Department.

(AQW 27712/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Parking within Belfast City Centre is divided into two zones, as defined in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015. The core parking area represents an extension of the existing controlled parking zone, whereas the fringe represents the area where car drivers can park and then walk into the city.

My Department carries out surveys on the parking in Belfast city centre on a two yearly basis. The last completed survey was in October 2011 and the current survey for 2013 is currently underway.

Based on the 2011 parking survey, there are approximately 28,000 parking spaces, on-street and off-street in both the core and fringe areas Belfast city centre, all of which are available for public use. The breakdown is as follows:-

- Core off street – 10,600 spaces
- Core on street – 3,410 spaces
- Fringe off street – 4,680 spaces
- Fringe on street – 9,320 spaces

My Department does not maintain details of the availability of private car parking spaces.

In relation to the proportion that are controlled by my Department, approximately 1,630 spaces (15%) in the core area and 330 spaces (7%) in the fringe area are controlled by my Department's Roads Service.

Ballymena - Antrim - Belfast Train Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the steps that are being taken to alleviate overcrowding on the Ballymena - Antrim - Belfast train service.

(AQW 27773/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Railways routinely monitor passenger loadings on all services.

From January of this year, service frequency was increased on this service to every hour, with a half hour service to/from Belfast early morning and evening. Several services daily are operated with six carriage trains.

Northern Ireland Railways is now experiencing standing passengers on several services throughout the day.

As passenger numbers continue to grow, Northern Ireland Railways will deploy additional six carriage trains in place of three carriages, in line with available resources. I have already raised the issue of funding for additional train carriages with the Department of Finance and Personnel and intend to pursue this further.

Belfast Rapid Transport System

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the estimated cost of building the Belfast Rapid Transport System.

(AQW 27803/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Outline Business Case for Belfast Rapid Transit, which was completed in May 2012, estimated the cost of building the system at £98.5m. In line with the relevant guidance this includes a significant amount to cover potential risk and unforeseen issues.

My Department is currently developing the detailed designs for the Belfast Rapid Transit system and, as this work progresses, the likely final costs will become clearer. My Department is delivering efficiencies through collaboration with the Department for Social Development on joint projects along the routes and is seeking to mitigate potential financial risks to the project through the detailed design process.

Lurgan Railway Station

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the current usage of Lurgan Railway Station.

(AQW 27857/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The footfall recorded for the first 6 months of 2013/14 has been documented at 459,000 (an increase of 8.6% on the same period last year). Based on these figures Lurgan is still the 7th busiest station on the rail network. Footfall recorded at Lurgan Station for 2012/13 was 901,000.

Senior Smartpasses

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Regional Development how many valid Senior Smartpasses are in use.

(AQW 27887/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The number of Senior Smartpasses held as at 8 November 2013 was 221,510. Of these 159,362 have been used at least once on Translink's buses and trains in the last twelve months.

Road Closures due to Landslides: Antrim Coast Road

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are plans for an immediate inspection of the Antrim Coast Road to identify further potential road closures due to landslides.

(AQW 27905/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Officials from my Department's Roads Service inspect the A2 Coast Road each morning and if there is any evidence of landslides or the risk of rock falls, more detailed inspections by engineering staff are undertaken.

In addition, a more detailed visual inspection is conducted twice per year by engineering officials, to identify any deterioration of the rock face slopes, which may increase the risk of landslides and rock falls. The most recent took place on 9 October 2013 and the next one is scheduled for May 2014.

There are also plans to undertake further retention works on the slopes at Straidkilly, just north of Glenarm village later this financial year.

Department for Social Development

Social Housing Stock Levels: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the social housing stock levels in North Down, broken down by number of bedrooms; and (ii) the current levels of vacancy and demand for each category.

(AQW 27622/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, in relation to (i) Table 1 attached details the current Housing Executive stock levels and levels of vacancy in their Bangor District Office area that covers North Down; and Table 2 details the Housing Association Stock and Vacancies in North Down. In relation to (ii) Table 3 details the Waiting List at 1 October 2013, by number of bedrooms required.

TABLE 1 – HOUSING EXECUTIVE STOCK AND VACANCIES – NORTH DOWN: -

District	Status	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	Total
Bangor	Occupied	463	1047	1030	47	4	2591
Bangor	Void	38	14	12	0	0	64
Total		501	1061	1042	47	4	2655

TABLE 2 - HOUSING ASSOCIATION STOCK AND VACANCIES - NORTH DOWN: -

No. of Bedrooms	Total stock	Vacancies
1 Bed	607	13
2 Bed	671	30
3 Bed	145	2
4 Bed	3	1
5 Bed	0	0
6 Bed	1	0
7 Bed	1	0
8 Bed	5	0
9 Bed	1	0
10 Bed	1	0

TABLE 3 – WAITING LIST AT 1 OCTOBER 2013, BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS REQUIRED

	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4-Bed	5-Bed	6-Bed	Total
Total Applicants	1,259	556	210	67	13	4	2,109

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.

