

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 22 November 2013

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

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 22 November 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Assembly Questions

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will answer AQWs 19706/11-15, 20272/11-15, 18856/11-15 and 17810/11-15.

(AQW 21311/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Member has received answers to each of these questions.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr McElduff asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of recent comments by a number of Ministers in relation to hydraulic fracturing, whether any decision on hydraulic fracturing will need to be made by the Executive.

(AQO 4885/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In accordance with the provisions of the Ministerial Code, it is in the first instance the duty of the responsible Minister to consider whether a particular matter needs to be brought to the attention of the Executive. In doing so, we would expect the Minister to make a careful assessment of whether the matter falls within any of the categories specified in the Code which trigger the requirement for referral to the Executive.

Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

Mr Craig asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.

(AQO 4886/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse has been up and running since October 2012, when its confidential Acknowledgement Forum began hearing accounts from victims and survivors.

Of course, the Inquiry is independent from government and, subject to the rules governing the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act, the procedure and conduct of the Inquiry are directed by the Chairperson.

Recent figures show that 397 people have contacted the Inquiry and that 223 of these have been before the Acknowledgement Forum.

The Chairperson has said that the closing date for people to come forward to give sworn evidence to the Inquiry is 29 November and we would encourage anyone who has not yet come forward to do so.

We are aware from a public session held by the Chairperson in September that he intends to commence the first batch of public hearings in January.

The Inquiry's terms of reference anticipate that it will have completed all its work by January 2016.

Programme for Government 2011-15

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when a decision will be made in respect of extending the Programme for Government 2011-15.

(AQO 5005/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have commissioned an internal review of the implementation of the Programme for Government, to consider progress made against our Commitments to date, and to make recommendations to support further progress.

The potential extension of the term of the current Assembly, through legislation presently being considered at Westminster, may create an opportunity to build on the progress we have already made.

For this reason, the review of the PfG will bring forward proposals for ensuring continuity in delivery in the context of an extension to the Assembly mandate.

Necessarily in this context, a decision on the extension of the PfG Period will take place when the outcome of the Westminster legislative process is known.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea and Johne's Disease Schemes

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQT 276/11-15, to detail the financial contributions provided to the Bovine Viral Diarrhoea and Johne's Disease schemes by the agricultural industry.

(AQW 27730/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI) and hence the agricultural industry is required to contribute at least 34% of the total costs of the BVD and Johne's programmes up to 31 December 2015. For the period from March 2013 to 31 March 2014, AHWNI is required to contribute £111,989 which included an industry cash contribution of £90,000. AHWNI have provided confirmation to my Department that, as of 9 October 2013, they have received cash contributions of £55,000 from industry and further funding is expected later this year.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the measures her Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27822/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department keeps the number of car parking spaces which attract a charge under ongoing review to ensure these are necessary to allow business to be conducted. Currently the Department rents a total of 13 car park spaces at a cost of £3,436.00 per year. The spaces are rented at the George Best Belfast City (11) and Belfast International airports (2) and are required by Veterinary staff who carry out essential portal inspection duties at both locations.

Single Farm Payments

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the interest earned on delayed Single Farm Payments, in each of the last eight years.

(AQW 27872/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: While European Union rules governing the Single Farm Payment (SFP) require my Department to make payments in full by 30 June each year, there is no obligation within these rules

to pay interest for payments made after that date. However, payments made after 30 June do provide a principled basis on which to pay interest where the delay in payment has been solely caused by my Department. The amount of interest paid out to farm businesses for SFP claims not finalised until after 30 June deadline for each of the last 8 scheme years is represented in the table below:

SFP Scheme Year	Interest Paid Out
2005	£39,499.9
2006	£23,538.9
2007	£1,793.86
2008	£473.35
2009	£0
2010	£0
2011	£3,486.74
2012	£0

There are a variety of reasons in any year for claims not being completed by 30 June. These reasons include delays in finalising inspection results and mapping issues. In many instances the reasons are beyond the control of my Department, for example, when probate has not been completed, where there is a dispute between landowners and tenants about the availability of land to one of the parties, where the same field is claimed by more than one applicant and where bank account details have not been provided to enable payment to issue.

Coastal Flooding

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the areas categorised as being at risk from coastal flooding.

(AQW 27926/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Strategic Flood Map, which has been available on my Department's website since 2008, shows areas that are at risk from coastal flooding. As part of the work to implement the EU Floods Directive, Significant Flood Risk Areas have been identified. Those areas with coastal flood risk are Belfast, Newtownards, Downpatrick, Newry and Warrenpoint.

Civil Service Posts in the Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development 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 27944/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A breakdown of the information requested is provided on the attached Annex.

AQW 27944/11-15 - ANNEX**(a) DARD Permanent staff in post (Full Time Equivalent) as at 1 Jan 2012 by Work Location & District Council Area**

Local Council Area	(viii) Grade 6	(vii) Grade 7	(vi) Deputy Principal	(v) Staff Officer	(iv) Executive Officer 1	(iii) Executive Officer 2	(ii) Administrative Officer	(i) Administrative Assistant	Total
Antrim	2.0	7.0	30.3	69.5	25.0	15.1	17.5	16.8	183.3
Ards		11.2	1.0	7.0	3.0	14.6	8.0	5.6	50.4
Armagh		13.2	2.0	10.5	12.4	17.4	15.4	11.2	82.1
Ballymena		10.4	5.6	14.3	31.4	17.5	14.3	13.2	106.7
Ballymoney				2.0					2.0
Belfast	10.5	69.4	132.7	167.6	113.9	146.6	117.7	51.9	810.2
Castlereagh	3.0	7.0	17.4	14.2	12.3	2.6	5.6	1.5	63.5
Coleraine		15.0	2.0	10.6	25.0	9.7	18.1	12.9	93.3
Cookstown		5.0	17.5	41.3	23.4	6.8	10.2	10.6	114.7
Craigavon		5.0	4.5	5.0	20.0	0.6	6.0	2.0	43.1
Derry		7.4	6.0	15.0	31.6	33.8	83.1	7.0	184.0
Down			2.0	7.6	10.5	2.0	8.6	1.0	31.7
Dungannon		6.9		9.8	23.0	15.6	10.3	8.8	74.4
Fermanagh		12.3	7.0	26.4	30.3	19.6	24.8	15.2	135.7
Larne		1.0		1.0	2.0	14.0	1.0		19.0
Limavady				3.6	2.0	1.0		1.0	7.6
Lisburn		1.0	2.0	7.0	8.9	3.4	8.4	4.0	34.7
Magherafelt		2.6	5.8	25.5	12.6	7.0	7.3	1.4	62.2
Newry and Mourne		20.7	5.0	18.1	21.5	30.3	14.6	10.1	120.3
Newtownabbey	1.0	7.3	0.8	3.5	7.2	12.9	7.0	8.6	48.3
Omagh		9.1	8.0	20.5	22.2	19.9	29.9	13.8	123.4
Strabane		1.0					1.0	1.0	3.0
Total	16.5	212.4	249.5	479.9	438.1	390.5	408.8	197.7	2393.4

Notes

Includes all Permanent DARD staff

Figures are Full-time Equivalents

Excludes staff on Career Break

(b) DARD Permanent staff in post (Full Time Equivalent) as at 1 Jan 2013 by Work Location & District Council Area

Local Council Area	(viii) Grade 6	(vii) Grade 7	(vi) Deputy Principal	(v) Staff Officer	(iv) Executive Officer 1	(iii) Executive Officer 2	(ii) Administrative Officer	(i) Administrative Assistant	Total
Antrim	2.0	7.0	30.6	66.7	34.0	15.1	17.6	16.4	189.3
Ards		11.2	1.0	7.0	3.5	12.6	7.1	6.6	49.0
Armagh		14.9	5.0	15.6	15.4	19.0	15.2	12.7	97.9
Ballymena		12.1	6.5	16.2	31.8	15.5	15.1	13.9	111.0
Belfast	11.5	76.2	139.2	160.6	119.0	140.3	114.0	44.9	805.6
Castlereagh	3.0	7.0	17.4	12.4	16.4	2.4	4.5	1.5	64.6
Coleraine		12.6	2.0	12.6	24.6	11.2	15.0	11.6	89.5
Cookstown		6.0	23.3	58.0	28.3	7.6	11.1	11.2	145.5
Craigavon		4.0	4.5	5.0	17.5	6.6	1.0	2.0	40.6
Derry		9.4	5.0	14.9	31.8	42.1	76.9	6.0	186.1
Down			1.0	8.7	11.1	2.0	8.8	0.7	32.3
Dungannon		11.7		10.3	24.1	16.8	11.0	8.0	81.9
Fermanagh		9.8	6.0	27.3	29.2	20.0	25.0	10.2	127.6
Larne		1.0			1.0	14.0	1.0		17.0
Limavady				5.6	2.0			1.0	8.6
Lisburn		1.0	2.0	7.0	7.9	9.0	2.4	4.0	33.3
Magherafelt		1.6	1.0	10.5	6.6	6.0	4.3	1.4	31.4
Newry and Mourne		23.6	5.0	18.2	20.1	28.8	12.6	12.0	120.3
Newtownabbey	1.0	6.9	0.8	4.5	7.1	13.3	6.0	7.7	47.4
Omagh		9.2	7.0	23.2	24.7	26.7	24.7	13.8	129.2
Strabane		1.0					1.0	1.0	3.0
Total	17.5	226.1	257.2	484.5	456.0	408.9	374.3	186.5	2411.0

Notes

Includes all Permanent DARD staff

Figures are Full-time Equivalents

Excludes staff on Career Break

Legal Actions: Cost

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail how much her Department spent on (i) legal costs; and (ii) paying damages or compensation as a consequence of legal actions, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27958/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's spend on (i) legal costs; and (ii) payment of damages or compensation as a consequence of legal actions, in each of the last five years is as follows:

Financial Year	Legal Costs Amount (£)	Damages/Compensation Amount (£)
2008/2009	249,625	362,936
2009/2010	182,200	269,036
2010/2011	186,757	133,647
2011/2012	205,079	68,216
2012/2013	258,579	386,170

Department Headquarters in Ballykelly

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the relocation of departmental headquarters to Ballykelly, specifically to detail (i) the anticipated timescale; (ii) the projected number of staff that will be working from Ballykelly; (iii) any discussions regarding the move with current staff in Dundonald House; (iv) the number of staff in Dundonald House that have transferred to other Departments or Agencies since the relocation announcement; and (v) the number of staff that have sought and been refused permission to transfer since the relocation announcement.

(AQW 28036/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In line with the Draft Programme for Government, I remain fully committed to the relocation of the DARD headquarters.

- (i) The business case to appraise the options for accommodating the DARD headquarters at the Shackleton site in Ballykelly is currently undergoing internal assurance. The preferred option reflects a phased approach for construction with phase one, accommodating 400 workstations, to be completed by end of 2016 and phase two to be completed by 2020.
- (ii) When complete, approximately 700 people will work from Ballykelly.
- (iii) Staff in my department receive regular updates in respect of the relocations programme through staff notices, management briefings and the dedicated intranet site. Consultation with Trade Union Side has been on-going through the Ad Hoc Whitley Committee which has been established to deal specifically with HQ relocations issues. I am committed to ensuring that staff and their representatives continue to be fully consulted and informed of progress throughout this process.
- (iv) Since 3 September 2012 a total of 78 staff have transferred from Dundonald House to other departments or agencies.
- (v) It is not possible to establish the number of staff that have sought and been refused permission to transfer since the relocation announcement. Requests to apply for transfer are discussed with local management and only those receiving approval proceed for further action. No specific concerns have been raised to date with Human Resources staff or at the regular consultation meetings. If staff have concerns then they can raise through agreed resolution procedures or through their local TUS representative.

Calendar Farming Restrictions

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has considered ending calendar farming restrictions for slurry spreading and other time limited restrictions. **(AQW 28066/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations prohibit slurry spreading from 15 October to 31 January. The Regulations also limit the times when solid manures and chemical fertilisers can be spread.

These spreading dates are based on scientific evidence from local research and take account of long term average weather patterns. The purpose of these dates is to ensure that slurry, manure and chemical fertiliser are spread when grass and crops are growing and the risks of causing water pollution are lower.

This helps farmers to maximise the benefit of the valuable nutrients contained in slurry and manure as they are used efficiently by grass and crops during the growing season.

During autumn and winter growth of grass and crops is limited by short day length and lower temperatures. Therefore, nutrient uptake is minimal and weather and soil conditions also mean that the potential for nutrient loss to surface and ground water is high. Research shows that if slurry is spread in autumn and winter up to 90% of the nitrogen it contains can be lost.

For these reasons, prior to the introduction of the Nitrates Action Programme in 2007, my Department's Code of Good Agricultural Practice advised farmers to "avoid spreading manures and slurry during November, December and January."

My Department does not intend to change the spreading dates as it has no scientific evidence to support an end to these restrictions.

Local Business Community in Irvinestown

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the support her Department will provide to the local business community in Irvinestown. **(AQW 28125/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: The current Rural Development Programme is providing opportunities through an application based process for funding across a range of sectors including: farm family members wanting to diversify; small business setting up or expanding; tourism; village renewal and provision of basic services for the rural community.

As you will be aware 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme is currently in the process of development and has the potential to provide the opportunity to support similar initiatives in our rural areas. This will include support for rural business development and a rural business investment scheme for micro and small businesses. How these schemes will be delivered is yet to be decided but will be accessible across all rural areas including Irvinestown. It is my intention to submit draft programme proposals to the EU Commission in early 2014.

Meat Plants: Quality Assured Dairy Herds

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail why meat plants to not permit cattle under thirty months old, emanating from Quality Assured dairy herds, to enter the food chain. **(AQW 28187/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: All animals entering the human food chain must meet rigorous public health inspection standards in accordance with EU food hygiene legislation. Certain categories of cattle must also test negative for BSE. Provided these conditions are met, there are no official controls preventing cattle

which are under thirty months old from entering the food chain, whether or not they originate from a dairy herd and regardless of their quality assured status.

Meat plants may decide not to accept certain categories of cattle for commercial reasons. This is a matter which is outside the remit of DARD.

Ear Tags for Livestock

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the need to frequently replace lost ear tags from livestock; and whether the tags available for purchase undergo quality control by her Department.

(AQW 28189/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My officials regularly ask Industry to supply us with information on the need to replace ear-tags as a result of durability or performance issues. Without such evidence we cannot address their concerns with ear-tag providers. My department has a system in place to gather concerns about ear-tag performance. It is known as the Ear Tag Performance form. This form is available on the DARD website (<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/ear-tag-complaint-form-final-july-2013.pdf>) and can be sent to my department via e-mail or by post.

The rule for replacing lost or illegible eartags in livestock is laid down in European and National legislation. Under National legislation all missing or unreadable official ear tags must be replaced within 28 days of discovery and in any event before the animal leaves the holding.

Ear-tags used for the official identification of cattle, sheep and goats must be officially approved. To be approved tags must have been tested and given PAS (Publicly Available Specification) approval; PAS 44:2009 (cattle) and PAS 66:2009 (sheep and goats). The Electronic Identification Device in sheep tags must be approved by the Joint Research Centre (JRC). The ear-tags must also have undergone on-farm welfare assessments carried out by a veterinary surgeon. Defra approves ear tags for use in England, Scotland and Wales. My department approves ear tags for use in the north.

The British Standards Institute (BSI) is about to conduct a review of PAS 44:2009 and PAS 66:2009 and my department will be represented in the stakeholder group. I would urge Industry to supply information about ear-tag performance via the link I have mentioned so that we can contribute fully to this review.

Farm Safety Measures

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what funds she has committed to farm safety measures, given the increase in farm related accidents and deaths in recent years.

(AQW 28300/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under the Farm Modernisation Programme my Department has committed over £4.2m in financial support for safety related items in letters of offer to successful applicants. Additional support will be committed, in letters of offer scheduled to be issued shortly, under the extension to tranche 3 which I announced on 30 September 2013 during an assembly debate on Farm Safety.

In addition, to date my Department has spent in excess of £117k in relation to the Farm Safe Awareness courses funded under the Rural Development programme.

As part of its Farm Safety Partnership involvement my Department provided £139k in funding towards the cost of the Partnership's 2013 Multimedia Campaign. My Department will also be providing an additional £111k for the 2014/15 year to extend this highly effective campaign.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

City of Culture Contingency Fund

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will allocate additional money to the City of Culture Contingency Fund if required.

(AQW 26871/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): My Department is investing up to £12.6 million to support the delivery of City of Culture in 2013. Of this allocation, £2m has been designated as optimism bias to manage unforeseen costs, subject to DCAL approval.

No further funding will be made available by DCAL for delivery of the 2013 City of Culture Cultural Programme.

I have secured £1m of funding to support continuation of key City of Culture projects from January to March 2014. These include the Music Promise, Portrait of a City, Community Cultural Strategies, digital and literacy skills projects and Other Voices' return to Derry in February 2014.

I have also secured £80k of capital funding to purchase an iconic Eamonn O'Doherty artwork, the 'Armoured Pram' and a Lumiere light installation 'Stitch in Time' which will be displayed on Rosemount Factory, to ensure a physical legacy of 2013.

Major Capital Projects

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the major capital projects that are currently being funded by her Department.

(AQW 28226/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: At the time of writing, my Department has a capital budget for 2013/14 of £36.7m.

The major element of this (£16.3m) is allocated to the Regional Stadium's Programme with spend to date largely concentrated on Ravenhill.

The Libraries sector has a budget of £9.4m, covering new library builds at Kilkeel and Lisnaskea and mobile library and IT infrastructure replacement.

Within the Sports sector, a budget of £5.1m has been allocated to a programme providing sports facilities at community level. Work is also beginning in the Sports sector on City of Culture legacy work.

Department of Education

Education and Library Board: Staff Redundancies

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education to detail the financial impact of staff redundancies in each Education and Library Board, in the last financial year, broken down by sector.

(AQW 27259/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The financial impact of staff redundancies in each Education and Library Board, in the last financial year, broken down by sector is provided in the table below:

	Pre Primary	Primary	Post Primary
BELB	£0	£345,368	£1,626,199
NEELB	£1,281	£534,733	£1,736,990
SEELB	£9,904	£1,236,783	£2,837,621

	Pre Primary	Primary	Post Primary
SELB	£2,759	£1,626,589	£2,145,231
WELB	£0	£1,048,767	£2,012,907
Totals	£13,944	£4,792,240	£10,358,948

Notes:

1. The financial impact has been defined as the reduction in salary costs arising from redundancies made in the 2012-13 financial year.
2. The timing of redundancies made may not result in a full year reduction in salary costs due to the variation in the date of redundancies.
3. Reductions reported include teaching and non-teaching costs.

Common Funding Formula Consultation

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education whether he will commission an independent compliance assessment of the consultation process on the Common Funding Formula to determine its robustness and compliance with the standards laid out in The Consultation Charter.

(AQW 27717/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The consultation on the reform of the Common Funding Scheme ran for 17 weeks and elicited well over 14,000 responses from a wide range of interested parties, including children and young people. These responses are currently being considered to allow me to make my final decisions. I see no need, nor have I any plans to commission an independent compliance assessment of this consultation exercise.

Common Funding Formula Consultation

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to detail the training that staff received prior to conducting the recent Common Funding Formula consultation, including (i) to what standards; (ii) to which certification; and (iii) by which accredited training organisations.

(AQW 27719/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Departmental officials are in the main General Service grades, tasked with a wide range of duties; their skills and experience are transferable throughout all work areas. The team established to implement the outworkings of the Independent Review of the Common Funding Scheme, comprises officials of differing grades, relevant experience and skills.

The skills required to carry out the consultation exercise are indicative of the expected duties required of NICS and Departmental officials.

Common Funding Formula Consultation

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to (i) publish the project plan for the recent Common Funding Formula consultation; and (ii) outline the pre-consultation, scoping, budgeting, stakeholder identification, profiling and mapping, choice of dialogue methods, recording, analysis and interpretation, acknowledging, feedback and feed-forward, findings and responses.

(AQW 27723/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In June 2012, I set up an Independent Panel of experts, chaired by the educationalist Sir Robert Salisbury, to carry out a review of the Common Funding Scheme (CFS). This panel was given very specific terms of reference and asked to produce their report by January 2013. Their report, which contained 29 recommendations, was published on my Department's website in the same month.

In June 2013, I set out my view on each of these recommendations in a Statement to the Assembly. I stated then that I would be consulting with schools and other stakeholders before the end of June and that I was determined to have changes to the CFS in place by April 2014.

The recommendations I accepted are not being implemented as a project, however in relation to the consultation exercise, the principles of project management have been applied.

The consultation ended on 25 October and well over 14,000 responses were received including over 3,000 from children and young people. The analysis of the consultation responses is currently underway and I remain determined that my original implementation date of April 2014 will be achieved. My officials are working towards this deadline.

New Builds for Schools

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how his Department determines the order in which schools are awarded new builds.

(AQW 27814/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The process adopted to select new build school projects is set out in two protocol documents published on the Department's website as follows:

- i. June 2012 Announced Projects:
http://www.deni.gov.uk/major_works_protocol.pdf
- ii. January 2013 Announced Projects:
http://www.deni.gov.uk/microsoft_word_-_protocol_for_selection_of_project_to_advance_on_planning.pdf

In brief, projects were initially confirmed as certain to form part of area solutions for the schools estate.

The criteria adopted to assess projects were then drawn from the following priorities for investment:

- To effect rationalisation;
- To address serious accommodation inadequacies and schools operating on split sites; and
- Undue reliance on temporary accommodation.

Finally, the prioritised list of projects was considered against the available capital budget.

Common Funding Formula: Special Educational Needs

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education how the Special Educational Needs element of the Common Funding Formula is calculated and implemented in primary schools.

(AQW 27853/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Common Funding Formula for schools is made up of a range of factors, as outlined in the Common Funding Scheme, available on the Department's website www.deni.gov.uk/schools and [infrastructure/schools_finance/common_funding](http://www.deni.gov.uk/infrastructure/schools_finance/common_funding).

Pupils with statements of special educational need who are in attendance / registered in a special unit within a primary school, grant-aided under the Common Funding Scheme, will attract the appropriate AWPU weighting as set out in Annex G of the Scheme. The reduced weighting reflects the fact that the Funding Authority meets the full cost of staffing in special units. Schools with approved Special Units also receive an appropriate lump sum for each class in the unit.

Pupils with statements of special educational need who are in attendance/registered in a mainstream class generate the same AWPU weighting as applicable to non-statemented pupils. In addition, the Funding Authority will meet the additional costs (outside the formula) required to fulfil the terms of the pupil's statement.