Occupation of the Site in Twaddell Avenue

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of whether the occupation of the site in Twaddell Avenue is legal or not.

(AQW 27742/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that persons entered onto the land at Twaddell Avenue, Belfast without the authorisation, consent or permission of the Housing Executive. The entering onto the land was not and is not lawful. The Housing Executive has not consented to the occupation. Following discussions with the PSNI, the Housing Executive has refrained from taking action to remove protestors from its lands to date in the hope that a potentially highly charged situation can be defused and resolved to avoid the possibility of any civil disorder.

Housing Waiting Lists: District Offices

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people on the housing waiting list for each District Office, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27763/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table attached details the number of people on the Common Waiting List for each Housing Executive District Office area in each of the last five years.

TABLE - APPLICANTS ON THE WAITING LIST BY NIHE DISTRICT 2009–2013

NIHE District Office	31.03.09	31.03.10	31.03.11	01.05.12*	31.03.13
Antrim	991	972	977	852	992
Armagh	797	760	802	708	851
Ballycastle	359	357	334	326	352
Ballymena	1,530	1,420	1,520	1,256	1,564
Ballymoney	497	439	496	390	481
Banbridge	698	665	677	479	581
Bangor	1,930	1,885	1,884	2,146	2,414
Belfast West	2,363	2,456	2,618	2,550	2,778
Belfast East	1,962	1,850	2,125	1,392	1,660
Belfast North	2,478	2,479	2,435	2,037	2,496
Shankill	893	897	888	672	860
Belfast South	2,321	2,259	2,112	2,122	2,692
Carrickfergus	1,032	994	974	818	962
Castlereagh	1,371	1,367	1,462	1,167	1,318
Coleraine	1,292	1,219	1,297	1,026	1,293
Cookstown	408	371	407	362	400
Waterloo Place	817	884	982	1,001	1,220
Waterside	874	863	1,007	748	943
Collon Terrace	727	827	1,004	1,013	1,123
Downpatrick	1,292	1,213	1,323	1,250	1,601
Dungannon	915	895	1,022	920	1,103
Fermanagh	894	833	853	639	826
Larne	526	509	550	406	490
Limavady	521	497	472	372	508
Lisburn Antrim Street	2,032	1,981	1,991	1,709	1,937
Lisburn Dairy Farm	638	626	604	559	598
Lurgan	1,242	1,061	1,154	961	1,226
Magherafelt	503	507	512	429	490
Newry	1,778	1,828	1,827	1,571	1,965
Newtownabbey ¹	814	785	826	731	889
Newtownabbey ²	912	906	917	783	928

NIHE District Office	31.03.09	31.03.10	31.03.11	01.05.12*	31.03.13
Newtownards	1,682	1,706	1,811	1,486	1,690
Omagh	620	590	622	495	663
Portadown	732	694	768	646	802
Strabane	482	525	638	511	660
Total	38,923	38,120	39,891	34,533	41,356

* NIHE advises that:-

- 1 Figures for 2011/12 were extracted on 1 May 2012, due to the implementation of a new electronic Housing Management System.
- 2 Due to the introduction of the new Housing Management System and a change to the annual renewal process for applicants, the number of waiting list applicants for 2011-12 are not directly comparable with previous years.

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.

Contractors to the Maintenance Framework

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 26087/11-15, whether the contractors to the planned maintenance framework have been appointed.

(AQW 27845/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that no decision has yet been reached in appointing contractors to the planned maintenance framework.

Housing in the Dungannon District

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Social Development how many of the 342 applicants in housing stress in the Dungannon district as of March 2013 are living in hostel accommodation; and how many are living in overcrowded accommodation.

(AQW 27849/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that at 31 October 2013 there were 357 applicants on the waiting list in their Dungannon District Office area who had been awarded Full Duty Applicant (FDA) status, that is they are statutorily homeless.

They further advise that there were 633 applicants in housing stress on the waiting list in the Dungannon District as at 31 October 2013. Applicants are defined as being in housing stress if they have been awarded a total of 30 or more points.

The number of homeless presenters placed in temporary accommodation by the Housing Executive's Dungannon District Office at 31 October 2013 was 33, with 12 placements in voluntary sector hostels and 21 placements in private sector temporary accommodation. However, this does not include those applicants who self refer to a voluntary sector hostel.

Of the 357 FDA applicants on the waiting list for Dungannon District Office area at 31 October 2013, 113 were in receipt of overcrowding points. However, some of these applicants may not currently be residing in overcrowded accommodation. This is because a no-detriment policy applies to FDA applicants i.e. they may have retained their overcrowding points even if their situation has changed and they are no longer in overcrowded accommodation.

Housing Led Regeneration Scheme

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Housing Led Regeneration Scheme, to outline the (i) criteria by which areas were selected; (ii) timescale for the scheme to progress; and (iii) proposed budget.

(AQW 27934/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The six areas chosen for the Building Successful Communities pilot were selected on the basis of the criteria set out last year in my housing strategy: Facing the Future, which was subject to public consultation.