There is no specific “Special Educational Needs” element within the current Common Funding Formula, and no imminent proposal to change these arrangements.

Common Funding Formula: Integrated Education

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what consideration has been given to the inclusion of an integrated education premium in the Common Funding Formula.[R]

(AQW 27874/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: An independent review of the Common Funding Scheme, which determines how funds are allocated to schools, was completed in January 2013. The panel’s report did not consider the inclusion of an integrated education premium in the Common Funding Formula and I have no current plans to do so.

School Closures: Savings

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the savings made as a result of school closures in the last financial year.

(AQW 27908/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The running costs, in their year of closure, of schools closed in the 2012/2013 financial year was £1,436,000. This figure excludes the one-off costs arising as a result of the closures such as demolition, security or redundancy costs. This information has been sourced from the relevant funding authorities.

Reduced School Places

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to list the schools that have been approved for decreased enrolment; and the actual number of reduced school places, broken down by sector.

(AQW 27909/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The table below lists the schools that have been approved for a decrease to their enrolment number and the actual number of reduced places. The decrease at each school will be effective from September 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter.

School	Sector	Current Approved Enrolment	Revised Approved Enrolment	Variance
Holy Cross Boys’ PS	Catholic Maintained	536	420	-116
St Kieran’s PS	Catholic Maintained	650	525	-125
Good Shepherd PS	Catholic Maintained	823	343	-480
St Teresa’s PS, Lurgan	Catholic Maintained	261	203	-58
Tannaghmore PS, Lurgan	Catholic Maintained	854	620	-234
St Joseph’s Convent PS, Newry	Catholic Maintained	470	407	-63
Total		3,594	2,518	-1,076

Bangor GS	VGS	880	850	-30
Foyle College	VGS	880	865	-15
Total		1760	1715	-45
Ebrington PS	Controlled	551	450	-101
Total		551	450	-101
Overall Total		5,905	4,683	-1,222

Schools: Temporary Variation of Numbers

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to list schools that were granted a temporary variation of numbers; and the number of additional spaces created as a result.

(AQW 27910/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Additional places were granted for the 2013/14 school year by a temporary variation of the admission or enrolment numbers at the following schools:

(Primary) Name	Town	Additional Places granted 2013/14 school year
Carr's Glen Primary School	Belfast	1
St Michael's Primary School	Belfast	1
Holy Family Primary School	Belfast	1
Scoil An Droichid	Belfast	3
Gaelscoil na Mona	Belfast	1
Forge Integrated Primary School	Belfast	11
Cranmore Integrated Primary School	Belfast	1
Kesh Primary School	Enniskillen	4
Belleek(2) Primary School	Enniskillen	2
Ballougry Primary School	Derry	5
Edwards Primary School	Castledearg	6
Strabane Controlled Primary School	Strabane	3
Greenhaw Primary School	Derry	1
Maguiresbridge Primary School	Enniskillen	1
Enniskillen Model Primary School	Enniskillen	1
Gaelscoil Neachtain	Derry	8
St Ninnidh's Primary School	Enniskillen	7
St Mary's Primary School	Enniskillen	8
Broadbridge Primary School	Derry	9
St Mary's Primary School	Omagh	2
Drumlish Primary School	Omagh	1
St Lawrence's Primary School	Omagh	5
St Columbkille's Primary School	Omagh	6
St Patrick's Primary School	Castledearg	3
St Dympna's Primary School	Omagh	5
Chapel Road Primary School	Derry	1
Gaelscoil na gCrann	Omagh	7
Enniskillen Integrated Primary School	Enniskillen	3

(Primary) Name	Town	Additional Places granted 2013/14 school year
Omagh Integrated Primary School	Omagh	8
Oakgrove Integrated Primary School	Derry	2
Woodburn Primary School	Carrickfergus	1
Gracehill Primary School	Ballymena	1
Greenisland Primary School	Carrickfergus	2
Fourtowns Primary School	Ballymena	1
Culcrow Primary School	Coleraine	6
Damhead Primary School	Coleraine	2
Macosquin Primary School	Coleraine	2
Mossley Primary School	Newtownabbey	1
Creggan Primary School	Antrim	2
St Mary's Primary School	Ballymena	1
Mount St Michael's Primary School	Antrim	2
St Brigid's Primary School, Tirkane	Maghera	4
St Trea's Primary School	Magherafelt	1
St John's Primary School	Maghera	2
St Patrick's & St Joseph's Primary School	Coleraine	5
St Oliver Plunkett's Primary School	Antrim	3
St Brigid's Primary School	Magherafelt	14
St Macnissi's Primary School	Newtownabbey	2
St Columba's Primary School	Coleraine	5
St Patrick's Primary School (Glen)	Maghera	2
St Brigid's Primary School	Ballymena	29
Gaelscoil Eanna	Newtownabbey	18
Ballycastle Integrated Primary School	Ballycastle	1
Ballyvester Primary School	Donaghadee	1
Grey Abbey Primary School	Newtownards	1
Moneyrea Primary School	Newtownards	1
Glasswater Primary School	Downpatrick	1
St Patrick's Primary School	Downpatrick	2
St Francis' Primary School	Castlewellan	2
St Joseph's Primary School	Belfast	1
St Mary's Primary School	Ardglass	1

(Primary) Name	Town	Additional Places granted 2013/14 school year
St Brigid's Primary School	Downpatrick	1
St Colman's Primary School	Lisburn	5
St Comgall's Primary School	Bangor	2
St Mary's Primary School	Newcastle	8
Kircubbin Primary School	Newtownards	4
All Childrens Integrated Primary School	Newcastle	4
Oakwood Integrated Primary School	Belfast	1
Millennium Integrated Primary School	Saintfield	15
Drumlins Integrated Primary School	Ballynahinch	4
Rowandale Integrated Primary School	Moira	4
Armstrong Primary School	Armagh	2
Clare Primary School	Tandragee	1
Waringstown Primary School	Craigavon	2
Bleary Primary School	Craigavon	1
Maralin Village Primary School	Craigavon	2
Aughnacloy Primary School	Aughnacloy	4
Augher Central Primary School	Augher	1
Markethill Primary School	Armagh	8
Bronte Primary School	Down	1
Drumadonnell Primary School	Banbridge	16
Orchard County Primary School	Craigavon	3
Killyman Primary School	Dungannon	3
St Oliver Plunkett Primary School	Newry	1
St Patrick's Primary School	Newry	6
St Brigid's Primary School	Newry	9
St Patrick's Primary School	Craigavon	1
St Mary's Primary School	Newry	6
Roan St Patrick's Primary School	Dungannon	1
St Mary's Primary School	Dungannon	2
St Patrick's Primary School	Newry	21
St Joseph's Primary School	Dungannon	8
St Mary's Primary School	Banbridge	1

(Primary) Name	Town	Additional Places granted 2013/14 school year
St Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit	Banbridge	5
St Mary's Primary School	Newry	1
St Mary's Primary School	Dungannon	1
St Jarlath's Primary School	Dungannon	1
St Mary's Primary School , Aughnacloy	Aughnacloy	7
St Francis' Primary School , Aghderg	Banbridge	1
St Patrick's Primary School Dungannon	Dungannon	33
St Colman's Primary School	Newry	4
St Johns Primary School	Armagh	7
St Francis Primary School	Lurgan	7
Our Lady's and St Mochua's Primary School	Keady	3
St Josephs and St James Primary School	Newry	6
Seagoe Primary School	Portadown	7
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	Dungannon	3
Kilbroney Integrated Primary School	Newry	1
Portadown Integrated Primary School	Portadown	14
Phoenix Integrated Primary School	Cookstown	5

(Post-Primary) Name	Town	Additional Places granted 2013/14 school year
Ashfield Girls HS	Belfast	1
De La Salle College	Belfast	2
St Joseph's Boys' School	Derry	1
St Colm's High School	Draperstown	4
St Paul's College	Kilrea	1
St Pius X College	Magherafelt	2
St Patrick's College	Maghera	1
St Louis Grammar School	Ballymena	1
St Columbanus College	Bangor	3
Shimna Integrated College	Newcastle	1
Newtownhamilton High School	Newtownhamilton	2
Fivemiletown College	Fivemiletown	1

(Post-Primary) Name	Town	Additional Places granted 2013/14 school year
St Patrick's High School	Keady	2
St Catherine's College	Armagh	25
St Colman's College	Newry	1
St Joseph's Grammar School	Donaghmore	1

Notes:

1. The figures show temporary increases given to schools' admissions or enrolment numbers for additional pupils
2. Numbers can change due to additional places being granted but not taken up, pupils becoming statemented, pupils leaving the school, or where the approved permanent enrolment or admissions numbers have been increased

Legal Actions: Cost

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to detail how much his Department spent on (i) legal costs; and (ii) paying damages or compensation as a consequence of legal actions, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27959/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The tables below set out how much my Department spent on (i) legal costs; and (ii) paying damages or compensation as a consequence of legal actions, in each of the last five years.

Legal costs: this includes notional costs in relation to the Departmental Solicitors Office and the movement in legal provisions.

Financial year	£000
2008-09	2,308
2009-10	202
2010-11	218
2011-12	41
2012-13	274

Damages or compensation as a consequence of legal actions: this includes legal expenses and compensation

Financial year	£000
2008-09	5
2009-10	37
2010-11	21
2011-12	432
2012-13	96

School Children with Type 1 Diabetes

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education for an estimate of the number of children with type 1 diabetes in primary schools in each of the last five years; and how many of these children have been allocated additional support from classroom assistants to provide such services as assisting with the management of insulin pumps.

(AQW 28042/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education's school census collects data on the number of children with diabetes but this is not split into type one and type two. The number of children with diabetes in primary schools, in each of the last five years, is as follows:

- 2008/09 – 115
- 2009/10 – 129
- 2010/11 – 122
- 2011/12 – 126
- 2012/13 – 142

The above figures include nursery, reception and year 1-7 classes.

The Education and Library Boards have advised that the number of these children who have been allocated additional support from either classroom or general assistants, in the last five years, is as follows:

- 2008/09 – 5
- 2009/10 – 9
- 2010/11 – 13
- 2011/12 – 21
- 2012/13 – 27

Education Bill: Meetings

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the meetings he has had with other political parties and stakeholders regarding the Education Bill since it last was debated in the Assembly.

(AQW 28068/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since the Education Bill was last debated in the Assembly I have had a large number of meetings with a wide range of educational stakeholders and political representatives with an interest in ESA.

Education and Library Boards: Resources

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education which areas in the Education and Library Boards require extra resources; and what action he is taking to provide those resources whilst the Education Bill remains at an impasse.

(AQW 28071/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools are generally in a state that is unsustainable. They remain in this state in the protracted absence of ESA. The main action I am taking, therefore, to address this is to continue to press urgently for progress on the Education Bill. In the meantime, my Department is currently exploring the scope for a modest programme of support in a number of key priority areas.

Common Funding Formula Consultation: Independent Review

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education whether he will order an independent review of the Common Funding Formula consultation to demonstrate that it has been undertaken to best practice, and to ensure avoidance of legal expenses, should it be challenged in the future.

(AQW 28094/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The consultation on the reform of the Common Funding Scheme ran for 17 weeks and elicited well over 14,000 responses from a wide range of interested parties, including children and young people. These responses are currently being considered to allow me to make my final decisions. I see no need, nor have I any plans to commission an independent review of this consultation exercise.

Common Funding Formula Consultation

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education to explain the project plan for the recent Common Funding Formula consultation, including (a) the budget; (b) who prepared and implemented the consultation; (c) the external support and training provided; (d) the standards and quality assurance procedures; and (e) by whom the process was reviewed and evaluated.

(AQW 28095/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In June 2012, I set up an Independent Panel of experts, chaired by the educationalist Sir Robert Salisbury, to carry out a review of the Common Funding Scheme (CFS). This panel was given very specific terms of reference and asked to produce their report by January 2013. Their report, which contained 29 recommendations, was published on my Department's website in the same month.

In June 2013, I set out my view on each of these recommendations in a Statement to the Assembly. I stated then that I would be consulting with schools and other stakeholders before the end of June and that I was determined to have changes to the CFS in place by April 2014.

The recommendations I accepted from the Independent Review of the Common Funding Scheme are not being implemented as a project, however in relation to the consultation exercise, the principles of project management have been applied.

The team established to implement the outworkings of the Independent Review of the Common Funding Scheme, comprise officials of differing grades, relevant experience and skills. The skills required to carry out the consultation exercise are indicative of the expected duties required of NICS and Departmental officials.

The consultation ended on 25 October and well over 14,000 responses were received including over 3,000 from children and young people. The analysis of the consultation responses is currently underway and I remain determined that my original implementation date of April 2014 will be achieved. My officials are working towards this deadline.

Teaching of Science in Primary Schools

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education what review has been carried out of the Teaching of Science in Primary Schools since the introduction of the Revised Curriculum.

(AQW 28096/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspect Science and Technology in primary schools as an integral part of the World Around Us (WAU) area of learning. It consists of three contributory subjects, History, Geography and Science and Technology and the ETI record it as a unitary performance level, a collective area of learning.

During the inspection period of September 2009 to September 2013 in primary schools, 79% of the WAU lessons evaluated were good or better, with 48% being very good and outstanding.

During 2011 the north of Ireland participated for the first time in TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) a large international comparative study of achievement, which

examined the mathematics and science ability of pupils ages 9-10 (equivalent to our P6 year). The survey results published earlier this year, showed that our primary school pupils are performing well above the international averages. The TIMSS survey ranked our primary school performance in science 21st out of the 50 countries surveyed, with a scale score significantly above the international average.

Redburn Primary School

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education for an update on the old Redburn Primary School site.
(AQW 28117/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The site of the former Redburn Primary School remains in the possession of the South Eastern Education & Library Board.

The Board has confirmed it is committed to redeveloping the site for educational purposes in the future and is currently considering options in this regard.

Free Pre-School Funded Places: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many free pre-school funded places are there in North Down.
(AQW 28119/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the 2011-15 Programme for Government my Department is committed to ensuring that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.

For admission to pre-school in September 2013, 99.8% of children, whose parents engaged with the pre-school admissions process to the end, obtained a funded pre-school place. This included all of the parents in the North Down area.

In the 2013/14 school year there are 875 funded pre-school places in the North Down constituency, broken down as follows:

■ Statutory nursery school / nursery unit	(full time)	-	104
■ Statutory nursery school / nursery unit	(part time)	-	364
■ Voluntary / Private Pre-School Settings		-	407

There are still a number of places available in voluntary/private settings if additional children in their final pre-school year apply.

Officials will continue to work with colleagues in the South Eastern Education and Library Board to maintain sufficient provision in the area.

Department of Education in Bangor: Visits

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many times he has visited the Department of Education in Bangor since becoming Minister.
(AQW 28120/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since taking up post as Minister for Education I have visited the Department of Education in Bangor as follows:-

- 2011 - 25 occasions.
- 2012 - 16 occasions.
- 2013 to date -11 occasions.

The Department of Education (DE) also have an office in Parliament Buildings which I work out of on average three days a week.

Education Made More Accessible Report

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education what action he has taken in relation to the Education Made More Accessible report.

(AQW 28130/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education's position in relation to the issues raised in the Education Made More Accessible report are documented within "Count, read: succeed – A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. In particular paragraph 4.17 addresses the use of phonics.

The strategy recognises that in developing early literacy skills, pupils need to acquire phonological awareness and that, pupils who have not yet fully developed their phonological awareness need to receive a systematic and time-bound programme of high-quality phonics work. However, based on local and international evidence, the strategy stresses that a broad and balanced approach to promoting literacy is key and a range of other strategies for developing early literacy should also be deployed as appropriate. The strategy also cautions that pupils who have successfully developed their phonological awareness should not be required to undertake phonics work if the teacher does not think it necessary or beneficial.

The Department does not endorse or fund any specific commercial or other phonics programmes. Count, read: succeed makes it clear that it is for schools to decide on its particular approach to phonics, taking account of evidence and of advice and support available, for example from the ELBs.

Mr Campbell's document also raises the introduction of the Primary Movement Programme. The revised curriculum, now in place across all 12 years of compulsory education, places a greater emphasis than before on giving teachers much more flexibility over how they deliver the curriculum to meet children's differing needs. The Department does not, therefore, recommend or endorse any particular programmes or approaches to teaching.

Children with a Learning Disability: Support

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education to outline the support offered to mainstream primary school pupils diagnosed with a learning disability.

(AQW 28132/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My priority is to ensure that every child, including those with a learning disability, receives a high quality education. To that end I am continuing to put in place a range of policies aimed at raising standards.

The Code of Practice (COP) on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) addresses the identification, assessment and provision made for all children who may have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made. The COP recognises that there is a continuum of needs and sets out a five stage approach for children with a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made. Stages one and two are school based with teachers and the SEN co-ordinator taking the lead in identifying and co-ordinating a child's SEN. At stage 3 the school is supported by specialists from outside the school and at stage four the education and library board (ELB) considers the need for a statutory assessment. At stage 5, if appropriate, the ELB makes a statement of SEN and arranges, monitors and reviews provision.

One of the main contributors to the Department of Education's key aim to raise standards in all our schools is the development of the education workforce to meet the needs of all our pupils. To this end ELBs must ensure that arrangements for necessary training of teachers and classroom assistants, who are supporting children with a learning disability, are in place.

I attach great importance to building the capacity of all schools to manage the needs of children with a learning disability. During 2011 a comprehensive SEN resource file was made available to primary and post-primary schools and teachers can also access materials on Learning NI and the DE website.

Education and Library Boards: Duty of Care

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education to outline the duty of care that Education and Library Boards have to children, in receipt of additional support at primary school, who are transferring to post-primary education.

(AQW 28134/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As detailed in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) should carefully consider a child's transfer to post-primary education at the annual review meeting during the last year in the child's current school. If necessary, the meeting should be brought forward to allow sufficient time for consideration of the school which will be appropriate for the child in the next phase.

Arrangements for a child's placement should be finalised by the beginning of the child's last term before transfer to allow time for any advance arrangements relating to that placement to be made and to ensure that parents feel confident and secure about the arrangements.

Parents have the statutory right to request the board to substitute the name of a grant-aided school for the school named in a child's statement of special educational needs.

Pupils with Learning Difficulties: Support

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the support offered to pupils with learning difficulties, particularly pupils with dyslexia.

(AQW 28135/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The statutory responsibility for securing provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) rests with both schools and the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs).

I am satisfied that schools and ELBs provide a range of effective services to meet the individual needs of children with SEN, including dyslexia.

With specific regard to dyslexia the recent Education and Training Inspectorate report "A Survey of the Provision for Pupils with Dyslexia" (May 2012) notes that provision for pupils with dyslexia is either good or better in all schools and in some schools outstanding. Schools are becoming more proactive in seeking a range of training for all teaching and support staff ensuring consistent use of appropriate and effective practice for addressing dyslexia throughout the school and tracking the progress of individual pupils.

The report goes on to note that across all ELBs there is increasing acceptance that early identification and continuous and intensive intervention, based on assessment of each child's learning profile, remains the best educational approach for pupils with dyslexia. ELBs continue to work collaboratively and a working group has been established to secure further commonality, consistency and equity of access to appropriate provision.

I am confident that schools and ELBs have made good progress in this area and will continue to do so in the future.

Support for Pupils with low Self-Esteem

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education what support is offered to pupils who are identified as having low self-esteem and a lack of confidence.

(AQW 28136/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All schools are required as part of their School Development Plan to promote the positive emotional health and wellbeing of pupils. It is a matter for each school to determine how it will pursue this objective given its particular circumstances.

All pupils do have access to the Revised Curriculum is balanced and broadly based and promotes, their emotional, physical and intellectual development. The learning objective is to prepare pupils for the

opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life by equipping them with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. The Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' strand provides the opportunity for specific attention to be given to a pupil's emotional wellbeing, health and safety.

Information and advice on sources of support is available directly to pupils through the i-Matter programme. A suite of information sheets on 20 topics of concern have been distributed to schools. This material can be used as lesson topics, homework diary inserts, posters and leaflets. Whilst aimed at post-primary pupils, this material can be used in an age appropriate way with younger pupils.

Post-primary age pupils can also access counselling provided by the Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS). The ICSS is funded by the Department and delivered by counselling providers contracted through a public tendering process. The counselling provided while school based is independent of the school and conforms to high professional standards and current best practice. All of the ICSS counsellors have experience in working with young people.

Proposed New Primary School for Inner South Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education for an update on his Department obtaining the site at Belfast City Hospital to facilitate the proposed new primary school for inner south Belfast.

(AQW 28137/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The responsibility for planning of the Controlled school estate in Belfast lies, in the first instance, with the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB).

You are aware that BELB's draft primary area plan was published and subjected to public consultation earlier this year. The Board is currently analysing the consultation responses.

The draft plan contains proposals for the amalgamation of Blythefield, Donegall Road and Fane Street primary schools on a new site, but also highlights alternative proposals, should the new site option not materialise.

The matter of a potential new primary school site or school building for inner south Belfast pupils is not currently an issue for my Department.

The process involves the Board publishing a statutory Development Proposal(s) (DP) setting out its intent for these schools. Following publication, there is a statutory two month consultation period during which interested parties may make their views known to the Department. I then make a decision on the DP taking account of all pertinent information and comments received.

To bring its future plans to fruition, the Board will need to secure the necessary DP approval(s) and prioritise the associated capital schemes so that they can compete with other projects for the necessary investment.

Teachers Removed from the Register

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 27563/11-15, why 2522 teachers were removed from the Register.

(AQW 28138/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are a number of reasons that a teacher might leave or be removed from the NISTR, including:

- gaining a permanent post;
- gaining a fixed term contract for a whole school year;
- allowing their General Teaching Council (GTC) registration to lapse;
- illness or death;
- disciplinary proceedings;
- if they choose not to be available to teach;
- if they take up another occupation, or
- relocation (including moving overseas)

Although over 2,522 teachers left the register in the last year, this was offset by other teachers joining the register (including re-registration of some teachers, whose GTC registration had previously lapsed, who have since paid their GTC fee and consequently again became eligible for registration on NISTR) and the number of teachers on the NISTR is reasonably steady year on year:

- March 2012 – 8,238
- June 2012 – 8,362
- Oct 2012 – 8,689
- Nov 2013 – 8,021

Steering Group Meetings

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 21400/11-15, how many times the Steering Group has met since April 2013; and to list the attendees at each meeting.

(AQW 28140/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The Area Planning Steering Group has met on seven occasions since April 2013. Included in the seven meetings is a Ministerial Quarterly Update Meeting held on 1 August 2013.

Date	Organisation	Attendees
8 April	Department of Education	John O’Dowd, MLA John McGrath Diarmuid McLean Bruce Fitzsimons Kathy Mairs
	Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team	Gavin Boyd
	Education and Library Boards Belfast Western North Eastern South Eastern Southern	Dr Clare Mangan Barry Mulholland Ray Gilbert Gregory Butler Tony Murphy
	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Jim Clarke Gerry Lundy
	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Noreen Campbell
	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Dr Micheál Duibh
29 April	Department of Education	John McGrath Diarmuid McLean Lorraine Finlay Angela Kane Kathy Mairs
	Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team	Gavin Boyd

Date	Organisation	Attendees
	Education and Library Boards Belfast Western North Eastern South Eastern Southern	Dr Clare Mangan Barry Mulholland Shane McCurdy Gregory Butler Tony Murphy
	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Jim Clarke
	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Noreen Campbell
	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Dr Micheál Duibh
28 May	Department of Education	Diarmuid McLean Lorraine Finlay John Williamson Bruce Fitzsimons
	Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team	Gavin Boyd
	Education and Library Boards Belfast Western North Eastern South Eastern Southern	Dr Clare Mangan Barry Mulholland Gregory Butler Tony Murphy
	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Jim Clarke
	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Noreen Campbell
	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Dr Micheál Duibh
24 June	Department of Education	John McGrath Lorraine Finlay Bruce Fitzsimons Kathy Mairs
	Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team	Gavin Boyd
	Education and Library Boards Belfast Western North Eastern South Eastern Southern	Dr Clare Mangan Barry Mulholland Shane McCurdy Gregory Butler Tony Murphy
	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Jim Clarke Gerry Lundy
	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Noreen Campbell
	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Dr Micheál Duibh

Date	Organisation	Attendees
1 August Ministerial Quarterly Update	Department of Education	John O'Dowd, MLA Diarmuid McLean Lorraine Finlay Angela Kane Pamela McCormick Kathy Mairs
	Special Advisor to Minister	Mark Mullan
	Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team	Gavin Boyd
	Education and Library Boards Belfast Western North Eastern South Eastern Southern	Dr Clare Mangan Rosemary Watterson Shane McCurdy Gregory Butler
	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Jim Clarke Gerry Lundy
	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Noreen Campbell
	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Dr Micheál Duibh
9 October	Department of Education	John McGrath Diarmuid McLean Lorraine Finlay Bruce Fitzsimons Roy Stevenson Kathy Mairs
	Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team	Pat O'Neill
	Education and Library Boards Belfast Western North Eastern South Eastern Southern	Dr Clare Mangan Barry Mulholland Shane McCurdy Gregory Butler Mike Donaghy
	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Jim Clarke Gerry Lundy
	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Noreen Campbell
	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Nodlaig Ni Bhrollaigh
6 November	Department of Education	John McGrath Diarmuid McLean Lorraine Finlay Angela Kane Bruce Fitzsimons Kathy Mairs
	Department of Employment and Learning	Dr Mary McIvor

Date	Organisation	Attendees
	Education and Library Boards Belfast Western North Eastern South Eastern Southern ELB and Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team	Dr Clare Mangan Barry Mulholland Shane McCurdy Gregory Butler Gavin Boyd
	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	
	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Jim Clarke Gerry Lundy
	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Noreen Campbell Dr Micheál Duibh

Aggregated Schools Budget

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what percentage of his departmental budget is allocated to schools through the Aggregated Schools Budget.

(AQW 28141/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In 2013-14, 58.8% (£1,123.0 million) of the Department of Education's Resource budget has been allocated to schools through the Aggregated Schools Budget.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, in the light of his decision to transfer the procurement of goods and services to the Central Procurement Directorate to achieve greater efficiency, whether he is considering similar options for capital procurement.

(AQW 28142/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I wrote to the Education Committee in December 2012, to update the Committee on my decisions relating to the future delivery of procurement services in education. When I advised the Committee of my decision to transfer the Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE) function for the procurement of supplies and services to the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), I also informed the Committee on my decision in relation to capital procurement. I have no intention of transferring capital procurement to CPD.

Mount St Catherines Primary School: Website

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education why Mount St Catherines Primary School's website utilised a graphic which belongs to the America Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

(AQW 28157/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Websites do not form part of the core provision provided by the C2k Managed ICT Service. Each school is responsible for its own website and it is therefore a matter for individual schools to decide on the material they wish to publish on their school website. Schools have the flexibility to choose the resources and programmes they wish to use to support their delivery of the curriculum. The Department of Education does not recommend or endorse any particular programmes for use by schools.

Entrepreneurship Education

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail any strategies or initiatives his department has to implement entrepreneurship education.

(AQW 28184/11-15)

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

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

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

In addition to schools delegated budgets, my Department also provides funding to a number of organisations to provide enterprise, employability and innovation events and programmes either in school or at larger regional events, for both primary and post-primary pupils. These organisations include Young Enterprise, Sentinus and a number of Business Education Partnerships where local schools and businesses work together to address specific needs of pupils in a cluster of schools in a particular area.

Education and Training Inspectorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many Inspectors were employed by the Education and Training Inspectorate in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 28205/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of Education & Training Inspectors employed by the Department of Education as at 31 March in each of the last ten years is as follows:

Year	No. of Inspectors
2003/04	52
2004/05	59
2005/06	61
2006/07	52
2007/08	54
2008/09	56
2009/10	62
2010/11	58
2011/12	58
2012/13	57

The figures provided do not include Chief Inspector or Assistant Chief Inspector grades.

Education and Training Inspectorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what was the cost of the Education and Training Inspectorate in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 28206/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below outlines the cost of the Education and Training Inspectorate in each of the last ten financial years.

It should be noted that the rise of £449,605.54 in 2009/2010 is due to an increase of 6 new inspectors in that year and the rise of £339,095.76 in 2012/2013 is due to a 'Pay and Grading' exercise, which was carried out in August 2012.

Year	Total cost
2003-04	4,661,769.39
2004-05	4,771,389.17
2005-06	5,046,820.14
2006-07	4,957,331.76
2007-08	5,162,675.99
2008-09	5,262,172.74
2009-10	5,711,778.28
2010-11	5,781,333.20
2011-12	5,408,696.83
2012-13	5,747,792.59

Education and Training Inspectorate: Travel and Subsistence Costs

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what were the travel and subsistence costs for the Education and Training Inspectorate in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 28207/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The travel and subsistence costs for the Education and Training Inspectorate in each of the last ten years were as follows:

Financial Year	£'000
2003-04	313
2004-05	282
2005-06	314
2006-07	293
2007-08	301
2008-09	307
2009-10	285
2010-11	274
2011-12	278
2012-13	277

School Crossing Patrol Guards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many school crossing patrol guards are employed in each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 28215/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

Education and Library Board	No of School Crossing Patrol Guards
SEELB	69
WELB	122
SELB	121
BELB	102
NEELB	129

School Crossing Patrol Guards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many school crossing patrol guards were employed in each Education and Library Board (i) five; and (ii) ten years ago.

(AQW 28216/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

Education & Library Board	No of School Crossing Patrol Guards 2008	No of School Crossing Patrol Guards 2003
SEELB	101	146
WELB	136	157
SELB	144	233
BELB	107	131
NEELB	146	162

Kirkinriola Primary School

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education why the follow-up inspection of Kirkinriola Primary School, which was scheduled for November 2013, was cancelled.

(AQW 28217/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Kirkinriola Primary School received notice of a follow-up inspection scheduled for November 2013. At the time of the original inspection in March 2011 important areas for improvement in leadership and management and relationships were identified and the school entered DE's formal intervention process. In the November 2012 follow-up inspection, these areas had not been addressed due to a lack of continuity in the leadership and governance arrangements in the school. The staffing arrangements from September 2013 are more stable, but key action plans need to be finalised and the associated training needs to be provided. As a result, ETI decided to postpone not cancel, the follow-up inspection until later in the academic year to allow time for the plans and training to impact positively on provision and relationships in the school. In the interim the District Inspector will visit the school to discuss the action plans and will continue to monitor the work of the school until the follow-up inspection.

'Welcome Statements' in Job Advertising

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 27331/11-15 and AQW 26875/11-15 and given the figure of under representation of Protestant applicants, on how many occasions in the last two years has a 'welcome statement' been used in job advertising.

(AQW 28228/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In compliance with Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all 5 DE led recruitment competitions held in 2011 and 2012 were referred to the Equality & Diversity Branch, Department of Finance & Personnel for consideration as to whether it was appropriate to take positive affirmative action by including a 'welcome statement' in the job advertisements. As a result of these considerations; in the 2011 and 2012 DE led recruitment competitions, a 'welcome statement' was not included in job advertisements.

St. Francis' Primary School, Loughbrickland

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education when a decision will be made on the development proposals for St. Francis' Primary School, Loughbrickland.

(AQW 28239/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I approved the Development Proposal to increase the admissions and enrolment numbers of St Francis' PS to 25 and 175 respectively, with effect from 1 September 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter on 25 October.

A press release issued following my decision and details were added to the 'Latest News' section of the DE website.

Classroom Assistants: South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of classroom assistants employed by each primary school in South Antrim.

(AQW 28254/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details the number of classroom assistants (headcount) in primary schools in South Antrim.

School	Headcount
Antrim Primary School	15
Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School	5
Ballyclare Primary School	10
Ballycraigy Primary School	12
Ballymacrickett Primary School	7
Ballymacward Primary School	2
Ballynure Primary School	3
Carnmoney Primary School	10
Creavery Primary School	6
Creggan Primary School	3
Crumlin Controlled Integrated Primary School	12
Doagh Primary School	2
Duneane Primary School	5

School	Headcount
Earlview Primary School	5
Fairview Primary School	7
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	8
Greystone Primary School	6
Groggan Primary School	5
Kilbride Primary School	5
Loanends Primary School	10
Maine Integrated Primary School	6
Mallusk Primary School	2
McKinney Primary School	2
Moneynick Primary School	9
Mossley Primary School	33
Mount St Michael's Primary School	10
Parkgate Primary School	2
Parkhall Primary School	11
Randalstown Central Primary School	7
Rathenraw Integrated Primary School	4
Round Tower Integrated Primary School	11
St Comgall's Primary School	22
St Joseph's Primary School, Antrim	9
St Joseph's Primary School, Crumlin	18
St Macnisius' Primary School	7
St Macnissi's Primary School	3
St Oliver Plunkett's Primary School	6
Straid Primary School	1
Straidhavern Primary School	3
Templepatrick Primary School	14
Thompson Primary School	7
Tildarg Primary School	3
Tir-na-Nog Primary School	1

Local Schools: Promotion of Respect and Inclusion

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education what funding is available to local schools who wish to promote respect and inclusion both inside and outside of the classroom.

(AQW 28262/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy contributes to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self respect and respect for others, by providing children and young people, in formal and non formal education settings, with opportunities to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions. It also provides opportunities for young people to explore issues surrounding any of the Section 75 groups which should lead to a greater understanding of the need to be inclusive towards all regardless of their background.

My Department provides annual financial support of £1.1m for the CRED policy through the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) CRED and Youth Council (YCNI).

More information on the CRED Enhancement Scheme can be found on the dedicated website at: www.credni.org

Kilcooley Primary School, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) fully-funded; and (ii) part-funded nursery schools places available at Killcooley Primary School, Bangor.

(AQW 28276/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are 26 full-time places in Kilcooley PS Nursery Unit, all of which are fully funded by the Department of Education.

St. Columbanus' College

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the religious breakdown of pupils attending St. Columbanus' College.

(AQW 28277/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The most up-to-date figures for pupil enrolments relate to the 2012/13 school year, these are detailed in the table below. Updated 2013/14 figures will be available following the completion of the annual school census which is currently being undertaken.

Religious breakdown of pupils attending St Columbanus College - 2012/13

Religion	Total pupils
Protestant	211
Catholic	260
Other	137
Total enrolment	608

Source: School census

Note: The other category includes 'other Christian', 'non Christian' and 'no religion'.

Education and Training Inspectorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 27560/11-15, to list the 20 schools involved in the project.

(AQW 28315/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The schools involved in the Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics programme are:

1. Belfast Boys' Model School
2. St Mary's Christian Bros. Grammar School

3. Parkhall Integrated College
4. Holy Cross College, Strabane
5. Hazelwood College
6. St Joseph's College, Belfast
7. Limavady HS
8. Ashfield Boys' HS
9. Ballyclare Secondary School
10. Glastry College
11. Lismore Comprehensive School
12. Brownlow Integrated College
13. Girls' Model School, Belfast
14. St Patricks College, Ballymena
15. St Mary's College, Londonderry
16. Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College
17. Oakgrove Integrated College
18. St Colm's HS
19. St Louises Comprehensive College

Please note that 19 schools are currently in the programme. An additional school will be identified in due course.

Education and Library Boards: Responses to Initiative

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 27511/11-15, what responses his Department has received from the Education and Library Boards in relation to this initiative.
(AQW 28316/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Training Inspectorate received two responses from the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards in relation to this initiative, seeking clarification on how the schools were identified and inviting the Chief Inspector to attend a meeting of the Association of Chief Executives.

This meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the project in more detail and clarify how the Education and Training Inspectorate would keep the Education and Library Boards informed of progress.

Education and Skills Authority: Senior Management

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what is the proposed senior management structure for the Education and Skills Authority.
(AQW 28317/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Senior Management Structure for the Education and Skills Authority will comprise a Chief Executive supported by five Directors as follows:

- Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development;
- Director of Finance and ICT;
- Director of Children and Young People Services;
- Director of Education Quality and Strategic Planning; and
- Director of Operations and Estates.

Education and Library Boards: Staff

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 27559/11-15, how many staff in each Education and Library Board have had their request for a job evaluation on their post agreed by management.

(AQW 28318/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Pursuant to the response given to AQW27559/11-15, all 137 posts listed have been agreed by management.

The procedures are such that only those requests for further evaluation that have the support of line management can be considered.

53 Youth Projects: Spend

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the location; and (ii) the amount due to be spent on each of the 53 Youth Projects identified to receive £53 million investment in their facilities.

(AQW 28322/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In my announcement on 14 November 2013, 53 schemes were successful in applying for grant-aid from the Youth Capital Funding Scheme for Voluntary Organisations for 2013/2014. Each organisation has supplied an estimate of cost for its specific project and the total estimated value that the Department of Education (DE) is being asked to contribute to all the schemes is approximately £12 million. The table below shows the organisations, their locations and approximate DE contribution towards each project. The actual cost for each scheme and DE's contribution will be dependent on Departmental approval of detailed drawings and costings.

Youth Organisation	Location	Approx Cost to DE
*1st Hillsborough Scout Group	Hillsborough	£50,000.00
1st Randalstown Scout Group	Randalstown	£50,000.00
1st Tyrone Scouts	Dungannon	£309,800.00
314 Northern Ireland Girls Brigade, Monkstown	Monkstown, Newtownabbey	£150,000.00
4th Portadown (St Mark's) Scout Group	Portadown	£140,000.00
6th Belfast Scout Group	Ophir Gardens, Belfast	£5,000.00
6th Fermanagh Scouting Ireland	Irvinestown	£18,665.00
6th Tyrone Scouts	Cookstown	£66,871.00
Ardoyne Youth Club	Ardoyne, Belfast	£324,000.00
Ardstraw Presbyterian Church Youth Council	Omagh	£144,177.00
*Ballysillan Youth for Christ Community Drop in Centre	Benview Road, Belfast	£360,000.00
Boys Brigade Belvoir Project	BB House, 14 May Street, Belfast, BT1 4NR	£299,000.00
Catholic Guides of Ireland Northern Region, Belfast	Beechmount Drive, Belfast	£246,322.00
Cladagh Glen Centre, Fermanagh	Enniskillen	£142,529.00
*Clann Eirann Youth Club	Lurgan	£850,000.00

Youth Organisation	Location	Approx Cost to DE
Comber Youth for Christ	Comber	£119,130.00
Conway Youth Centre	Conway Street, Belfast	£103,102.00
Corpus Christi Youth Centre	Ballymurphy Road, Belfast	£146,295.00
Croi Éanna	Glengormley	£5,000.00
Deanby Youth Centre	Oldpark Road, Belfast	£112,000.00
Downpatrick Group Scouting Ireland	Downpatrick	£12,780.00
Ebrington Church Youth Council	Derry	£107,260.00
Fairhill Youth Centre, Maghera	Maghera	£49,000.00
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Springfield Road, Belfast	£29,094.00
Gallbally Youth and Community Association	Gallbally, Dungannon	£87,336.00
Girlguiding Ulster, Lorne House, Craigavad	Craigavad, Holywood	£145,000.00
Glarryford Young Farmers' Club	Glarryford, Ballymena	£50,000.00
*Glenview Community Centre	Londonderry	£150,000.00
Goal Line Youth Trust, Portadown	Portadown	£93,011.00
Holy Family Youth Centre, Belfast	Limestone Road, Belfast	£135,216.00
Holy Trinity Youth Centre	Norglen Gardens, Belfast	£116,900.00
Hollywood Family Trust	Hollywood	£140,000.00
John Paul II Youth Club	Brookfield Place, Belfast	£292,487.00
Kingdom Youth Club	Kilkeel	£36,000.00
Londonderry YMCA	Londonderry	£148,000.00
Loughiel Community Association	Loughiel, Antrim	£89,352.00
Magnet Young Adult Centre	Newry	£312,000.00
National Council of YMCAs of Ireland, Newcastle	Newcastle	£146,000.00
Newhill Youth & Community Centre Association	Whiterock Road, Belfast	£607,200.00
Patrician Youth Centre, D'patrick	Downpatrick	£137,500.00
*Portadown YMCA	Portadown	£1,200,000.00
Rosario Youth Centre	Ormeau Road, Belfast	£200,580.00
Saints Youth Centre	Twinbrook, Belfast	£149,895.00
Share Discovery Village	Lisnaskea	£55,440.00
St Comgalls Youth Centre	Antrim	£149,756.00

Youth Organisation	Location	Approx Cost to DE
*St Mary's Youth Club, Derry	Derry	£2,384,073.00
St Michael's Scout Group Enniskillen	Drumlyon, Enniskillen	£140,890.00
St Patricks Youth Centre, Donaghmore	Donaghmore	£117,000.00
St Peter's Immaculata Youth Centre	St Peter's Square North, Belfast	£77,064.00
St Teresa's Youth Club, Belfast	Glen Road, Belfast	£149,980.00
The Scout Association - NI Scout Council	National Scout Centre Crawfordsburn	£500,000.00
West Kirk Community Project	Conway Street, Belfast	£140,000.00
Willowfield Parish Church	My Lady's Road, Belfast	£240,000.00
Overall Total		£12,030,705.00

* Denotes a new build.

Teaching Children about the Holocaust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what provision is made within the curriculum for teaching children about the Holocaust.

(AQW 28342/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The revised curriculum gives teachers more flexibility over how they deliver the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. The minimum to be taught is detailed in legislation as Areas of Learning and a number of these provide opportunities for schools to explore the Holocaust and related issues. A number of examples of the opportunities provided are detailed below:

At Key Stage 2 there are opportunities within the areas of the World About Us and Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, for pupils to explore human rights and social responsibility, how people in the world interact and the causes of conflict and appropriate responses.

At Key Stage 3, the Environment and Society Area of Learning includes history as a contributory element and the statutory Minimum Content for History requires opportunities to be provided for pupils to investigate the impact of significant events of the 20th Century on the world.

The Local and Global Citizenship strand of the Learning for Life and Work Area of Learning also provides opportunities for pupils to explore issues relating to diversity in societies and investigate key human rights principles and local and global scenarios where human rights have been seriously infringed.

In line with the flexibility provided by the revised curriculum, the specifics of what is taught, and how it is taught, under each Area of Learning is a matter for each teacher/school.

Promotion of Recycling Initiatives

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what initiatives his Department is following to encourage the uptake of cycling by the school age population.

(AQW 28361/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I would refer the Member to my answer to his earlier question AQW 20533/11-15 published in the Official Report on 15 March 2013

Holocaust Educational Trust: Lessons From Auschwitz Programme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what discussion he has had with the Holocaust Educational Trust on making the Lessons From Auschwitz programme available to pupils.

(AQW 28404/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have had no direct discussions with the Holocaust Educational Trust. I have received correspondence on behalf of the Holocaust Educational Trust regarding the Lessons from Auschwitz Programme. My replies have outlined the opportunities provided through the revised curriculum for pupils to explore the Holocaust and other related issues.

In line with the flexibility provided by the revised curriculum, it is a matter for individual schools to decide on their involvement with outside organisations such as the Holocaust Educational Trust to assist in their delivery of the curriculum.

Mobile Phones in Schools

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education whether he plans to ban pupils from bringing mobile phones into school.

(AQW 28426/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is a matter for the Board of Governors of each school to adopt a policy regarding the use of mobile phones by children and young people on school premises.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Units: South Antrim

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

(AQW 28471/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North-Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that there are no units dedicated solely to supporting pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in South Antrim.

Department for Employment and Learning

Dangers of Drugs and Alcohol Use

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any work being carried out to make students aware of the dangers of drugs and alcohol use.

(AQW 27731/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The four campus based Higher Education Institutions and the six further education colleges all have policy statements in place regarding drugs and substance abuse and misuse of alcohol.

They provide information to students on drugs and alcohol as part of the induction process and throughout the year through a range of media including handbooks, promotional leaflets and websites. Support services are also available to students in the form of counselling, welfare and healthcare.

Each college has a number of policies in place to raise awareness, provide education on the detrimental effect of drugs and substance abuse and provide guidance to staff and students on the procedures to deal with incidents.

The colleges also work in partnership with a number of external stakeholders and organise a number of promotional events and workshops throughout the year.

Maximum Student Number Cap

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any increase he intends to make to the maximum student number cap in the next two years.

(AQW 27888/11-15)

Dr Farry: On 28 August 2013 I confirmed that my Department had enabled the provision, from a 2011-12 baseline, of an additional 1,350 places for learners undertaking an economically relevant STEM course by 2015.

In implementing the final phases of this provision, I intend to increase the Maximum Student Number (MaSN) cap at the Northern Ireland universities by 403 places in academic year 2014/15 and by a further 144 places in academic year 2015/16.

I also intend to increase the number of MaSN controlled higher education places at Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges by 46 places in academic year 2014/15 and by a further 24 places in academic year 2015/16.