In order to determine the areas for inclusion, my Department first selected areas of deprivation that are either Neighbourhood Renewal Areas or Areas at Risk. Indicators that reflect social housing market failure and the need for regeneration were then considered i.e. void stock, low or medium projected housing need and vacant land in the Housing Executive's ownership that could be utilised to develop new housing.

The six pilot areas were considered to be those that both scored among those most in need according to the regeneration indicators, and that required additional intervention above that already planned or existing. To enable this approach to be fully tested the pilots also cover a range of contexts such as higher and lower population and differing housing problems.

Regeneration Forums will now be established in each area, it is anticipated that it will take approximately six months for these forums to consult and engage with local communities and statutory bodies to identify the housing and regeneration needs of each area and develop plans to address those issues. Subject to business plans being signed off to confirm value for money, I aim to see actual work on the ground in 2014/15.

In terms of budget, no figure has yet been determined; this will depend on the action plans developed by each Regeneration Forum. A business case for each area action plan will be formulated in due course which will confirm the funding required for each area.

Warm Home Scheme

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development how many complaints his Department has received from contractors of the Warm Home Scheme regarding condensation issues following cavity wall insulation.

(AQW 28003/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There have not been any complaints from contractors of the Warm Homes Scheme regarding condensation issues following cavity wall insulation.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Assembly Tablet Contract

Mr Kinahan asked the Assembly Commission in regard to the Assembly tablet contract to detail, (i) the cost of the contract; (ii) the contract provider; (iii) what piloting took place; and (iv) were any other options considered.

(AQW 27034/11-15)

Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): "To ask the Assembly Commission in regard to the Assembly tablet contract to detail, (i) the cost of the contract; (ii) the contract provider; (iii) what piloting took place; and (iv) were any other options considered."

AQW (27034/11-15)

- (i) The total cost for the supply, delivery and maintenance of the tablet computers is detailed below.

	Price Per Unit	Numbers	Cost
Acer Iconia Tablet W510	£449.95	170	£76,491.50
Acer three year warranty	£43.78	170	£7,442.60
Delivery	£80.00	2	£160.00
Total Whole Life Costs (over three years excluding delivery costs)	£83,934.10		

- (ii) The supplier was Specialist Computer Centres PLC.

The supply of tablet devices to MLAs and Committee staff formed part of the Assembly Electronic Committee Pack (ECP) project. The Central Committee Office undertook a pilot project during April to June 2012 involving the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Committee for Employment and Learning and the Committee for Standards and Privileges. As part of this pilot, Information Systems Office procured a range of tablet computers with different specifications and operating systems. On completion of the pilot phase of the ECP project, an evaluation took place which included interviews with Members of the three committees, Committee staff and staff from the Information Systems Office. The tablet devices were evaluated against the following attributes:

- (iii) screen size; touchscreen performance; weight; battery life; portability; operating system interface and usability; consumption mode; integration with Assembly Information Technology infrastructure and systems; and connectivity. In November 2012 an additional tablet device was purchased and evaluated against the above criteria to ensure that the range of models tested was fully representative of the tablet marketplace at that time.
- (iv) In total, nine different device models were tested running on a variety of platforms including Apple iOS, Microsoft Windows and Android. The nine device models were: Apple iPad 2; Eee Pad Transformer; Fujitsu Stylistic Q550; Fujitsu Stylistic ST6012; Asus Eee Slate B121; Samsung Series 7 Slate; Zoostorm 3310-9500 SL8; RM Windows 7 Slate; Acer Iconia W510.

The Acer Iconia model (running Microsoft Windows 8) scored highest in the technical evaluation and this was recommended as the most suitable tablet computer for Members who wish to access their email, calendar, documents, and Assembly network services such as the Assembly intranet, Committee SharePoint sites and current and future Assembly in-house applications.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 15 November 2013

(AQW 27114/11-15)

Information on accepted carers' assessments is not available centrally. However the Department holds figures on completed carers' assessments. Table 1 below sets out the completed assessments as a proportion of all carers' assessments offered. This information is available quarterly since June 2011 only.

TABLE 1. PROPORTION OF OFFERED CARERS' ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED.

HSC Trust	Quarter Ending									Average
	Jun-11	Sep-11	Dec-11	Mar-12	Jun-12	Sep-12	Dec-12	Mar-13	Jun-13	
Belfast	69%	54%	56%	25%	61%	59%	51%	71%	58%	56%
Northern	55%	47%	50%	56%	50%	62%	50%	60%	53%	54%
South Eastern	31%	27%	32%	21%	31%	28%	27%	30%	32%	28%
Southern	39%	38%	39%	47%	46%	42%	47%	58%	50%	46%
Western	51%	60%	49%	55%	49%	38%	49%	37%	36%	46%
Northern Ireland	50%	40%	44%	36%	45%	45%	43%	50%	46%	45%

Source: Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland (Community Information Branch)



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