Further and Higher Education Colleges: Disability Discrimination Act

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 26987/11-15, (i) if all Further and Higher Education colleges comply with the definitions stipulated within the Disability Discrimination Act; (ii) why South West Regional College claimed, in error that they provided learning disability/Post-19 courses for Dungannon and Cookstown Campuses, when both are specifically for students with mental health issues; and (iii) whether the initial information skewed the figures prior to correction; and (iv) to detail any discussions he has had with the South Regional College regarding this error.

(AQW 27902/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) Further to my response to AQW 26987/11-15, I can confirm that further education (FE) colleges and higher education (HE) institutions are bound by the definitions stipulated within the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). All FE colleges and HE institutions comply with these obligations and operate on a pan-disability approach, which ensures that support for students is based on need, rather than category of disability;
- (ii) In the interest of completeness, South West College (SWC) included details of its work with Beacon Centres, delivered at its Dungannon campus, for people with mental health issues, in its response. The College did not claim these courses were specifically for those with a learning difficulty, post-19, and, as I have mentioned in previous responses, SWC has maintained that this provision was not appropriate for young adults leaving special schools. The courses delivered at the Cookstown campus of SWC were for young adults leaving special schools;
- (iii) This information was not included in the figures, as it was outside the remit of the audit, so the figures provided remain accurate.
- (iv) My Department sought clarification from SWC on this provision, and is content that the information provided was forwarded in an attempt to be comprehensive, and was not to be included in their provision for post-19 students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Teacher Training at College or University

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) how many students began teacher training at college or university in this academic year; and (ii) what are the admission numbers for these courses over the next three years.

(AQW 27919/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) Data on the number of students that began teacher training at college or university in this academic year are unavailable at present. In 2011/12, the latest year for which data are available, 632 students began teacher training at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

- (ii) The Department of Education is responsible for determining the number of students to be admitted each year to courses of initial teacher education here.

- (iii) The Department of Education has determined an overall intake number of 600 for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15. Intakes for 2015/16 have not yet been determined.

Notes:

The latest available data on Higher Education enrolments are for 2011/12.

The Department of Education has indicated that information on the number of intakes for 2015/16 is not yet available.

Queen's University: Pro Vice Chancellor

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any actions or investigation he intends to pursue with Queen's University, Belfast regarding the Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Tony Gallagher being found guilty of academic misconduct.

(AQW 27938/11-15)

Dr Farry: I would advise that it is not a matter for me or my Department to investigate cases of alleged academic misconduct. This is an internal matter for the University and it is up to that institution 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 academic integrity.

Queen's University: Pro Vice Chancellor

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what assurances he can give that all publications claimed in Professor Tony Gallagher's research and scholarly activity bibliography have been published as referenced.

(AQW 27940/11-15)

Dr Farry: I would advise that it is not a matter for me or my Department to provide assurances as to the accuracy of any particular academic's activity bibliography. This is an internal matter for Queen's University, Belfast and it is up to that institution and the individuals involved to ensure the accuracy of the bibliographical details contained in any academic publications.

Civil Service Posts in the Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning 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 27952/11-15)

Dr Farry: The total number of posts within the Department for Employment and Learning at 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2013 is summarised below*. The figures are based on Staff in Post (Full Time Equivalent) plus vacant posts in the General Service Grades specified. A breakdown by grade and local Council area for each period is provided in Annex A and Annex B respectively which I have placed in the Assembly Library and on the DEL website.

Total Number of posts at 1 January 2012	Total Number of posts at 1 January 2013
1788.04	1834.13

* As information is not held by Human Resources in relation to the dates specified in the question, statistics are provided in relation to the closest dates available, i.e. 3 January 2012 and 12 December 2012 respectively.

Apprentices in the Construction Industry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how many apprentices on all schemes are employed in the construction industry, broken down by constituency, for each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 28035/11-15)

Dr Farry: Table 1 overleaf details ApprenticeshipsNI occupancy relating to Construction and Construction Crafts apprenticeship frameworks, broken down by constituency, for each of the last 3 years.

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

Table 1 Occupancy⁽¹⁾ on Apprenticeships NI in Construction and Construction Crafts Frameworks by Quarter and Parliamentary Constituency⁽²⁾

	April 2011	April 2012	April 2013
Belfast East	14	11	9
Belfast North	19	18	16
Belfast South	22	18	15
Belfast West	16	12	11
East Antrim	36	27	21
East Londonderry	6	10	9
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	43	34	21
Foyle	8	37	11
Lagan Valley	26	22	24
Mid Ulster	43	33	19
Newry And Armagh	33	30	22
North Antrim	39	22	22
North Down	11	10	9
South Antrim	39	31	21
South Down	43	28	27
Strangford	19	16	18
Upper Bann	10	8	13
West Tyrone	66	48	44
Not Known ⁽³⁾	2	0	2
Total	495	415	334

Source: Data extracted from the DEL Client Management System on 26 July 2013

- (1) Occupancy figures refers to the number of participants on provision on the last Friday of each quarter
- (2) Parliamentary Constituency is based on the home post-code of the participant
- (3) "Not Known" includes those participants for whom post-code is not known or incorrect, or where post-code cannot be mapped to PC.

Students with Learning Disabilities

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW27081/11-15, whether he will consider relaxing the aspect of pan-disability approach until there is a definitive, fit for purpose programme in place across all colleges under his remit which is compliant with all statutory regulations specifically for students with learning disabilities.

(AQW 28059/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department considers that it would not be constructive to relax the pan-disability approach, applied across colleges, as this has the potential for creating a hierarchy of disability, which could result in possible discrimination between categories of disability. It is considered that the pan-disability approach is fair and equitable, and that no disability is considered any more or less important than another, ensuring that anyone with an additional need is supported, regardless of the nature of the disability.

As I have stated before, decisions on the curriculum offered is a matter for each individual college, based on local demand and viability. I am content that colleges are already meeting their obligations under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SEND0), which places a duty on institutions to make reasonable adjustments, to ensure that people who have a disability are not put at a substantial disadvantage (compared to people who do not have a disability), in accessing further and higher education.

Education Maintenance Allowance Payments

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what measures the Department is taking to prevent fraud on Education Maintenance Allowance payments.

(AQW 28158/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise the member that both my Department and the Department of Education, the Student Loans Company, who administer the scheme on behalf of both Departments and the Learning Centres are focused on preventing Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) fraud and have put in place a number of measures to minimise the risk.

From an auditing view, in order to provide assurance on the effectiveness of the role of colleges and schools, my Department's Financial Audit Systems Team (FAST) monitors the administration of the scheme by the Learning Centres. The team carry out inspections at approximately 25% of the Learning Centres in Northern Ireland each year. During the inspections the team will assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of control for this programme, the degree of compliance with Departmental Guidelines and the accuracy, reliability and completeness of associated accounting records. Training and information away days for Learning Centre EMA administrators are arranged twice a year to flag up common mistakes made in administration and to promote fraud awareness.

The Student Loans Company has responsibility for the processing of EMA applications. The checks and balances put in place ensure that original identification and financial evidence is required to accompany the student's application, all Customer Service advisors have been trained on fraudulent documents awareness, specifically on passports, birth certificates, and financial documents. In addition, students must provide evidence, either a tax credit notification or a utility bill to confirm residence at the address stated on the application form.

The EMA processing system automatically performs checks to ensure there have been no duplicate applications submitted or that the bank details have not been duplicated on another account or application. A Cross reference and reconciliation task is also completed on a monthly basis from October to January in partnership with the Western Education and Library Board in relation to the Further Education Award computer system and the EMA computer system to ensure students have not applied for both schemes, thus avoiding double funding for the same student.

EU: “Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs”

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any interaction he has had with the EU’s “Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs”.

(AQW 28186/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs is a multi-stakeholder consortium, launched by the European Commission in March 2013, to tackle the twin issues of a projected shortfall of up to 900,000 ICT professionals in Europe by 2015, exacerbated by a decline in computing science graduates. Its aim is to increase the overall supply of digitally skilled professionals and to better match supply and demand of digital skills.

The Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs is similar to the ICT Skills Working Group, which I established and Chair, in that it utilises a multi-stakeholder approach using collaborative action to address skills mismatches in the digital/ICT sector.

A number of its priorities also align closely with the aims of the ICT Skills Working Group.

The ICT Skills Working Group, and the associated ICT Skills Action Plan which sets out the short, medium and long term actions required to ensure that local ICT employers have access to the skilled workforce they need now and in the future, are having a positive effect on the ICT skills landscape in Northern Ireland. For example, in the last year alone applications to IT-related degrees at both of our local universities have risen by over 24%. There is an opportunity for my Department to engage with the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs by pledging support for its aims and objectives and sharing the best practice approach developed in Northern Ireland.

Officials in my Department are also currently exploring the possibility of submitting an application to a Call for Proposals under the PROGRESS funding stream which is seeking to identify effective implementation measures, good practice and innovative approaches with a special emphasis on the employment potential of ICT and the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs.

Jordanstown University of Ulster Campus

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether it would be more cost-effective to relocate existing schools from the Jordanstown University of Ulster campus to Magee as opposed to the Belfast City campus.

(AQW 28280/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster’s business case for the transfer of activities from its Jordanstown campus to its Belfast campus was prepared several years ago and received approval from both this Department and the Department of Finance and Personnel in March 2010. The development of the University’s Belfast campus is a major infrastructure project which had been in the planning for some time before the business case was approved. The question of cost-effectiveness is one that only the University is in a position to answer and the matter is now wholly one for it to consider.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Review of Competition in the Energy Sector

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the proposed review of competition in the energy sector announced in the House of Commons, whether this will include Northern Ireland, and if not, will a separate review be conducted.

(AQW 27772/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Energy policy is a devolved matter and different energy markets operate in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The review of competition in the energy sector announced in the House of Commons is specific to the energy sector in Great Britain and will not include Northern Ireland.

I have no current plans to initiate a review of competition in the energy sector in Northern Ireland.

Trading Standards: Illegally Imported Cigarettes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 27105/11-15, when Trading Standards last carried out inspections in Ballymena to investigate the sale of illegally imported cigarettes.

(AQW 27774/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Trading Standards Service (TSS) has not carried out any inspections to investigate the sale of illegally imported cigarettes in Ballymena.

Free Derry Museum

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she will release the letter of offer to the Free Derry Museum given the urgency of other funding offers being lost due to the delay.

(AQW 27886/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A conditional Letter of Offer will be issued in due course for this project

Electricity: Renewable Sources

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 27528/11-15, whether she is confident that, by 2020, 40 percent of electricity will be generated by renewable sources.

(AQW 27942/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive remains committed to the target of 40 percent electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020. As I noted in my response to AQW 27528/11-15 (not AQW 27447/11-15 as referenced in the question), we have a range of plans and policies to support the delivery of the 40 percent target.

Progress to date has been very good and I welcome the ongoing strong private sector interest in developing renewable electricity projects.

I have just approved work which will provide an updated analysis of the costs and benefits arising from the 40 percent target which will feed into the planned mid-term review of the Strategic Energy Framework due to commence in 2014-15.

Local Economy: Impact of the Recovery of the British and Southern Irish Economies

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact on the local economy from the recovery of the British and southern Irish economies.

(AQW 27981/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As a small open economy, the performance of key external markets influences Northern Ireland in areas such as exports, tourism and FDI. I therefore welcome the recent growth in both the Great Britain and Republic of Ireland economies. While it is not possible to quantify what impact it has had on the local economy, it is fair to say that recovery in these economies has had a positive impact.

We have begun to see welcome improvements to the Northern Ireland economy during 2013. For example, there has been nine consecutive monthly falls in unemployment benefit claimants, rises in employee jobs, improved business activity being reported in a range of external surveys and growth in exports.

However, as highlighted in our Economic Strategy, it is vital that the local economy continues to diversify into new high-growth markets to ensure that we are not as reliant upon more traditional markets such as Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Flag Protests

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 27369/11-15, to detail the concerns that prospective visitors raised regarding flag protests.

(AQW 28017/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Prospective visitors raised a number of issues in their correspondence.

Number of Single Wind Turbines Connected to the Grid

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of single wind turbines successfully connected to the grid between 1 May 2010 and 1 November 2013, broken down by generator output levels (i) 0kW to 50kW; (ii) 51kW to 100kW; (iii) 101kW to 200kW; and (iv) 201kW to 250kW.

(AQW 28028/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Data on grid connections is retained by NIE however the Department understands that the information is not kept in the format requested. The most relevant information that can be provided is the commissioning dates for onshore wind generating stations accrediting under the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) which is sourced from Ofgem's Renewables and CHP register.

Table 1 Number of onshore wind generating stations commissioned between 1 May 2010 and 1 November 2013.

Installed Capacity	Numbers Commissioned
0 – 50kW	67
51-100kW	20
101-200kW	23
201-250kW	33

It should be noted that it is not possible to confirm if all the generating stations are single turbines; however the majority of turbines up to 250 kW will be single turbines.

Department of the Environment

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the measures his Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27883/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): As part of its overall strategy for cost reduction, my Department has been engaged in a significant programme to reduce and consolidate the number of leased contract spaces annually since 2010/11. These reductions have produced overall savings of £187,570 which represents a reduction of 66.2% between 2010/11 and 2013/14.

The consolidation exercise included a reduction in the number of car park providers from eight to three through identification of those car park arrangements which were least cost effective and by renegotiation of the retained contract lease agreements.

My Department has also introduced car pooling arrangements, whereby the number of spaces leased is fewer than the number of people in the pool. The overall aim in using the pooling arrangement is to optimise utilisation and maximise savings based on evidence that not all users will be in the car park at any one time.

My Department continues to monitor car park usage and target areas of under usage to ensure the Department benefits from 'best value' for money.

Waringstown Rath Site and Grange Listed Building

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the Northern Ireland Audit Office's findings on the history of planning applications for the Waringstown Rath site and Grange listed building, which were reported to the Public Accounts Committee, and the subsequent report "DoE Planning – a review of counter-fraud arrangements" of 15 Oct 2013, what action he has taken, and plans to take, in respect of (i) a counter-fraud strategy and policy; (ii) creating internal control mechanisms to counteract fraud; (iii) the roles of his Department's internal audit and the Planning Policy Division's compliance policy and review team; and (iv) arrangements for instilling a counter-fraud culture, including whistle-blowing, in his Department.

(AQW 27892/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Northern Ireland Audit Office's (NIAO) report "DoE Planning – A Review of Counter-Fraud Arrangements" acknowledges that my Department has a comprehensive set of fraud and whistle blowing policies in place to prevent and detect fraud. The recommendations made by the NIAO, as a result of this report, are currently being considered by my officials who will implement appropriate measures to ensure the enhancement of existing counter-fraud policies and the continued development of an anti-fraud culture.

My Department also receives an independent and objective opinion on risk management, control and governance through regular reviews of systems and processes by Internal Audit. Audits are also conducted by the Compliance, Improvement & Review Team with agreed recommendations implemented accordingly.

I am committed to ensuring that work continues to further develop a robust counter-fraud culture within DoE Planning.

Shadow Councils: Power Sharing

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what assurances he can give that from the initial formation of the shadow councils power sharing will be fair and equitable.

(AQW 27898/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am committed to ensuring that the sharing of power and responsibility is the cornerstone of the new councils. The arrangements provided for in the Local Government Bill in relation to positions of responsibility and the membership of committees will apply to the incoming councils, following the local government election in May 2014.

Traffic: Noise Levels

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the acceptable noise levels from vehicular traffic within residential areas and conservation zones.

(AQO 4968/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are no formal noise limits or acceptable noise levels for vehicular traffic within residential areas and conservation zones.

Although no overall noise limit exists, individual vehicles must comply with the noise limits set out in The Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.

In addition, under the Environmental Noise Directive the noise exposure of the population was required to be determined and Noise Action Plans developed. Following the publication of noise maps for roads in September 2012, the Department for Regional Development, as the Competent Authority for roads, is in the process of preparing a Noise Action Plan.

While the associated technical guidance published by my Department to assist Competent Authorities in the preparation of Noise Action Plans does not identify a particular noise limit value, it does recommend that when addressing areas of high noise, a prioritised approach should be adopted, firstly considering those affected by the highest noise levels.

The Noise Action Plan, which was released for a full public consultation earlier in the year, is now in the process of being finalised.

PPS 21

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of increasing cases of farmers being denied mortgages because of the constraints of CTY 10 in PPS 21, which insists on siting a farm dwelling as close to the farm yard as possible, will he consider reviewing this part of the policy to give decision makers greater flexibility in its application.

(AQO 4962/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am not aware of a recent increase in the number of mortgage applications declined due to the requirements of CTY 10, however I will happily consider any evidence the member may have of this.

CTY 10 requires that a new building is visually linked or sited to cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm.

This provision is intended to minimise the impact of a new dwelling on the character and appearance of the landscape by ensuring that it forms an integral part of the building group or, when viewed from surrounding vantage points, it appears to be visually interlinked with those buildings.

The policy also provides that, as an exception, consideration will be given to an alternative site away from other buildings on the farm where there are either, demonstrable health and safety reasons, or verifiable plans to expand the farm business at the existing group of buildings.

The application of CTY 10 has already been considered as part of my predecessor's rolling review into the operation of PPS21 which was intended to ensure appropriate consistency and flexibility in interpretation, in accordance with the content and substance of the policy.

As part of the review officials were instructed of the need to have greater regard to the practicalities of requiring new dwellings to be clustered with an established group of buildings on the farm.

In his statement to the assembly on the outcome of the review, my predecessor made it clear that he did not expect applicants to be required to access new dwellings through busy working farmyards where an acceptable alternate access can be achieved without detriment to integration.

I am satisfied that, as a result the actions taken through my predecessor's review, the policy is now being applied with appropriate flexibility and that a further fundamental review of this aspect of CTY10 is not necessary at this time.

Councils: Training

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of the Environment to outline how the local government sector will be involved in the designing and implementation of capacity building and training programmes required for the new councils.

(AQO 4964/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Capacity building and training is a priority task of the Local Government Reform Programme. The reform process is complex and will mean a period of significant change for all those working in and with local government. This includes those civil servants working in areas that will transfer to local government in April 2015.

My Department has worked closely with key stakeholders in both central and local government, including the Local Government Training Group, the National Association of Councillors, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, the Human Resources Working Group, the Pilots and Community

Planning Working Group, DOE Planning and DSD to identify the capacity building needs of both elected members and central and local government staff. This will result in a capacity building framework which prioritises the capacity building requirements between now and 2015.

It will be the task of my officials to implement this framework and to continually review its impact to ensure priority development needs are met in a coordinated and timely way.

To facilitate this important work, my predecessor secured £3m for capacity building and training and a further £600K for staff induction from the Executive over this financial year and next. The framework I have outlined will determine how most of this funding is spent. Meanwhile, I have already committed monies in this financial year to early capacity building, training and staff induction activities for both central and local government, including supporting the work of the Local Government Training Group and Statutory Transition Committees.

Taxis: Public Hire

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of the Environment to outline how public hire taxis can be facilitated under the single tier system.

(AQO 4965/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The forthcoming suite of legislation, which will fully implement the Taxis Act 2008, will bring in a single tier licensing regime for all taxis in Northern Ireland which is aimed at creating a level playing field between public and private hire taxis. It will also contribute to a safe and fit for purpose taxi industry for the general public. A key element in this will be that all taxis may be booked in advance, or ply for hire in the street when they are not already hired.

I am aware of the concerns of Belfast Public Hire taxi drivers, who currently enjoy exclusive access to Belfast City Centre taxi ranks and are the only class of taxi who can ply for hire within Belfast; indeed I met with a number of their representatives on 16 October 2013, to hear their concerns firsthand.

The proposed reforms are designed to ensure that the public are safe when using taxis and to improve standards of service throughout the industry. This will help to target enforcement activities towards illegal taxi operations, which will drive down the demand for illegal taxis and increase business for compliant operators. All operators will have the opportunity to benefit from greater use of taxis by the public, including those operated by Belfast Public Hire.

Further, as a consequence of the Department's intention to permit only taxis approved as wheelchair accessible vehicles to access ranks within Belfast and to grant acquired rights status to those already approved as wheelchair accessible (including all Belfast Public Hire Taxis), Belfast Public Hire will continue to be able to use city centre ranks, unlike the vast majority of private hire vehicles.

The Taxi Reform Programme is the first substantial overhaul of taxi regulations in Northern Ireland for nearly thirty years, and there has been widespread agreement across the taxi industry and other key stakeholders that the current situation is not fit for purpose. It is therefore inevitable that significant changes are necessary, some of which may not find favour with all taxi operators and drivers. However, responses to a consultation on the introduction of single tier clearly indicated support for its introduction with 84% in favour. The Environment Committee has also given its support to the full implementation of the Taxis Act and has clearly indicated that all the remaining legislative changes are to be in place by September 2014.

I believe, therefore, that all taxis in Northern Ireland can and will be facilitated under the introduction of single tier. Whilst I am committed to implementing the entirety of the Taxis Act, my Department has also been listening to all stakeholders and working to ensure that the transition to the new regime is as smooth as possible. This includes ensuring that the particular work of the taxi buses in Belfast is recognised and facilitated in the transition. This important work will continue.

Toxic Waste

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of the Environment what impact the dumping of toxic waste from cross-border fuel laundering is having on the natural environment.

(AQO 4966/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The effects on the environment arising from illegal disposal of fuel laundering wastes cannot be predicted, it will be site-specific. These effects will be driven by the risks to health, environmental receptors (such as groundwater, rivers and lakes) and agricultural receptors (such as crops, grazing land and livestock). Fuel laundering waste products can cause serious environmental damage by contaminating land and waterways. The toxic effects of the chemicals contained in the waste from laundering fuel can directly affect aquatic life. The changes in the pH (acidity/alkalinity) of a waterway will have an effect on both invertebrates and fish life. Oil is a toxic chemical which forms a film on rivers and lakes, reducing the amount of oxygen available for aquatic life. The recovery of the waterway from this contamination may take several years.

To date, the NIEA Water Management Unit has not undertaken any specific water surveys in relation to dumping of fuel laundering wastes. The Agency has however assessed the water quality data available for those polluting substances which may be associated with fuel laundering wastes. No water quality failures due to these substances have been identified in cross border locations where the dumping of fuel laundering waste has allegedly occurred. The existing freshwater biological and water quality sampling programmes have not identified any impacts that have been linked to dumping of toxic waste in cross border areas.

Planning Bill: Legal Advice

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the fact that he did not seek the legal advice freely available to him from the Attorney General in relation to the concerns he has with the Planning Bill, how much additional cost has been incurred in seeking the alternative legal advice.

(AQO 4967/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Like any Minister in the Executive, I am free to seek the opinion of any legal counsel where I consider this to be necessary. The nature, scope, timing and ramifications of the two significant, complex and late amendments to the Planning Bill at Consideration stage prompted my predecessor to seek independent legal opinion, which on this occasion, came from one of the top QCs in the UK, who specialises in planning, environmental and public law. I have confidence in that advice which I have made publically available. The cost to my Department of that legal advice was £4,150 net of VAT. I consider this reasonable when weighed against the potential legal and other costs to the planning system and the economy of attempting to defend the legal challenges which I have no doubt would have been made against clauses 4 and 15 of the Bill (as amended at Consideration stage).

Taxis: Single-tier System

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of the Environment whether proposed new legislation will deliver a single tier taxi system.

(AQO 4969/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The delivery of a single tier taxi system by September 2014 is at the core of the Department's programme of taxi reforms.

The current taxi licensing system provides for two distinct licensing systems, private hire and public hire, each derived from different legislative bases and each with its own distinct rules and regulations. Public hire taxis are further divided into public hire within Belfast, and public hire outside Belfast. This system has proved to be confusing for members of the public wishing to use taxis, who may be unsure which taxis can ply for hire on the street, and which they must pre-book.

Under the new taxi licensing regime all taxis will be required to hold the same licence. In order to cater for the variety of different uses of taxi in Northern Ireland, this licence will be obtainable for a number

of discrete uses. The main two categories of use will be Class A, which will cover all taxis being used to stand or ply for hire and those which are pre-booked; and Class B taxis, which will be wheelchair accessible.

My Department will be following the necessary steps to make secondary legislation to achieve these aims of the Taxis Act 2008, in the coming months.

Single tier licensing will provide Northern Ireland with a taxi system whose vehicles will meet common standards, administered through a single legislative framework, and which is more easily accessible and understood by consumers.

Mobuoy Road: Timeframe for the Publication of the Mills Report

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the concern over what has been permitted to take place at Mobuoy Road and the potential risks this poses to public health and the integrity of the River Faughan Special Area of Conservation, for a timeframe for the publication of the Mills Report.
(AQW 28460/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The report is being finalised by Mr Mills and, once I have received a copy I will want to consider its findings and recommendations, before deciding how to proceed.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Current Rates Initiatives: Domestic and Non-Domestic Properties

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the current rates initiatives in operation for both domestic and non-domestic properties; and when evaluations were carried out on each initiative.

(AQW 27799/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): All domestic rating reliefs are currently being evaluated in the context of the wider Welfare Reform changes as they relate to rate rebate replacement and associated funding issues.

Non-domestic reliefs are listed in the table alongside the related information on their evaluation.

Non-domestic Rating	
Small Business Rate Relief	The policy was reviewed in 2011 when the Large Retail Levy was introduced. A further in-year review was undertaken in 2012. The scheme is due to end in 2015 but a full policy evaluation is due in 2014.
Post Office Rate Relief	The scheme is due to end in 2015 but will be considered alongside the review of the main scheme.
Empty Shops Rates Concession	This was a one year scheme but was extended after its first year following evaluation. It will now end in 2015.
Charitable Exemption	There is no intention to evaluate this provision but the Department continues to monitor the position in GB in relation to avoidance.
Sport and Recreation Relief	Policy evaluation currently rests with DCAL as the policy competent Department.
Quarries and Mines	An evaluation is currently being undertaken.

Non-domestic Rating	
Industrial Derating	Evaluated in 2009 as part of the decision to retain derating at 30%. Policy is due for further review in 2014.
Freight Transport Relief	Evaluation aligned to Industrial Derating Policy.
Non-Domestic Vacant Rating	Evaluated in 2009 – 5 years after the policy was introduced.
Hardship Relief	An evaluation is currently being undertaken.
Rural ATMs Relief	This initiative is reviewed on a 3 year basis. Evaluations were undertaken in 2010 & 2013.
Shop Window Displays	This scheme was introduced as a three year scheme – due to end in 2015.
Residential Homes Relief	No evaluation planned.
Community Halls	An evaluation is currently being undertaken.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 25356/11-15, to detail the cost of car parking spaces per year, broken down by Department.

(AQW 27802/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: DFP does not have the cost of owned spaces as these spaces are attached to buildings and the costs are not separated out from the general building costs.

I would advise the Member to contact each Department for costs relating to their owned spaces.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the measures his Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27884/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department has rationalised car parking contracts to one provider, increasing buying power and reducing costs. It has also produced and introduced a policy to restrict the provision of car parking to essential business users only.

Legal Action: Cost

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how much his Department spent on (i) legal costs; and (ii) paying damages or compensation as a consequence of legal actions, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27961/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The amount spent on legal costs and paying damages or compensation as a consequence of legal actions by my Department in each of the last five years is provided in the attached table.

The damages/compensation figures include £17,310k in respect of DFP's share of the settlement payments made to staff at AA, AO, EOII and analogous grades in the NICS as a result of an agreement with NIPSA in respect of equal pay.

	Legal Costs £000	Damages/Compensation £000
2012/13	250	675
2011/12	910	2,664
2010/11	255	17,378
2009/10	507	236
2008/09	314	39

Direct Tax Revenue

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the definition of direct tax revenue and its aggregate parts including to specify which elements are collected locally and by HM Revenue and Customs; and (ii) how returns from direct tax revenue can be quantified or measured.

(AQW 27995/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: DFP is not responsible for the definition of taxes, this is a matter for HM Treasury and HM Revenue & Customs.

Civil Servants: Grade 3 and Grade 5 Promotions

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail within the last 5 years, how many Grade 3 and Grade 5 promotions have been awarded to Civil Servants; and how many of these have been female.

(AQW 28002/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The attached table includes existing civil servants successful in external recruitment competitions as well as those who were promoted through internal competitions.

Year	Gender	G3	G5	Total
2009	Female	1		1
	Male		3	3
2009 Total		1	3	4
2010	Female	1	2	3
	Male	1	6	7
2010 Total		2	8	10
2011	Female	3	4	7
	Male	3	6	9
2011 Total		6	10	16
2012	Female		4	4
	Male	2	6	8
2012 Total		2	10	12
2013	Female	3	10	13
	Male	5	6	11
2013 Total		8	16	24
Grand Total		19 (8 Female)	47 (20 Female)	66 (28 Female)

Co-Operative Sector

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail for each of the last five years, (i) the economic value of the co-operative sector within the agri-food sector; (ii) the number of jobs sustained within it; and (iii) specific plans to further support its growth.

(AQW 28020/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: DFP is not responsible for supporting the co-operative agri-food sector and therefore does not hold the economic or employment data requested.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Staff

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any planned actions to ensure that Northern Ireland Housing Executive staff receive the 1% pay increase which was awarded in July 2013.

(AQW 28053/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: You will be aware that public bodies are subject to pay constraint and are required to complete a business case for any pay increase. This case has to be approved by both the sponsor Department and ultimately myself as Finance Minister.

I can confirm I approved the 1% pay increase for NIHE staff on 14 November 2013 and the sponsor department, DSD, was advised on the same date. The appropriate payment will now be made to NIHE staff.

Rates Arrears

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail what initiatives are currently being pursued to reduce rates arrears.

(AQW 28093/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: LPS undertakes various initiatives to rigorously pursue and reduce rate arrears. These initiatives, however, are balanced against assisting ratepayers who are genuinely struggling. LPS recognises that we are in tough economic times and many people are struggling to pay their bills during this difficult period. We are seeing increasing numbers of individuals and businesses facing bankruptcy, administration and liquidation. Within this context, initiatives to pursue and reduce rate arrears include:

- offering payment arrangements where appropriate;
- offering, where conditions are met, benefits, reliefs and allowances;
- court processes: obtaining court decrees, referral of debt to the Enforcement of Judgements Office, and initiation of bankruptcy proceedings where appropriate; (LPS also joins in bankruptcy proceedings generated by other organisations or individuals);
- using Land Registry information and data sharing agreements with other public bodies; and
- utilising tracing services to locate debtors.

It is worth noting that the rating debt has remained fairly constant over the past three years, while the cash collected by LPS has risen by over £125 million since 2008/09. This means extra millions can be invested in front-line services such as education, healthcare, roads and district council services from which all residents in Northern Ireland benefit.

Percentage of Procurement Spend Allocated to Local Firms

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the percentage of procurement spend allocated to local firms; and how this compares with Scotland and Wales.

(AQW 28110/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy requires that all procurement is the subject to competition. Contracts are awarded on the basis of lowest price or most economically advantageous tender regardless of the location of the winning bidder.

In 2011-12, 79% of all contracts awarded by the Centres of Procurement Expertise in Northern Ireland were awarded to local companies. This compares favourably to Scotland and Wales where the figures are approximately 77% and 51% respectively.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how his department estimated that the introduction of a zero percent rate on Air Passenger Duty would cost between £60 and £90 million; and to outline the method of calculation.

(AQW 28111/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department did not produce this estimate. It was prepared by HM Treasury.

The £60 million covers estimated Air Passenger Duty receipts from Northern Ireland airports in 2012/13. The £90 million figure is the projected rise in receipts in line with the Office of Budget Responsibility forecasts for increases in passenger numbers, for the UK as a whole, over the next five years.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Staff

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has received instruction from the Minister for Social Development to award the one percent pay increase to Northern Ireland Housing Executive employees announced in July 2013.

(AQW 28257/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: All public bodies are subject to pay constraint and are required to complete a business case to be approved by both the sponsor Department and ultimately myself as Finance Minister.

I can confirm I recently received and approved the Pay remit for the NIHE 1% increase allowing payment to be made to NIHE staff.

Councils: Carbon Reduction Measures

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the finance options available to councils wishing to invest in carbon reduction measures.

(AQW 28304/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department does not hold this information.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Multiple Sclerosis: Prescription Drugs

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to allow the prescription of drugs, such as Fampyra and Copaxone, to be free of charge for people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, who currently pay approximately £180 a month for these drugs.

(AQW 27720/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Northern Ireland has the highest uptake rate for specialist multiple sclerosis (MS) drugs in the UK and at October 2013, there were 1,395 people on active treatment. A report from the MS Society suggests that a MS patient in Northern Ireland is twice as likely to be taking a disease modifying therapies (DMT) (68%) than an MS patient in Wales (30%), with access to treatment in Scotland and England only a little higher at 36% and 40%.

This access to MS drugs is supported by significant investment in MS specialist drugs; the current budget for this service is in excess of £10m per year.

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) commissions DMT treatments in line with NICE Technical Appraisal guidelines. Currently the range of specialist treatments for MS include: Copaxone, Rebiff 22, Rebiff 44, Betaferon, Avonex, Extavia, Tysabri and Fingolimod. These are all routinely commissioned by the HSCB and therefore are free of charge to patients in Northern Ireland.

Fampyra (fampridine) is currently not under consideration within the NICE Technical Appraisal work programme. In instances where there is no explicit advice from NICE the HSCB takes into consideration guidance issued by other recognised appraisal bodies. In this context it should be noted that the use of this therapy is not recommended for use by the Scottish Medicines Consortium and the NHS England Commissioning Board recently issued its Commissioning Policy in April 2013 advising that this therapy would not be routinely funded for use within its licensed indication.

For treatments not currently commissioned in Northern Ireland, the HSCB has a clear process by which individual patient requests can nonetheless be considered. As part of this process the patient's consultant is expected to put in writing the exceptional clinical circumstances which apply to the case and such requests require to be supported by nominated senior clinicians and managers within the Trust. Where an individual funding request is approved by the HSCB and Public Health Agency, funding is made available to the requesting Trust to prescribe the therapy for that named patient.

If a drug is not routinely commissioned and treatment for an individual patient is not funded through the IFR process, then a patient may opt to pay for that therapy and such arrangements are set out in DHSSPS guidance.

I have set a performance indicator that no patient should wait longer than 13 weeks to commence NICE recommended disease modifying therapies for MS to ensure that eligible patients have timely access to the treatment. My Department collects information from the Trusts to monitor performance; as at 31st October 2013 there were 39 patients waiting to commence treatment, with no patients waiting longer than 13 weeks. Collected data does not indicate the exact treatment regime for those waiting patients.

Multiple Sclerosis: Prescription Drugs

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why patients diagnosed with multiple sclerosis have to wait up to three months before they receive medication such as copaxone. **(AQW 27721/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland has the highest uptake rate for specialist multiple sclerosis (MS) drugs in the UK and at October 2013, there were 1,395 people on active treatment. A report from the MS Society suggests that a MS patient in Northern Ireland is twice as likely to be taking a disease modifying therapies (DMT) (68%) than an MS patient in Wales (30%), with access to treatment in Scotland and England only a little higher at 36% and 40%.

This access to MS drugs is supported by significant investment in MS specialist drugs; the current budget for this service is in excess of £10m per year.

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Multiple Sclerosis: Prescription Drugs

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are diagnosed with multiple sclerosis; and how many are on a waiting list for drugs such as Fampyra and Copaxone.

(AQW 27722/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland has the highest uptake rate for specialist multiple sclerosis (MS) drugs in the UK and at October 2013, there were 1,395 people on active treatment. A report from the MS Society suggests that a MS patient in Northern Ireland is twice as likely to be taking a disease modifying therapies (DMT) (68%) than an MS patient in Wales (30%), with access to treatment in Scotland and England only a little higher at 36% and 40%.

This access to MS drugs is supported by significant investment in MS specialist drugs; the current budget for this service is in excess of £10m per year.

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Specialist Multiple Sclerosis Nurses

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the role of a specialist multiple sclerosis nurse.

(AQW 27726/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Multiple Sclerosis Nursing Service is considered a specialist nursing role. The post holder may be based either in a hospital setting or within primary care.

MS Specialist Nurses are experts in nursing and the specialist requirements of patients with complex health problems.

They promote a “wellness” approach and coach patients to live healthily throughout the disease trajectory.

In 2001 the role of the MS Specialist Nurse was identified as:

“To empower those affected by MS by providing information, support and advice about the condition from time of diagnosis and throughout the disease spectrum. The MS specialist nurse is pivotal in providing a greater understanding of the condition, and by adopting a holistic, collaborative and coordinated approach can help those individuals, where possible, reach their goals of self-management. The role also involves acting as a consultant and educational resource for staff striving towards greater awareness and knowledge of MS in the health and social arena.”

(Source: MS Trust, UKMSSNA, RCN. Specialist nursing in MS – the way forward: the key elements for developing MS specialist nurse services in the UK. April 2001.)

The role of the specialist nurse is to provide coordinated care and assessment for patients with multiple sclerosis on their caseload or those referred to the service.

The role also includes provision of support to patients’ families and carers as required.

The nurse can provide support to patients with benefit claims and advice regarding community and voluntary organisations in local communities that provide additional services for individuals with MS including support groups.

As part of the clinical role the nurse will be required to attend multi-disciplinary case management meetings and provide expert nursing advice to the team in respect of nursing needs of patients undergoing assessment, treatment and ongoing management and review of their condition.

In addition, the nurse will carry out assessments on patients for new treatments and coordinate newly diagnosed education programmes and advice for patients.

The nurse may provide telephone contact advice for patients which may be part of a locally developed advice line.

The role includes the initiation, support and monitoring of disease-modifying therapy and provision of support to patients who have progressive MS and are not eligible for disease modifying therapy.

The nurse may practice in a nurse-led clinic in a Trust.

As part of the specialist role the nurse will have to incorporate a percentage of time toward clinical audit, education of staff and research within the field of the speciality.

The nurse may also be responsible for the development of local policies and procedures relating to the local service in keeping with current evidence and professional guidance.

The service includes participation of the nurses' role in the provision of an integrated service across the community and ward settings as well as attendance at neurology clinics where appropriate.

The nurse can provide onward referral to all Allied Health Professionals or community nursing teams for specific interventions as well as voluntary agencies and can liaise with GPs as required.

Their role is advisory and educational to the service user, their families and to the wider multi-disciplinary team. Their aim is to empower people who have a diagnosis of MS to self-manage their disease through the provision of correct information & support. They offer an open referral system to anyone who has been diagnosed with MS or Clinically Isolated Syndrome.

The MS Specialist Community Nurse works in partnership with Royal Victoria Hospital MS Nurses who cover the neurologists' outpatient clinics in outlying Trusts, commencing and monitoring patients on the disease modifying drug injections. The Royal Victoria Hospital MS Nurses also provide a regional helpline which patients in the outlying Trusts access.

The MS Nurses operate a number of Nurse Led Clinics where they assess patients for symptom management & ensure good compliance to drug therapies. They offer support to those individuals who have MS & also to their family members.

"People with long term neurological conditions have improved health outcomes and a better quality of life when they are able to access prompt and on-going advice and support from practitioners with dedicated neurological expertise" (The National Service Framework for Long Term Neurological Conditions 2005).

The MS Nurses in BHSCT manage the MS nursing care of patients from BHSCT, SEHSCT, NHSCT, SHSCT and WHSCT requiring specialist treatments such as Tysabri as there are no facilities other than in the BHSCT to receive such treatment locally. Patients travel to RVH for treatment. There is one exception in that some patients (10) in WHSCT receive treatment in WHSCT while others (5) are required to travel to Belfast for treatment.

Summary of the role

- Provide information and support for those people newly diagnosed with MS and those who have been living with MS for many years.
- Provide a telephone advice line service.
- Commence patients onto disease modifying therapy namely Avonex, Betaferon/Extavia, Copaxone and Rebif and manage their ongoing MS nursing care. Have own caseload of patients on treatments.
- Administer intravenous Natalizumab (Tysabri) to patients and manage their ongoing MS nursing care.
- Administer intravenous steroid therapy (Methylprednisolone) to patients and manage their ongoing MS nursing care.
- Administer oral Fingolimod (Gilenya) to patients and manage their ongoing MS nursing care.
- Provide a Nurse Led Clinics.
- Provide a bladder scanning service for patients.
- Carry out specialist blood test sampling.
- Attend case conferences and meetings as required.
- Refer patients to other members of the multidisciplinary team and receive referrals from them.
- Meet inpatients in Regional Neurology Unit and in other centres as required.
- Visit patients for assessment in their own homes.
- Provide educational talks to both professionals and people living with MS, their families and carers.
- Have involvement in the DOH Risk Sharing Scheme.

- Provide information evenings for people newly diagnosed with MS.
- Liaise with other members of the multidisciplinary team and in particular Pharmacy in relation to the management of specialist medicines for patients.
- Liaise with voluntary organisations/charities.
- Attend outpatient clinics in NHSCT – Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital.

Craigavon Area Hospital: Stroke Patients

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to transfer the treatment of stroke patients from Daisyhill Hospital, Newry to Craigavon Area Hospital.
(AQW 27749/11-15)

Mr Poots: The most recent Royal College of Physicians National Stroke Guidelines suggests that the development of a centralised ‘hyper-stroke’ unit improves outcomes for patients. The Southern Health and Social Care Trust is developing a long-term strategic plan to reorganise inpatient stroke services currently provided across four hospital sites (i.e. Craigavon, South Tyrone, Lurgan and Daisy Hill). The Trust is planning to bring proposals for public consultation to their public Trust Board meeting in the New Year.

However I am advised by the Southern Trust that patients in Newry and Mourne with symptoms of stroke will always be taken to the Daisy Hill Hospital Emergency Department for assessment and treatment and that this will not change.

Buddy Bear School, Dungannon

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what departmental funding is available for the Buddy Bear School, Dungannon.
(AQW 27778/11-15)

Mr Poots: Buddy Bear School will be included in the Public Health Authority’s review of Allied Health Professional support for children with statements of special education needs in special schools and mainstream education.

It is my view that in circumstances that there is demonstrable benefits to a child’s development it is for the appropriate Department should provide appropriate support.

Blood Donations: Ban on Gay Men Donating

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to make available a copy of the departmental legal advice into the ban on blood donation by gay men who have been sexually active in the previous twelve months.
(AQW 27783/11-15)

Mr Poots: Legal professional privilege is a fundamental principle of justice. The relationship between an individual and his legal adviser has long been recognised as requiring confidentiality, not just in the advice given but also in the exchange of information between client and lawyer, and it attracts legal professional privilege. This enables a free exchange of information and applies equally to instructions and advice. Legal professional privilege ensures that it is a trusting relationship both for the adviser and the advised. These are important principles and qualities which protect the relationship and they apply equally to government as to private individuals.

Legal professional privilege is a fundamental condition on which the administration of justice rests. It is a basic right recognised by common law, by the European Court of Human Rights, by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and by the Freedom of Information Act.

In all these circumstances it is my view that it is inappropriate to waive legal professional privilege and provide details of the departmental legal advice.

Prevention of Ovarian Cancer

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made in the prevention of ovarian cancer.

(AQW 27785/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is little evidence to show that ovarian cancer can be prevented however it may be possible to reduce risk by the general precautions that are common to all cancers, for example lifestyle choices such as smoking and healthy diet.

A particular challenge of ovarian cancer is that it is difficult to diagnose. Patients often present with vague, non specific abdominal symptoms that can be common to other illnesses.

However, as with all cancers, early diagnosis leads to a better outcome and there is general agreement among experts that early symptom identification, with a high index of suspicion of ovarian cancer, has the potential to improve prognosis.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board are currently working closely with GPs and specialists from across the HSC to develop an agreed management pathway for patients suspected of having ovarian cancer. The aim of the pathway is to ensure that all patients presenting with symptoms or signs of ovarian cancer are swiftly investigated and are able to access specialist cancer care rapidly.

The PHA has also started work to develop a cancer awareness campaign. The aim of the campaign is to raise public awareness of the key signs and symptoms of cancer. The campaign will also encourage people with symptoms to seek medical advice promptly. While the detail of the cancer awareness campaign has yet to be finalised, the PHA is committed to improving the outcome for women with ovarian cancer and will prioritise ovarian cancer as an area for inclusion within the upcoming campaign.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Carers' Assessments

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 26711/11-15, for his assessment of the lower proportion of carers' assessments completed within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; and what action he will take to address this issue.

(AQW 27794/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that the question is referring to the response to AQW 27114/11-15. The response to AQW 27114/11-15 indicated that, between June 2011 and June 2013, 28% of carers offered a carers' assessment by the South Eastern HSC Trust accepted the offered assessment, which was then carried out by the Trust.

During the same period, the South Eastern HSC Trust offered carers' assessments to the largest number of carers of all of the HSC Trusts. Of all carers declining assessment in the South Eastern HSC Trust over that time, some 61% recorded their reason for refusal being the fact that they already had adequate informal support available to them and did not require additional support to cope with their caring duties.

I am currently considering the introduction of a new target to drive forward progress in the identification of carers and the number of carers being offered an assessment of their needs, in respect of their caring role.

Health and Social Care Board's Statutory Residential Homes Project

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how Health and Social Care Trust's plans to run down residential homes over a number of years will be considered under the Health and Social Care Board's Statutory Residential Homes Project.

(AQW 27819/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care (HSC) 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. This is unlikely to be formally revisited however until the conclusion of the first stage of the consultation process.

To that end, the HSC Board will shortly commence a public consultation on criteria to be applied by HSC Trusts at a local level to evaluate statutory residential homes. In light of non-admission policies, it is anticipated that the proposed criteria will consider admission levels to both statutory and independent sector residential homes to enable consideration of overall demand for residential care.

Chestnut Grove Residential Home

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration is being given to the closure of Chestnut Grove residential home.

(AQW 27824/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the new regional approach outlined in Improving Services for Older People – A New Process for Consulting, Engaging and Implementing Change a number of key stages are involved before any proposals for home closures will be made. The first of these is a public consultation which will commence shortly on criteria which will be used by HSC Trusts at a local level to evaluate statutory residential homes.

Following this evaluation exercise Trusts will produce proposals for change which will then be subject to public consultation. It is only at this point, therefore, that it would be possible to say which homes may be proposed for closure. In the interim the Belfast Trust has stated that permanent residents will not be asked to leave either Chestnut Grove or Pine Lodge while the homes continue to meet their needs.

Chestnut Grove Residential Home

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what statutory residential homes the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is (i) considering for closure; and (ii) running down over a period of years.

(AQW 27827/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the new regional approach outlined in Improving Services for Older People – A New Process for Consulting, Engaging and Implementing Change a number of key stages are involved before any proposals for home closures will be made. The first of these is a public consultation which will commence shortly on criteria which will be used by HSC Trusts at a local level to evaluate statutory residential homes.

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Brooklands Care Home, Antrim

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of complaints his Department has received in relation to Brooklands care home, Antrim.

(AQW 27839/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of complaints received by the Department relating to Brooklands care home is not collected, as complaints regarding health & social care services will be referred to the relevant HSC Trust in which the facility is located.

In response to this question the Northern HSC Trust indicated that the information could only be provided at disproportionate cost, as information held on complaints may not include the name of the facility to which the complaint relates.

Vulnerable People Seeking Accommodation

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what protections are in place to protect vulnerable people who are seeking alternative accommodation when a private nursing home can no longer provide care for a client.

(AQW 27840/11-15)

Mr Poots: Circular ECCU 1/2010 'Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance' states that care planning is a fundamental element of the care management process which provides an opportunity for the service user, family and carer to consider all options for meeting health and social care needs.

In the management, implementation & monitoring of a care plan Case Managers should undertake a number of key tasks to ensure care is being delivered in the most appropriate setting which meets all of the service user's assessed care needs. As the needs and circumstances of service users change, monitoring of the care plan will be an ongoing task to ensure service users' needs are continually met. It is recognized, however, that, in circumstances where a service user's needs are changing rapidly, adjustments may have to be made to the care package.

Medical Services Provided to Non-UK Citizens

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 27491/11-15, how many non-UK citizens have been provided with medical services in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27846/11-15)

Mr Poots: Available data indicates the number of non-UK citizens that have been provided with medical services is as follows:

- 2008/09 6136
- 2009/10 6658
- 2010/11 7013
- 2011/12 6980
- 2012/13 6501

Lisburn Health Centre

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much rent or lease charges are being paid for the use of Lisburn Health Centre; and to whom is it being paid.

(AQW 27851/11-15)

Mr Poots: For the last financial year the total annual rental income in respect of Lisburn Health Centre was £118,190. This was paid to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust which owns the premises.

South West Acute Hospital: Medical School

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) junior doctors; and (ii) junior doctor vacancies in the South West Acute Hospital in each medical area; and (iii) locum doctors currently filling those positions.

(AQW 27862/11-15)

Mr Poots: The following table provides the information requested:

Specialty	Total Posts	Posts Vacant	Locum Doctors*
Medicine (St 1/2 level)	13	0	0

Specialty	Total Posts	Posts Vacant	Locum Doctors*
Surgery (St 1/2 level)	7	4	4
Paediatrics (St 1/2 level)	6	3	3
Paediatrics (GP clinics post)	1	0	0
Obstetrics & Gynaecology (St 1 level)	5	1	0
Obstetrics & Gynaecology (St 2+ level)	5	5	4
A&E (GP Trainee)	1	0	0
Totals	38	13	11

* Locum doctors include agency Doctors and Doctors on the HSC Trust payroll.

Foster Parents: Ages

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of foster parents that are (i) 29 years old and under; (ii) 39 years old and under; (iii) 49 years old and under; and (iv) 50 years old and over.

(AQW 27864/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not centrally available and has therefore been requested from the five HSC Trusts. Due to differences in data collection and data storage between the Trusts, only the Belfast, South Eastern and Western HSC Trusts have been able to provide this information. The Northern and Southern HSC Trusts were unable to provide an answer as it would require a manual trawl through hundreds of records.

Table 1 below details the number of foster parents by age group in the Belfast, South Eastern and Western Trusts.

Table 1: Foster parents by age at 6th November 2013^{1, 2, 3}

Age Range	Aged 29 or Under	Aged 30 - 39	Aged 40 - 49	Aged 50 or Older
No. of Foster Carers	50	196	366	597

1. Figures do not include the Northern & Southern Health and Social Care Trusts
2. Total includes Kinship (Panel & Fieldwork Approved), Panel Approved Stranger & Dedicated Foster Carers but does not include children living with Former Foster Carers
3. In cases where there are two foster parents age is related to only one of the foster parents

Note: These figures have not been validated by DHSSPS

Emergency Foster Parents

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of emergency foster parents in each Health and Social Care Trust area; and (ii) the consideration that has been given to increasing this number.

(AQW 27865/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The Table below details the number of foster carers by Trust area who provide time limited placements at short notice to children who need somewhere safe to stay. Foster Carers who provide this 'emergency' service may be from generic teams or from specialists teams who are

approved as respite, short term and long term carers. They can be contacted at any time including weekends.

Trust	'Emergency' Foster Carers
Belfast	no specific category of "emergency" foster carers - where an emergency arises foster carers are trawled from existing stock of 149 respite and short term carers
South Eastern	15
Northern	12
Southern	13
Western	10

Source – Health & Social Care Trusts

- (ii) Recruitment of foster carers is a continual activity. Overall there are currently around 2,216 foster carers in Northern Ireland. The Regional Adoption and Fostering Service supports local HSC Trusts in the recruitment, assessment and training of foster carers and maintains an overview of the overall fostering position and continues with particular recruitment drives as required. Other established initiatives include: a free out- of- hours Regional Helpline; a HSC website www.adoptionandfostering.hscni.net to provide information about training events and other developments in fostering to potential new foster carers as well as existing carers and staff; and television advertising which is broadcast at intervals throughout the year. In addition Fostering Network NI, on behalf of the HSC Board promotes foster care both locally and nationally by providing advice, support, information and training to support foster carers. The Department will also consider the findings of a recent review of Statutory Fostering Services which aims to build a profile of fostering services in NI, establish a baseline assessment of the fostering arrangements currently in place and identify gaps in the service.

Tendering Process Planned for 2014/15: Community Groups

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances he can give that voluntary and community sector organisations which are providing services under Protect Life will not be disadvantaged by the tendering process planned for 2014/15.

(AQW 27867/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are 70 contracts for Protect Life and mental health promotion services which are scheduled for tendering by the Public Health Agency during 2014-15 under a phased procurement plan. Voluntary and community sector organisations that currently provide services under these contracts will have equal opportunities along with other potential providers to tender for services as part of this procurement process.

To help organisations to prepare for this, the Public Health Agency will hold generic awareness sessions across the region over the next six weeks. These sessions will be open to all potential providers and will be conducted within the parameters of the existing Public Contracts Regulations. The aim is to help organisations to understand the requirements of the procurement process and to enable them to prepare for participating in this.

Protect Life Strategy: Suicide

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of community response plans to suicide across (i) Belfast; and (ii) Northern Ireland; and to outline their importance to the delivery of the Protect Life Strategy.

(AQW 27868/11-15)

Mr Poots: Suicide can trigger suicidal behaviour in others within an associated group or area. In the midst of a number suicides in any given community there is often confusion and a lack of clarity about what can be done to prevent further deaths. The development and implementation of emergency community response plans are, therefore, important elements in the delivery of the “Protect Life” Strategy which places emphasis on the early surveillance to identify emerging suicide “clusters”.

The emergency cross-agency community response plans have been developed in each Trust area with the aim of quickly putting in place multi-agency actions to prevent further deaths occurring where a potential suicide cluster has been indicated.

The Plans have been implemented at different times in all Trust areas including Belfast. Early indications confirm the value and effectiveness of this approach in preventing further suicides and in providing appropriate early support to bereaved families.

Single Use Plastic Bag Levy

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 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 27871/11-15)

Mr Poots: This is a matter for the Food Standards Agency, which is a non-Ministerial Government Department. The Food Standards Agency has advised as follows:

Cross-contamination by bacteria that can cause foodborne illness through the improper use of reusable carrier bags could present a potential health hazard. However, there is very limited scientific evidence regarding how often such contamination occurs, by what means and its significance in public health terms. The Food Standards Agency has issued guidance to consumers regarding the safe use of reusable bags and in order to prevent bacteria being spread through carrier bags consumers are advised to;

- Pack raw meat and fish separately from food that is ready to eat
- Keep a bag and use it for raw meat and fish only
- Thoroughly wash bags if there has been any spillage of raw meat juices, where it is practical to do so. If that is not possible the bag should be discarded in order to prevent the possibility of cross contamination of food transported in it in the future.

Blood Donations: Ban on Gay Men Donating

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of his challenge of the Information Commissioner’s ruling that legal advice on the ban of blood from gay men should be publically available.

(AQW 27879/11-15)

Mr Poots: The legal costs to date in this case, in relation to the legal challenge by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, against the Information Commissioner, amount to £7,195.83

South West Acute Hospital: Medical School

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration has been given to the establishment of a medical school at the South West Acute Hospital.

(AQW 27899/11-15)

Mr Poots: Whilst no consideration has been given to the establishment of a medical school at the South West Acute Hospital, the Hospital has been designated a Teaching Hospital, affiliated to the School of Medicine, Queen’s University, Belfast in recognition of its importance in the acute hospitals sector in providing high quality clinical teaching and placements to medical students.

The Department does not believe that there is the need for a second medical school in Northern Ireland. Considerable investment was made in the QUB Medical School in 2005 to ensure its capability to produce the necessary numbers of medical graduates in line with service needs. The medical school at QUB is part of a UK wide medical education system.

South West Acute Hospital: Staff

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken to attract and retain medical staff to the South West Acute Hospital.

(AQW 27900/11-15)

Mr Poots: In order to attract medical staff to the South West Acute Hospital the Western Trust advertises vacancies in the British Medical Journal, Irish Medical Times and the Belfast Telegraph. For those medical specialities where there is a UK shortage of applicants, further high quality advertising is undertaken to promote the benefits of working in the region.

Every opportunity is taken both in the recruitment process and after appointment to ensure that Doctors are fully engaged in the activities of the hospital, including access to continuing professional development and comprehensive medical education resources including extensive library services. Medical staff can also access onsite purpose built residential accommodation with access to an onsite crèche facility.

Western Health and Social Care Trust: Budgetary Position

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action is being taken to improve the budgetary position of the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 27901/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Trust, like other Trusts, is continuing to carry out detailed analysis of its financial position for 2013/14, taking account of emerging cost pressures and implementing, where possible, options to reduce expenditure which do not impact on front line services.

My Department and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has supported the Trust in this process and there has been focused and purposeful engagement to progress plans which will enable the Trust to achieve statutory financial breakeven in 2013/14, while minimising potential impact on capacity and performance. Although this involves of necessity, identifying and implementing savings opportunities wherever possible, I am committed to ensuring that the needs of service users and patients are placed at the centre of this process.

Citizens Advice Bureau: Funding

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the amount of funding provided by each Health and Social Care Trust, and the Public Health Agency, to each Citizens Advice Bureau over the last five years.

(AQW 27903/11-15)

Mr Poots: The amount of funding provided by each Health and Social Care Trust, and the Public Health Agency, to each Citizens Advice Bureau over the last five years is set out in the table below:

	2012/13 £	2011/12 £	2010/11 £	2009/10 £	2008/09 £
BHSCT					
Duncairn Gardens CAB	99,086	83,332	86,812	87,120	52,343
Andersonstowns Road CAB	0	0	31,703	35,057	34,244
BHSCT Total	99,086	83,332	118,515	122,177	86,587

	2012/13 £	2011/12 £	2010/11 £	2009/10 £	2008/09 £
SHSCT					
Dungannon CAB	19,686	19,686	19,738	10,000	13,000
Armagh CAB	19,686	19,686	19,738	10,000	13,000
Craigavon CAB	19,686	19,686	19,738	30,012	35,012
Banbridge CAB	19,686	19,686	19,738	19,484	19,225
N&M CAB	19,686	19,686	19,738	10,000	0
SHSCT Total	98,430	98,430	98,690	79,496	80,237
SEHSCT					
North Down	0	0	0	0	59,101
Downpatrick	18	59,382	29,700	47,483	8,126
Ards	30,386	30,386	30,386	30,712	30,920
Bangor	74,787	102,651	92,224	93,426	41,776
Lisburn	8,582	8,582	9,396	16,549	0
SEHSCT Total	113,773	201,001	161,706	188,170	139,923
PHA (established 01/04/2009)					
Antrim CAB	55,890	36,299	29,633	28,869	
Coleraine CAB	52,249	32,658	25,992	25,992	
Craigavon CAB	450	10,000	3,000	0	
Derry CAB	9,957	0	0	0	
Dungannon CAB	75,267	39,101	27,435	27,435	
Fermanagh CAB	10,000	0	0	0	
Newry/Mourne CAB	20,525	6,449	0	0	
Newtownabbey CAB	56,173	36,582	29,916	29,044	
PHA Total	280,511	161,089	115,976	111,340	
Total	591,800	543,852	494,887	501,183	306,747

The Western, Northern and NI Ambulance Service HSC Trusts did not provide funding to a Citizen's Advice Bureau over this period

Co-Codamol Addiction

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many people are addicted to co-codamol; (ii) what action his Department is taking to (a) reduce the number of people in chronic pain becoming addicted to co-codamol; and (b) help people in chronic pain deal with an addiction to co-codamol.

(AQW 27904/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) There is no register or source of information for those addicted to co-codamol in Northern Ireland. However, during 2012/13, 136 people presented for treatment for the first time (or the first time in 6 months) for addiction to codeine and paracetamol. Of this number, 80 people stated that it was their main drug of misuse (Source: Statistics from the Northern Ireland Drug Misuse Database: 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013).

In addition, our Drug Prevalence Survey in 2010/11 showed that 3.6% of those surveyed stated that they had taken other opiates (including co-codamol) within the last month – though this includes legitimate /prescribed use of these substances. (Source: Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland: 2010/11 Drug Prevalence Survey).

- (ii) **(a)** The Health and Social Care Board's (HSCB) Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team is currently undertaking a range of initiatives in relation to prescribing, including long-term co-codamol used to treat chronic pain.

In addition, the HSCB is currently in the process of finalising a support tool for opioid prescribing in chronic pain which highlights that there is no place for immediate release strong opioids in maintenance treatment of chronic pain and that if pain is not resolved within 6 weeks, a modified release product is recommended as there is less potential for abuse. Pain toolkits have also been ordered for each GP practice and will be sent out soon – to help patients to cope with pain, provide non-drug advice etc.

On an on-going basis, GPs advise patients of potential for addiction to such medications and are encouraged to prescribe acutely rather than on repeat and to discuss a ladder of suitable analgesia for patients depending on pain. Referral for physiotherapy, counselling and pain management is possible.

Under the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs, my Department has developed an action plan to prevent and address prescription drug misuse in Northern Ireland. This covers reducing supply, decreasing demand, and providing treatment and support for those who need additional help. The plan is currently being considered by the Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care Board who will be responsible for its delivery.

(b) If anyone has concerns that they are becoming addicted to any substance, they should speak to their GP in the first instance. A range of treatment and support services is available for those in Northern Ireland who wish to seek help with substance misuse (including illicit drugs, alcohol, or prescription and over-the-counter drugs). The services available in each Health & Social Care Trust area can be accessed online at:

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/drug-and-alcohol-directories-services>.

Antrim Area Hospital: Short Stay Ward

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the status and number of beds in the short stay ward in Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 27911/11-15)

Mr Poots: The short stay ward in Antrim Area Hospital is a 10-bed unit co-located within the emergency department. Patients who are identified as requiring a length of stay in hospital of less than 24 hours would be admitted to this unit.

Antrim Area Hospital: Accident and Emergency

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what use is being made of the former Accident and Emergency area in Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 27912/11-15)

Mr Poots: The former emergency department in Antrim Area Hospital now accommodates the Acute Assessment Unit. This unit provides direct access for GPs to the on-site speciality teams in Antrim

Hospital, eliminating the need for a patient to be referred to the emergency department. The unit also provides rapid access to the medical outpatient clinic to facilitate urgent outpatient reviews by a doctor.

There is also a discharge lounge located in the old emergency department. This is an area staffed by registered nurses where patients awaiting relatives or transport home following discharge can wait to be picked up.

Antrim Area Hospital: Inpatient Beds

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many inpatient beds were available in Antrim Area Hospital as of (i) 31 July 2013; and (ii) 28 October 2013.

(AQW 27913/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern HSC Trust has advised that there were (i) 401 inpatient beds available as of 31 July 2013; and (ii) 409 inpatient beds available as of 28 October 2013 at Antrim Area Hospital.

Antrim Area Hospital: Accident and Emergency

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many ambulances were diverted from Antrim Area Hospital's Accident and Emergency in the last twelve months.

(AQW 27914/11-15)

Mr Poots: Between 1st November 2012 and 31st October 2013, 52 ambulances were diverted from Antrim Area emergency care department. The table below details the number diverted from Antrim Area to other emergency care departments.

Emergency Care Department Diverted to from Antrim Area	Number
Altnagelvin	1
Causeway	29
Mater	15
Royal Victoria	7
Number	52

Source: NIAS

Brooklands Health Centre: Intermediate Care Beds

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a cost comparison was made by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in tendering the 15 intermediate care beds to Brooklands Health Centre; and what the cost would have been to (i) provide these beds in the Mid Ulster Hospital; and (ii) increase provisions at Dalriada.

(AQW 27915/11-15)

Mr Poots: I understand that the position was as follows:-

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT), in discussion and agreement with the HSC Board, sought to increase the number of Intermediate Care beds following the unprecedented peak in unscheduled admissions; the very significant rise in the number of complex discharges; and the impact on Accident & Emergency services in January 2012. These additional beds were secured in order to provide additional capacity to address these significant pressures and ensure that patients, who were ready to leave hospital, could be safely discharged and avoid them remaining in an acute hospital setting.

Neither the Mid Ulster Hospital nor Dalriada Hospital, at that time, had the capacity to increase their bed numbers in the timeframe needed; therefore the option of securing 15 extra beds and the associated services in either of these hospitals was not costed.

The tender to seek additional capacity to support discharges from the acute hospital was open to all appropriately registered facilities in the Trust area (Nursing and Dual Registered Homes), able to meet the patients nursing and care needs.

This arrangement was put in place to deal with the pressures on acute services and to meet the needs of patients

Ballymena Health and Care Centre

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the timeline for the building and opening of the Ballymena Health and Care Centre.

(AQW 27936/11-15)

Mr Poots: The notice of contract award has been issued and subject to the normal legal requirements being satisfied it is intended to commence construction within the next few weeks.

The construction period for the building is 15 months and following a period of operational commissioning it is anticipated the building will be open in April 2015.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust Senior Management Team

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the cost involved in the relocation of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust Senior Management Team from The Cottage in Ballymena to the Antrim Area Hospital site.

(AQW 27937/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Trust is currently developing a business which will identify the costs associated with its plans to relocate staff from The Cottage in Ballymena to the Antrim Hospital site. Until this business case has been completed, final costs cannot be determined.

Number of Civil Service Posts in Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 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 27955/11-15)

Mr Poots: The tables below show the number of funded posts in my Department in January 2012 and January 2013, including analogous (i.e. professional and specialist) grades.

January 2012

Council Area	G6	G7	DP	S0	E01	E02	A0	AA	Total
Belfast	17	91	148	144	60	74	60	48	642
Derry			1	1					2
Total	17	91	149	145	60	74	60	48	644

January 2013

Council Area	G6	G7	DP	S0	E01	E02	A0	AA	Total
Belfast	15	96	150	145	64	69	65	45	649
Derry			1	1					2
Total	15	96	151	146	64	69	65	45	651

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service: Fitness Test

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how many fire fighters from the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service who failed a fitness test in the last five years (i) were redeployed within the Service; and (iii) retired from the Service.

(AQW 27962/11-15)

Mr Poots: In the last 5 years, no NIFRS personnel have been retired or redeployed due to failing a fitness test.

Fire Fighters: Fitness Test

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many fire fighters aged between (i) 50-55; (ii) 56-57; and (iii) 58-60 failed a fitness test, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 27963/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below provides a breakdown of the numbers of NIFRS personnel who have failed their fitness tests within the specified age groups in 2011, 2012 and 2013 (to date).

Year	Age			Total
	50-55	56-57	58-60	
2011	1	2	0	3
2012	1	0	0	1
2013 (to date)	1	0	0	1
Total	3	2	0	5

NIFRS did not conduct fitness testing prior to 2011.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service: Age of Fire Fighters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many fire fighters between the ages of (i) 50-55; (ii) 56-57; (iii) 58-60; and over the age over 60 are employed by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

(AQW 27964/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details the numbers of Firefighters between the ages of 50-55; 56-57; 58-60; and over the age of 60 employed by NIFRS:

	50-55	56-57	58-60	60+	Total
Wholetime	105	2	4	0	111
Retained Duty System & Volunteers	169	24	29	13	235
Total	274	26	33	13	346

People Newly Certified as Blind or Partially Sighted

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people who have been newly certified as blind or partially sighted between 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013; and of these, how many were over 65.

(AQW 27977/11-15)

Mr Poots: Between 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, 240 people were newly certified as blind and 143 people were newly certified as partially sighted in Northern Ireland. Of these, 151 blind people and 72 partially sighted people were aged over 65.

This information is broken down by HSC Trust in the table below:

Number of People Newly Certified as Blind or Partially Sighted between 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, by Age Band and HSC Trust 1

HSC Trust	Number of people newly certified as blind		Number of people newly certified as partially sighted	
	Under 65	65 and over	Under 65	65 and over
Belfast	13	26	7	11
Northern	22	41	19	15
South Eastern	8	20	8	16
Southern	16	37	17	14
Western	30	27	20	16
Northern Ireland	89	151	71	72

- 1 The information recorded by HSC Trusts is not a register of those blind or partially sighted, as people may refuse to have their names added to relevant HSC Trust records.

Special Conditions of Contract SS17a

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) when the Special Conditions of Contract SS17a were last reviewed; and (ii) when they are next due to be reviewed.

(AQW 27987/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no fixed period for review of Special Conditions of Contract SS17a. Special conditions of contract are constructed specifically for each individual procurement and, whilst containing a core of frequently used terms and conditions, will vary from procurement to procurement. The date the template was last formally updated was 20 May 2013.

Special Conditions of Contract SS17a

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 27266/11-15, to detail how the Business Services Organisation guarantees equality for suppliers under its Special Conditions of Contract SS17a as since October 2012 some contracts have allowed suppliers to request a price increase six months after the award of a contract, whereas others have imposed a twenty-four month period.

(AQW 27988/11-15)

Mr Poots: When conducting a procurement process, the Business Services Organisation has an obligation to ensure equal treatment of bidders during that process. As the Special Conditions of Contract SS17a are constructed specifically to suit each procurement, there may be a variation of terms between different contracts conducted under separate procurement processes.

Companies bidding for contracts in procurement processes have clear visibility of the special conditions of contract and confirm their acceptance of those terms as part of the bidding process. It is up to individual bidders to consider the implications of those terms for them in seeking to win the contract being tendered. Those special conditions of contract will not vary from bidder to bidder in individual procurement processes but may vary between different procurement processes.

Special Conditions of Contract SS17a

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 27265/11-15 to detail (i) the rate of increase in the Retail Prices Index over the last three years; and (ii) why the Business Services Organisation, within its Special Conditions of Contract SS17a, includes the term “Requests for a price increase must not exceed the lower of 2% or the average rate of RPI”.
(AQW 27989/11-15)

Mr Poots: According to the Office For National Statistics, the most recent statistics published as Retail Price Index are found at the following link <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/cpi/consumer-price-indices/september-2013/consumer-price-inflation-reference-tables.xls> . For the purposes of this reply, the figures have been taken from Table 37 RPI: All items: 12 months % change 1948-2013, from which the figures for each of the years 2010 – 2012 are as follows:

2010	4.6%
2011	5.2%
2012	3.2%

Without being provided with the details of the specific contract from which this clause has been taken, I can advise only that in general, the BSO includes terms of this nature to control the level of price increase that may be sought during the contract. Additionally, in some procurements, BSO may seek to establish the pricing at the outset of the contract, in order to secure the best possible value for money over the life of the contract.

Non-Admissions Policy for Statutory Residential Homes

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of Fionnuala McAndrew’s statement on reviewing the non-admissions policy for statutory residential homes, to detail (i) the plans and structures that are in place to review this policy; and (ii) when the decision will be taken on a non-admissions policy.
(AQW 27991/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC Board has indicated that the admissions policies adopted by Trusts will be kept under review. The situation is being monitored by the regional team responsible for reviewing the future of statutory residential care.

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. It is unlikely that admissions policies will be formally reviewed prior to the conclusion of this first stage of the consultation process.

Belfast Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of running the Belfast Genito-urinary Medicine clinic.
(AQW 27996/11-15)

Mr Poots: The cost of the Royal Victoria Hospital’s Genito-Urinary Medicine Outpatient specialty in 2011/12 was £6,819,756.

Allergy Treatment at the Ulster Hospital

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the future plans for allergy treatment at the Ulster Hospital; and whether a new consultant will be appointed to specialise in this area.
(AQW 28008/11-15)

Mr Poots: A new consultant paediatrician with specialist interest in asthma/allergy commenced working within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust on 1 September 2013, and the vacant specialist nursing post has also been filled. The Trust has submitted a business case to the Health and Social Care Board for a second nurse specialist and additional dietician resource. With regards the Trust's future plans for the service, the new consultant is leading a reform programme as part of the development of its Paediatric Strategy, which will include re-evaluation of clinics to ensure maximum capacity and the need for dietician/psychology input into this service.

Health Centres in East Antrim

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to explain the reasons for the costs of a medical check varying between health centres in East Antrim.

(AQW 28034/11-15)

Mr Poots: GPs cannot charge for medical checks that are carried out as part of their health service work. However, they are entitled to charge for medical checks if they are carried out for purposes such as insurance cover, HGV licences or for employment requirements because those checks are not carried out as part of health service related work.

There is no set fee for carrying out such checks; the individual GP is entitled to decide what fee, if any, to charge for carrying out those medical checks.

Mid-Ulster Hospital Site: Acute Mental Health

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the centralisation of acute mental health services at the Ulster Hospital site.

(AQW 28037/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following the South Eastern Trust's public consultation on the rationalisation of its acute mental health services, the Trust is finalising a business case for consideration and appraisal, seeking approval to proceed with this project.

Once the business case is approved, funding will be considered as part of the budgetary prioritisation process.

Ulster Hospital: Proposed New Mental Health Hospital

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had to date with the Minister for Regional Development on improving the transport network for people travelling from South Down to the proposed new mental health hospital at the Ulster Hospital site.

(AQW 28038/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have had no discussions to date with the Minister for Regional Development as regards improving the transport network for people travelling from South Down to the proposed new mental health unit at the Ulster Hospital Site. The South Eastern Trust is committed to helping patients travelling to and from the Ulster Hospital and will examine any transport issues which may arise when the business case for this proposed unit has been approved.

Children and Adults with Type 1 Diabetes

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) children; and (ii) adults with type 1 diabetes in each Health and Social Care Trust area, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 28039/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information is not available in the form requested.

Under the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF) of the General Medical Services contract, the total number of GP-registered patients aged 17 and over with diabetes mellitus is recorded. Although the

practice must record whether the patient has type 1 or type 2 diabetes, this level of detail is not collected centrally, therefore the register size cannot be disaggregated by type of diabetes. As the care of children with diabetes mellitus is generally under the control of specialists and not general practitioners, the QOF register excludes them, therefore information on the number of children with diabetes is not available.

The number of patients, aged 17 and over, on the QOF diabetes register for the last five years is shown in table 1 below. Both patients with type 1 diabetes and patients with type 2 diabetes are included in the figures. The number of patients on the diabetes register in each Health and Social Care Trust area has been derived based on the location of the practice. It should be noted that patients may not reside in the same HSC Trust in which their practice is located.

Table 1: The number of patients, aged 17 and over, on the QOF diabetes register by HSC Trust, 2009 – 2013.

HSC Trust	Number of patient on the QOF diabetes register (aged 17+)				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Belfast	15,073	15,935	16,549	17,216	17,803
South Eastern	11,665	12,134	12,886	13,058	13,646
Northern	15,954	17,008	18,034	18,906	19,828
Southern	11,574	12,336	13,043	13,995	14,627
Western	10,800	11,567	12,181	12,662	13,168
Northern Ireland	65,066	68,980	72,693	75,837	79,072

Register sizes are taken from the Payment Calculation and Analysis System (PCAS) as at National Prevalence Day, 31 March each year.

Care should be taken when looking at trends in prevalence over time, as year-on-year changes in the size of QOF registers can be influenced by various factors including: changes in prevalence of the condition within the population; demographic changes, such as an ageing population; and improvements in case finding by practices.

Children Under the Age of 11 Currently Using Insulin Pumps

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of children under the age of 11 who currently use an insulin pump; and how this figure compares to each of the previous five years.

(AQW 28040/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested was not held centrally and was therefore requested from each of the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. Their responses have been collated in the table below.

Table 1: Number of children aged 11 or under who were using an insulin pump at 1st November (2009 – 2013)¹

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of children	13	21	50	72	92

Source: HSC Trusts

1 Please note that the Northern HSCT supplied the number of new insulin pump starts for this age group in each year.

Note: These figures have not been validated by DHSSPS

Prevalence of Type 1 Diabetes

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the trend in the prevalence of type 1 diabetes in adults and children over the last decade, including the reasons for the trend.

(AQW 28041/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am aware of the increasing prevalence of diabetes in Northern Ireland although it is currently not possible to breakdown prevalence data by Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented because the triggers for its onset are currently unclear, however over the past decade people living with Type 1 diabetes have benefited from improved services which have helped reduce complications and improve outcomes - services include early intervention, close monitoring of diabetic control, retinopathy screening, structured patient education and the innovative use of new technology. I am committed to continually improving services for people living with Type 1 diabetes in Northern Ireland.

PreMenstrual Dysphoric Disorder

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of women diagnosed with PreMenstrual Dysphoric Disorder in each of the last five years.

(AQW 28050/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of women diagnosed with PreMenstrual Dysphoric Disorder is not available.

PreMenstrual Dysphoric Disorder

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what treatment options are available to women diagnosed with PreMenstrual Dysphoric Disorder.

(AQW 28051/11-15)

Mr Poots: Successful treatment for PreMenstrual Dysphoric Disorder begins with accurate and early diagnosis of the condition. This may take place in primary care or gynaecological services in secondary care.

Once diagnosed and depending on the severity of the symptoms e.g. severe depression, the recommended treatments are generally medication based. It may be the symptoms require referral to mental health services for on-going management and treatment. If this is required, patients are referred by their GP or from gynaecological services in the normal way and are seen in line with the general mental health access criteria.

Number of Current Registered Foster Carers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of current registered foster carers; and the number registered in each of the previous five years.

(AQW 28057/11-15)

Mr Poots: Table 1 below details the number of foster carers registered with Health and Social Care Trusts in each of the last five years.

Table 1: Registered Foster Carers (2009 – 2013) 1, 2, 3

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Registered Foster Carers	1,714	1,727	1,729	1,748	1,825

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Note: These figures have not been validated by DHSSPS

1. Figures for 2009 taken at 31 August; Figures for 2010 at 30 April; Figures for 2011 – 2013 at 31 March
2. These figures include Kinship Foster Carers (Field work Approved & Panel Approved), Panel Approved Stranger Foster Carers and Dedicated Foster Carers
3. These figures do not include Former Foster Carers, Prospective Adopters dually approved as Foster Carers and Independent Foster Carers

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder in County Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the services provided by his Department for adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder in County Fermanagh; and how this compares with other areas.

(AQW 28077/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available in the format requested.

The services required by an adult with ADHD will depend on the assessed needs of the individual. Some needs will be general in nature and will be addressed in primary or community settings. Access to more specialist services will be based on the assessed clinical needs of the individual.

Home Help Service

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of people currently in receipt of home help; (ii) the number in receipt in (a) 1993; and (b) 2003; (iii) the number of hours spent providing home help at present; (iv) the number of hours spent providing home help in (a) 1993; and (b) 2003; (v) the number of administration staff supporting home help staff at present; and (vi) the number of administration staff supporting the delivery of home help in (a) 1993; and (b) 2003.

(AQW 28078/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of people in receipt of home help:

- (i) is not currently collected centrally;
- (ii) (a) at 31 March 1993 was 28,540;
(b) at 31 March 2003 was 26,339.

(iii)&(iv) The number of hours spent providing home help is/ was not collected centrally.

The number of administration staff supporting:

- (v) home help staff at present is not centrally available from HSC Trusts and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.
- (vi) the delivery of home help in (a) 1993; and (b) 2003 is not available.

Agency Staff Training

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 27022/11-15, whether these training requirements apply to agency staff who are employed on an ad hoc basis.

(AQW 28105/11-15)

Mr Poots: The training requirements for domiciliary care staff set out in the Minimum Care Standards for Domiciliary Care Agencies, as described in AQW 27022/11-15, apply to all agency staff regardless of the basis on which they are employed.

Closure of Coffee and Confectionery Outlets at Hospitals

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposals to close the coffee and confectionery outlet at the Downe Hospital; and whether the respective Health and Social Care Trusts will close similar facilities at Lagan Valley or the Ulster Hospital.

(AQW 28122/11-15)

Mr Poots: I can confirm that the coffee and confectionery outlet at the Downe Hospital will close from 30 November 2013. However, the staff restaurant, which is within close proximity, will be able to offer many of the products currently on sale within the coffee/confectionery outlet.

Lagan Valley Hospital does not have a coffee bar and its shop is operated by the Guild of Ex-Patients (and is therefore not funded by the South Eastern Trust). In terms of the Ulster Hospital, the South Eastern Trust is planning to close the coffee bar in the Maternity Unit.

Fire Sprinklers in New Buildings

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce legislation to make fire sprinklers compulsory in new buildings.

(AQW 28123/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no plans in place at this time to introduce legislation to make fire sprinklers compulsory in all new buildings.

5N Medical Assessment Unit at Belfast City Hospital

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether a decision has been taken to close the 5N Medical Assessment Unit at Belfast City Hospital; if so (ii) to outline the rationale for this decision; and (iii) to detail the level of consultation with local GPs and other relevant stakeholders.

(AQW 28124/11-15)

Mr Poots: The GP direct assessment and admission unit in Belfast City Hospital will not be closing; however, it will operate out of ward 6N rather than 5N. From the beginning of December 2013, the service is being enhanced, with access to direct GP assessment and admission to the RVH site also.

Dentistry Appointments: Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures he will implement to reduce the waiting list for dentistry appointments at Altnagelvin Hospital.

(AQW 28146/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that the current demand for the dental service exceeds the capacity within the Trust to provide this service. Where demand exceeds capacity, the Health and Social Care Board provide additional funding to ensure patients are treated within the agreed time scale set out in the Commissioning Plan Direction 2013; therefore the Trust has transferred patients to the independent sector for treatment.

Waiting Time for Dentistry Appointments

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current waiting time for dentistry appointments in each hospital.

(AQW 28148/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available in the format requested. The Department collects the current waiting time for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment and the current waiting time for inpatient treatment, by specialty. For the purpose of this question, waiting times for dentistry appointments are taken to include the following specialties: Oral Surgery, Restorative Dentistry, Paediatric Dentistry,

Orthodontics, Dental/Oral Medicine Specialties and Special Care Dentistry. Hospitals may provide dentistry services in one or more of these specialties. The figures detailed in the tables overleaf are presented for the total waiting times of these specialties combined.

Number of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in a dentistry specialty, at 11th November 20131

Hospital/HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for a first Consultant-led Outpatient Appointment, by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0-6	>6-9	>9-12	>12-15	>15-18	>18	
RBHSC	93	36	29	21	0	0	179
School of Dentistry	875	191	35	14	0	0	1,115
Belfast HSCT	968	227	64	35	0	0	1,294
Northern HSCT2	280	112	110	39	6	3	550
Ulster	374	108	89	46	6	0	623
South Eastern HSCT	374	108	89	46	6	0	623
Craigavon Area3	187	64	26	9	12	9	307
Daisy Hill	131	36	26	4	0	0	197
Southern HSCT	318	100	52	13	12	9	504
Altnagelvin	328	92	68	94	57	258	897
South West Acute	102	47	27	20	23	42	261
Western HSCT	430	139	95	114	80	300	1,158

Source: HSC Trusts

Number of patients waiting for inpatient admission with a consultant in a dentistry specialty, at 11th November 20131

Hospital/ HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for Inpatient Admission, by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0-6	>6-9	>9-12	>12-15	>15-18	>18	
RBHSC	39	20	10	10	1	10	90
School of Dentistry	63	34	10	0	0	0	107
Belfast HSCT	102	54	20	10	1	10	197
Northern HSCT2	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Ulster	25	15	2	0	0	0	42
South Eastern HSCT	25	15	2	0	0	0	42
Southern HSCT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Altnagelvin	313	134	24	10	4	14	499
South West Acute	9	0	0	0	0	0	9
Western HSCT	322	134	24	10	4	14	508

Source: HSC Trusts

- 1 The current waiting time refers to the waiting time position at the week commencing the 11th November 2013, for all HSC Trusts, with the exception of the Belfast HSC Trust, where it refers to the waiting time position at the 7th November 2013.
- 2 Dental services in the Northern HSC Trust are provided by visiting consultants from the Belfast, South Eastern and Western HSC Trusts. However, Northern Trust has responsibility for these patients waiting times. The Northern HSC Trust have stated that they are unable to provide waiting times for each hospital as joint waiting lists are used, and patients could be treated at either Antrim, Braid Valley, Causeway or Mid Ulster Hospitals.
- 3 A first consultant-led outpatient appointment within the Oral Surgery specialty in Craigavon Area Hospital is provided by a visiting consultant from the South Eastern HSC Trust.

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the policy of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service on the display of poppies, including on vehicles; and for his assessment of the policy in terms of freedom of expression.

(AQW 28154/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service policy on staff wearing poppies in the workplace accords with Equality Commission for Northern Ireland guidance and relevant employment legislation. The Equality Commission takes the view that wearing poppies in a respectful manner and during the appropriate period should not cause offence. NIAS has advised that it recently reissued its standing guidance, which has been consulted on with trade union side, on the wearing of poppies in the workplace.

NIAS staff who wish to wear a poppy are fully entitled to do so, enshrining freedom of expression in the guidance. The NIAS guidance makes clear that wearing poppies is a matter of personal choice for staff, but that displaying poppies on NIAS vehicles or premises is not permitted as NIAS consider it would be unacceptable for staff to feel uncomfortable for not wearing a particular emblem.

Agency Staff Covering Domiciliary Care Services

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many hours each Health and Social Care Trust have required agency staff to cover in domiciliary care services, in each of the last five years; and how this compares with the overall number of hours required in providing these services.

(AQW 28164/11-15)

Mr Poots: The use of agency staff to provide cover for HSC staff is not common practice in the HSC.

In the last 5 years only the Belfast Trust has used agency staff as cover when cases of severe staff shortages have arisen. The Trust has advised that, as a percentage of the overall total of domiciliary care hours provided these occurrences are small; however, the Trust could not provide the actual figures within the timeframe required.

Flu Pandemic: Preparations

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in the event of a flu pandemic, (i) what provisions are in place to help school teachers avoid the flu; (ii) what consideration has been given to providing standardised vaccinations for teachers to mitigate the disproportionate cost of providing substitute staff to cover periods of illness, and the resultant disruption to pupils; and (iii) what level of consultation he has had with the Minister of Education regarding these issues.

(AQW 28195/11-15)

Mr Poots: As part of the overall response to a flu pandemic there would almost certainly be a national campaign to remind everyone of the importance of maintaining basic respiratory and hand hygiene measures which will help to limit the spread of the disease throughout the whole community, not just in schools.

In Northern Ireland as in the rest of the UK, vaccination policy in relation to a pandemic will be informed by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert advisory committee that advises the four UK Health Ministers. In formulating its advice and recommendations, the Committee's aim is to ensure that the greatest benefit to public health is obtained from the most appropriate vaccination and immunisation strategies.

I meet with the DE Minister on a regular basis to discuss topics of mutual interest, such as for example the introduction of the routine annual seasonal flu vaccination programme to all children aged 2 to 16 years (inclusive). Although this vaccine does not protect against pandemic flu, seasonal flu is an annual occurrence, rather than a pandemic which occurs infrequently. The children's seasonal flu programme is expected to appreciably lower the public health impact of flu each year by directly averting a large number of cases of disease in children, and, through lowering flu transmission in the community, indirectly preventing flu in unvaccinated younger children, people in clinical risk groups, and older adults. In the event of a future pandemic both departments would work together to ensure any necessary arrangements were put in place, subject to JCVI recommendations

Sale of Cigarettes in Quantities of less than Twenty

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department will consider prohibiting the sale of cigarettes in quantities of less than twenty.

(AQW 28208/11-15)

Mr Poots: The policy aim behind introducing a minimum pack size for tobacco products is to reduce their affordability to children and young people. This is one of a number of measures being considered under the revised EU Tobacco Products Directive and was agreed on by Members of the European Parliament during a recent plenary vote.

The revised Directive is expected to be adopted in 2014 and the agreed measures will come into effect in all EU Member States, including the UK, from 2015/16.

Number of People Taking up Smoking

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures are under consideration to reduce the number of people taking up smoking.

(AQW 28209/11-15)

Mr Poots: With one in four adults being regular smokers, reducing smoking prevalence is a priority for my Department. The Tobacco Control Strategy has three main objectives: preventing people from starting to smoke; supporting smokers to quit; and protecting the population from tobacco-related harm. The Public Health Agency leads on implementation of the Strategy, including public information campaigns to inform people about the dangers of smoking and education-based programmes targeting school-aged children.

My Department is also delivering a programme of legislation on tobacco control, the main aim of which is to prevent the uptake of smoking by young people. Sales of tobacco from vending machines were banned from 1 March 2012, and a ban on the display of tobacco products in large shops, introduced from 30 October 2012, will be rolled out to small shops from 1 April 2015.

Earlier this year I introduced a draft Tobacco Retailers Bill to the Assembly and this is entering its final stages. The Bill will introduce further sanctions against irresponsible retailers who continue to sell tobacco products to those under the legal age of sale. Once commenced, I believe this new legislation will prove an effective deterrent to underage sales and make it much more difficult for children to access tobacco – thereby helping to prevent them from taking up the smoking habit.

Waiting Times at Accident and Emergency Units

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients, on average, had to wait longer than 12 hours in Accident and Emergency Units in each of acute hospital, between January and July 2013.

(AQW 28231/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on emergency care waiting times is published quarterly and is available to view or download from: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-monthly_waiting_times.htm

Health Treatment Centre in Lurgan

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on proposals for a health treatment centre in Lurgan.

(AQW 28241/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action consultation document, Lurgan was included as a hub in the illustrative hub and spoke model. The Health and Social Care Board, through its Local Commissioning Groups and in association with the HSC Trusts, is undertaking detailed analysis to determine the most appropriate locations for the various hubs and spokes. This work will provide an evidence base for the locations and will replace the illustrative model in the consultation document. It is expected that this work will be completed by the end of this year. Therefore I am not yet in a position to advise on when this facility is likely to proceed.

Non-Emergency Telephone Number

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are plans to introduce a three digit non-emergency telephone number for the emergency services, similar to that used in Scotland.

(AQW 28269/11-15)

Mr Poots: Scotland's current non emergency telephone number for health service is NHS24 (this is a 0845 number). Scotland is planning to replace NHS24 with the NHS111 number currently being used in England.

The Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) initially consulted on proposals for a single telephone number as part of Transforming Your Care. The HSCB subsequently conducted a public consultation on the "Strategic Framework for GP out Of Hours" which included a specific proposal to simplify patient access by reducing the current telephone and text numbers from a total of seven across NI to just one, simplifying access for people when contacting Out of Hours.

My Department, the HSCB and NIAS colleagues are keeping up to date with developments in relation to the 111 number to ensure we learn from the experiences in England and add value to any service which we develop here in Northern Ireland.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Hospitals: Car Parking Charges

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail criteria for exception of car parking charges at hospitals in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 28278/11-15)

Mr Poots: The criteria for exception of car parking charges at hospitals in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust are as follows:

Care Path	Application for Free Car Parking			
	Patient	Next of Kin / Partner	Relative	Visitor
Renal Dialysis Renal Outpatients	Yes	Yes if transporting patient	Yes if transporting patient	N/A
Patients attending McDermott Unit	Yes	As above	As above	N/A
Cardiac Rehabilitation	Yes	As above	As above	N/A
Critical Care	N/A	Yes	Discretionary	Discretionary
Attendance at Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)	N/A	Yes	Discretionary	Discretionary

A Ward Manager additionally has discretion to apply the eligibility criteria for exemption to car parking where the frequency of visits can lead to significant charging over a period of time, for example;

- Relatives spending a lot of time with a very sick or terminally ill relative;
- A patient who may benefit from lengthy or frequent visits from relatives which are of benefit to that patient.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Guidelines Around Lenalidomide

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the implementation, by the Health and Social Care Board, of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines around Lenalidomide.

(AQW 28289/11-15)

Mr Poots: To date, NICE have only published one Technology Appraisal relating to Lenalidomide. NICE TA171 recommends Lenalidomide in combination with dexamethasone, within its licensed indication, as an option for the treatment of multiple myeloma only in people who have received two or more prior therapies.

This guidance was endorsed by my Department in September 2010 through Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 06/10. The HSC Board have advised that Lenalidomide for the treatment of multiple myeloma is recurrently funded in Northern Ireland for all patients who meet the criteria outlined in NICE TA171. In line with my Department's circular, Trusts are required to submit applications to the HSC Board solely for monitoring purposes. Between the period of April 2012 until July 2013, 51 applications were received by HSC Board, all of which were in line with the NICE criteria for TA171.

Experior Medical System

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department will consider the implementation of the Experior Medical system to improve and enhance patient care across the Health Service.

(AQW 28290/11-15)

Mr Poots: This innovative use of technology is designed by local clinicians to support medical training and is not a tool for direct patient care.

The app is in early stages of development. HSC Innovations are aware of the product and have had initial contact with the lead developer. The school of radiology which oversees the training of radiologists in Northern Ireland is aware of its development and will be considering how it can contribute to the education of junior doctors.

People with an Illness Related to Smoking

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the estimated cost of providing treatment to people with an illness related to smoking.

(AQW 28291/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to the answer I provided to AQW 22199/11-15.

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/writtensearchresults.aspx?&qf=0&qfv=1&ref=AQW 22199/11-15>

Accident and Emergency Units: Children with Alcohol Intoxication

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the information that 500 children a year attend Accident and Emergency Units due to alcohol intoxication, how many of these children have been referred to social services for “at risk” assessments, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28353/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not centrally available and cannot be provided from Health and Social Care Trust information systems.

Autism Strategy: Young People with Autism

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Autism Strategy, including the funding that will be available as part of the Strategy to support community-based schemes for young people with autism.

(AQW 28372/11-15)

Mr Poots: A final draft of the cross-departmental Autism Strategy (2013-2020) and Action Plan 2013-2016) has been developed following the public consultation which completed in March 2013.

Subject to Executive approval, I hope to launch the Strategy and Action Plan before the end of the year.

I am grateful to my Ministerial colleagues for the participation of respective Departments in the development of this Strategy and Action Plan. It has also had significant involvement of community sector organisations. The entire document is based on a model of improved social inclusion for children, young people, families and adults living with autism. Each Department will have responsibility for funding those Actions which are relevant to their specific remit and responsibility.

People Suffering from Diabetes

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the estimated change in the number of people suffering from diabetes in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28481/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF) of the General Medical Services contract, the total number of GP-registered patients aged 17 and over with diabetes mellitus is recorded. As the care of children with diabetes mellitus is generally under the control of specialists and not general practitioners, the QOF register excludes them.

The number of patients, aged 17 and over, on the QOF diabetes register for the last three years, and the annual percentage change in the number of patients on the diabetes register, is shown in table 1 below. Both patients with type 1 diabetes and patients with type 2 diabetes are included in the figures.

Table 1: The number of patients, aged 17 and over, on the QOF diabetes register, and percentage change 2011 – 2013.

	2011	2012	2013
Number of patients on the QOF diabetes register (aged 17+)	72,693	75,837	79,072

	2011	2012	2013
Increase compared to previous year	3,713	3,144	3,235
Percentage change compared to previous year	5.4%	4.3%	4.3%

Register sizes are taken from the Payment Calculation and Analysis System (PCAS) as at National Prevalence Day, 31 March each year.

Care should be taken when looking at trends in prevalence over time, as year-on-year changes in the size of QOF registers can be influenced by various factors including: changes in prevalence of the condition within the population; demographic changes, such as an ageing population; and improvements in case finding by practices.

The QOF register figures, along with background information on QOF and detailed register definitions, can be found at the following link: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-resource/stats-gp-allocation/gp_contract_qof/statistics_and_research-qof-prevalence.htm

Department of Justice

Self-Defence Classes: Funding

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what funding his Department provides for self-defence classes. **(AQW 27746/11-15)**

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Department of Justice does not provide funding for self-defence classes.

Consultation Processes: Young People

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice, given the commitment to remove interfaces by 2023, to outline how his Department will ensure that young people are engaged in any consultation processes. **(AQW 27757/11-15)**

Mr Ford: In taking forward work on interfaces since 2010, I have made clear the importance of engaging with communities to seek to find alternative ways of reassuring them that safety can be achieved without separation.

As part of that engagement it is important that we hear the views of our young people. That is why, for instance, I welcomed the publication of the Community Relations Council's report; 'Young people and the interfaces', which included a suggested consultation process for engaging with young people. Indeed, I attended the launch of this report.

Furthermore, the Department of Justice asked the Community Relations Council (CRC) to undertake research into how consultation should take place at interfaces to ensure an inclusive approach. The CRC commissioned the Institute of Conflict Research to look at past and current models of consultation and participation in relation to transformation and regeneration efforts on physical interface structures. Their report will be launched at the Interface Community Partners and Inter-agency Group annual conference on 3 December.

Importantly this report will set out a framework for meaningful engagement with the community on promoting regeneration and transformation around interface areas, including with young people. I have asked officials to ensure that this framework is incorporated within the work of the community groups currently engaged on the various interface programmes.

People Remanded on Bail on a Charge of Murder: Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of occasions, whilst remanded on bail on a charge of murder in 2011, has the individual (i) been convicted of an offence; and/or (ii) is presently in within the court system in respect of an alleged offence; and to detail the nature of the offence.

(AQW 27820/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am currently seeking advice on the Data Protection implications of answering this question and will provide an answer as soon as possible.

Number of Convicted Sex Offenders

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of convicted sex offenders, broken down by risk category, in each council area; and to outline the measures in place to monitor their behaviour.

(AQW 27852/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 10 October 2013 there were 1,080 convicted sex offenders in the community who were also subject to notification under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Information by Council area is not available. The breakdown for each police district as of that date is as follows:

Police District	Number of notified sex offenders
A	102
B	254
C	124
D	133
E	136
F	92
G	138
H	101

Sex offenders are subject to a variety of measures to reduce the risk of reoffending. Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 places a statutory requirement on certain sex offenders to notify personal information to the police. This information is provided in the interests of the prevention or investigation of crime and the protection of the public.

Offenders may also be subject to probation supervision of licence conditions or court orders on release from prison. Sex offender prevention orders are also available to the courts to place necessary restrictions on offenders' behaviour to prevent harm to the public.

For those who present the highest level of risk, multi agency public protection arrangements (PPANI) offer a combined approach to risk assessment and management. Information on how the PPANI arrangements seek to address risk is also available on (<http://www.publicprotectionni.com>).

Prisoners: Keys to Their Own Cells

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27405/11-15, to detail (i) whether all prisoners who hold their own cell keys are fully risk assessed for the safety of themselves and others; and (ii) the criteria that must be met for prisoners to hold their own cell keys.

(AQW 27891/11-15)

Mr Ford: All prisoners are risk assessed before being moved into an area where they will have access to their own cell key. Only selected residential locations in each establishment have the facility where prisoners can have keys to their own cells.

Those located within these areas are continually monitored to ensure the required standard of behaviour is maintained. If the appropriate behaviour is not maintained at the standard required prisoners are deselected from the unit and will no longer have access to cell keys.

There are detailed specific admissions criteria for these residential locations set by each establishment.

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many Sexual Offences Prevention Orders have been imposed in each of the last three years, broken down per court division.

(AQW 27893/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPOs) made in each of the last three years, broken down by County Court Division.

Number of SOPOs made¹ by County Court Division: 2010 to 2012

Division	2010	2011	2012
Belfast	31	19	40
Londonderry	10	11	18
Antrim	11	12	19
Fermanagh and Tyrone	13	6	11
Armagh and South Down	3	7	14
Ards	12	12	26
Craigavon	11	12	12
Total	91	79	140

Source: Integrated Court Operations System

1 Data includes SOPOs made on appeal if no SOPO was made on the original case.

Social Security Related Appeals

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Justice to detail the current waiting times for social security related appeals to be heard by the Appeals Service.

(AQW 27921/11-15)

Mr Ford: In the period 1 October 2013 to 31 October 2013, the average waiting time from receipt of valid appeal in The Appeals Service until the first date of hearing was 18 weeks.

Sentences for Murder

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Justice to detail the legislation used by judges to impose a life sentence for murder.

(AQW 27922/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973 abolished the death penalty in Northern Ireland and replaced it with a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment for murder. Where the court has imposed a life sentence, the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 governs the

determination of tariffs. Under this legislation, the court is required to impose a minimum term that must be served before the prisoner is eligible for release on licence. This exercise involves the judge making an estimate of the period of imprisonment that is necessary to satisfy the requirements of retribution and deterrence. Decisions for release on licence on expiry of this period are made by the Parole Commissioners based on the assessment of risk.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 created statutory starting points for tariffs in mandatory life sentence cases in England and Wales. Following their implementation, the Northern Ireland Office issued a public consultation, in January 2004, seeking views on these provisions and the appropriateness of their application to the sentencing framework in Northern Ireland. The Government at that time made no changes to the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 as a result of this consultation.

My review of this legislation is ongoing. The impetus for the review came from the tariffs set for Wootton and McConville for the murder of Constable Stephen Carroll, which were referred to the Court of Appeal by the Director of Public Prosecutions on the grounds of undue leniency. A consultation paper will be published following the judgment in that Court of Appeal reference.

Sentences for Murder

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Justice to detail how many consultations have been carried out on life sentencing tariffs for murder since 2003; and what changes in the law have been instituted in that time. **(AQW 27923/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973 abolished the death penalty in Northern Ireland and replaced it with a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment for murder. Where the court has imposed a life sentence, the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 governs the determination of tariffs. Under this legislation, the court is required to impose a minimum term that must be served before the prisoner is eligible for release on licence. This exercise involves the judge making an estimate of the period of imprisonment that is necessary to satisfy the requirements of retribution and deterrence. Decisions for release on licence on expiry of this period are made by the Parole Commissioners based on the assessment of risk.

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Sentences for Murder

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQO 2988/11-15, for an update on the review of sentencing legislation for murder. **(AQW 27924/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973 abolished the death penalty in Northern Ireland and replaced it with a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment for murder. Where the court has imposed a life sentence, the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 governs the determination of tariffs. Under this legislation, the court is required to impose a minimum term that must be served before the prisoner is eligible for release on licence. This exercise involves the judge making an estimate of the period of imprisonment that is necessary to satisfy the requirements of retribution and deterrence. Decisions for release on licence on expiry of this period are made by the Parole Commissioners based on the assessment of risk.

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Victims' Code

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice whether he will bring forward legislation similar to that being introduced in England and Wales, under the new Victims Code, allowing the victims of crime to address the court before sentencing.

(AQW 27943/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am planning to legislate in the forthcoming Justice Bill to give victims of crime the opportunity to make a written victim personal statement.

While victims in England and Wales will now be permitted to read out their statement in court, I have some reservations about this. There were mixed views on this matter when we consulted on our proposals for formalising the submission of victim personal statements. I would have concerns about the potential for this to re-traumatise a victim, particularly if the statement contains sensitive material. Reading the statement aloud may increase the likelihood that a victim could be subject to cross-examination and also risk sensationalised media reporting.

While the victim will not have an entitlement to read out their statement, the judge may, at his or her discretion, as at present, read out or refer to part of the statement when sentencing the offender, as is considered appropriate. As with all policies, this matter will be kept under review.

The Justice Committee was briefed on and endorsed my Department's plans to formalise the process for making a victim personal statement at its meeting on 7 November.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice to outline the measures his Department is taking to reduce the amount it spends on car parking spaces.

(AQW 27948/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department is currently consulting on a draft car park policy which will apply to all business areas based in Belfast City Centre. This policy is intended to provide Senior Officers who are charged with allocating spaces with a framework within which to operate. My Department has already achieved £12,000 in savings in the last two years from an expenditure of £64,600 and it is expected that the policy once implemented will produce further savings to the Department.

The Department plans to introduce the new Belfast City Centre Car Parking Policy in spring 2014.

Civil Service Posts in the Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Justice 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 27956/11-15)

Mr Ford: The location and number of full time equivalent Civil Service posts in the Department of Justice (excluding the NI Courts and Tribunals Service) on 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2013 are detailed in the tables below. Information relating to NICTS will follow as soon as possible.

Grade Level at 01 January 2012

Council Area	AA	AO	C/E0	S0	DP	Grade A/7	Grade 6	Total
Antrim	0	0.78	0	0	0	0	0	0.78
Ards	2	4.88	2.04	0	1	1	0	10.92
Ballymena	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	4
Banbridge	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
Belfast	60.53	155.9	134.66	146.76	104.46	60.29	2	664.6
Carrickfergus	0.8	23.6	11.49	3.9	4	3	1	47.79
Castlereagh	5.68	18.72	8	1.89	0	0	0	34.29
Coleraine	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Craigavon	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Derry	1.1	2	0	1	0	0	0	4.1
Down	0	0.81	0	0	0	0	0	0.81
Fermanagh	0	0.57	0	0	0	0	0	0.57
Limavady	5	21.9	8	2	1	0	0	37.9
Lisburn	12	42.31	18.7	8	3.9	1	0	85.91
Newry & Mourne	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
North Down	1	6.99	0.88	1	0	0	0	9.87
Omagh	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Total By Grade	90.11	286.46	184.77	167.55	114.36	65.29	3	911.54

Grade Level at 01 January 2013

Council Area	AA	AO	E02	E01	S0	DP	Grade 7	Grade 6	Total
Ards	2.0	8.69	0	1.6	1.0	0	1.0	0	14.29
Ballymena	1.0	3.0	0	0	1.0	0	0	0	5.0
Banbridge	1.0	3.0	0	0	1.0	0	0	0	5.0
Belfast	54.29	145.91	64.11	59.07	140.93	108.59	61.96	2.0	636.86
Carrickfergus	0.8	22.57	5.31	4.54	5.0	7.54	4.0	1.0	50.76
Castlereagh	6.0	19.3	7.0	2.0	0.89	0	0	0	35.19
Derry	1.1	2.0	0	0	2.0	0	0	0	5.1

Council Area	AA	AO	E02	E01	S0	DP	Grade 7	Grade 6	Total
Limavady	5.83	24.22	6.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0	0	42.05
Lisburn	10.99	35.83	13.93	6.61	6.81	1.9	1.0	0	77.07
North Down	1.0	6.17	1.0	0	1.0	0	0	0	9.17
Omagh	0	2.56	0	0	1.0	0	0	0	3.56
Total By Grade	84.01	273.25	97.35	76.82	162.63	119.03	67.96	3.0	884.05

Offence in Lurgan: Sexual Offences Prevention Order

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to David Paige and any offence for which he was dealt with immediately prior to the alleged commission of the current matter in Lurgan, to detail (i) the nature of the offences and when committed; (ii) the disposal and/or penalty imposed including the date; and (iii) the terms of the Sexual Offences Prevention Order imposed including whether this was in place at the time the offence was committed, and if so, whether the terms were reaffirmed or enhanced.

(AQW 27969/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested constitutes personal information and is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Prisoner Assessment Unit: Reviews

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether any evidence has been established, through the investigation into issues around the Prisoner Assessment Unit and subsequent reviews and investigations, which show links into the handling of prisoners, such as Noel Parker and Kenneth Douglas, who caused reviews to be carried out as to their management whilst they were inmates in this facility.

(AQW 27970/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no evidence from these reviews to suggest that there are links into the handling of these prisoners.

Review of Conviction of Abduction and Rape

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27406/11-15, whether the fourth man in this case was prosecuted; and if so, to detail the charges and their disposal.

(AQW 27971/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prosecution and sentencing are matters for the Public Prosecution Service and judiciary, respectively. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of both and have asked the Public Prosecution Service to reply directly to the Member.

Abolition of Mixed Committals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27701/11-15, for an estimate on (i) the timeframe for the abolition of mixed committals; and (ii) the savings to the Legal Aid budget as a result, based on the average yearly pay-outs for such hearings.

(AQW 27972/11-15)

Mr Ford: Provisions to give effect to the abolition of mixed committals will be carried in the proposed Justice Bill. Subject to Executive approval, I intend to introduce the Bill to the Assembly in the early part of next year. The timeframe for abolition will be dependent on the passage of the Bill.

Currently, a mixed committal will attract either the standard committal fees set out in Schedule 1 to the Magistrates' Courts and County Court Appeals (Criminal Legal Aid) (Costs) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009 ("the 2009 Rules") or, where the Legal Services Commission determines that a mixed committal should be treated as a very high cost case, fees based on the hourly and daily rates set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Rules.

As part of my programme of work to reform Legal Aid, I intend to amend the 2009 Rules to remove the provisions in relation to very high cost cases before the end of the year. Savings in relation to the cost of mixed-committal will therefore be made prior to the introduction of the Justice Bill.

Homophobic and Transphobic Hate Crimes

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Justice whether he has considered reviewing legislation and sentencing guidelines for homophobic and transphobic hate crimes.

(AQW 27997/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 2 of the Criminal Justice (No.2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 makes provision for an increase in sentence for offences aggravated by hostility because the victim of the offence is a member, or perceived to be a member, of a racial, religious, or sexual orientation group or is disabled.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, in its recent Racist Hate Crime Report, considered the current legislation to be adequate, but did highlight the need for increased awareness and understanding to improve detection and prosecution rates. My officials are currently considering the Report's recommendations.

Sentencing within the legislative framework is a matter for the independent judiciary. In making decisions, members of the judiciary are guided by sentencing guidelines which already indicate that, where the offence is motivated by, or demonstrates, hostility on account of (or presumed account of) the victim's race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, this should be treated as an aggravating factor when deciding the appropriate sentence.

Homophobic and Transphobic Hate Crimes

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of convictions for both homophobic and transphobic hate crimes, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28000/11-15)

Mr Ford: While the Criminal Justice (No2.) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 makes provision for an increased sentence for offences aggravated by hostility, hate crime does not constitute a separately identifiable offence in itself. Conviction datasets held by my Department record offences, but neither suspect motivation, nor specific details of the nature and circumstances of offences, adequate to allow the identification of homophobic and transphobic hate crimes.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Scanning Technology

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the justification process for scanning technology within the Northern Ireland Prison Service estate.

(AQW 28043/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the answer I gave to AQW/25557/11-15. No further update will be available until the Justice Secretary writes to me with his recommendation on the way forward.

Registered Intermediary Scheme: Pritchard Test

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27137/11-15, if the proposed changes to the Pritchard Test are implemented, whether this will necessitate a restructuring of the Registered

Intermediary Scheme; and to clarify whether this scheme will be permitted to continue to assist vulnerable people.

(AQW 28047/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Law Commission considered that the use of an intermediary to assist a vulnerable defendant to communicate during his trial should not be a factor which is taken into account when assessing the fitness to plead of that individual. Therefore, if the proposed changes to the Pritchard test are implemented, any modification to that test will not impact on the Registered Intermediaries Schemes.

Swedish Government: Regulation of Prostitution and Trafficking

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of occasions his Department has been in communication with the Swedish Government regarding the regulation of prostitution and trafficking, including the date and method of communication.

(AQW 28048/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is widespread availability of published material on the regulation of prostitution in Sweden. My Department has of course made use of this material. However, while there is much to learn from how other jurisdictions, including Sweden, respond to these issues, I believe the most effective response is one tailored to local needs.

As I have already announced, I am commissioning research into prostitution in Northern Ireland which, while it will consider the regulation of prostitution in Sweden and elsewhere, and the impact of such regulation on trafficking, will focus on the local context. This will provide a sound evidential base for future policy decisions.

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Sexual Offences Prevention Orders are currently within the court system for an alleged breach of the Order, broken down per court division.

(AQW 28049/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of defendants, by County Court Division, currently charged with an alleged breach of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order as at 11 November 2013.

Division	Number of Defendants charged with a breach of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order
Antrim	1
Ards	2
Armagh and South Down	1
Belfast	4
Craigavon	2
Fermanagh and Tyrone	3
Londonderry	2
Grand Total	15

Source: Integrated Court Operations System

Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice when the review of Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 will be published.

(AQW 28087/11-15)

Mr Ford: My officials considered the policy with key stakeholders and I have already announced plans to bring forward legislative change to extend the time period within which offenders can be prosecuted for this offence.

Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 makes provision for seizing telephones and computers for forensic examination whilst a person is (i) under suspicion; (ii) under arrest; (iii) being charged; and/or (iv) convicted.

(AQW 28088/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 sets out the scope of the offence of paying for the sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force etc. It does not confer any specific powers of seizure.

Police powers of search and seizure of evidence are set out in the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.

Disciplinary Hearings Held Under the 2013 Code of Conduct

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the conduct of disciplinary hearings held under the 2013 Code of Conduct, whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service will make a verbatim record of hearings available to staff members recommended for dismissal or demotion in time to submit their case if they are lodging an appeal.

(AQW 28162/11-15)

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

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Nurses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 27654/11-15, to detail (i) the name of the employer of the nurses working in the Northern Ireland Prison Service; (ii) the regulations under which they carry out duties in prisons; and (iii) to whom they report.

(AQW 28200/11-15)

Mr Ford: The nurses who work in the Northern Ireland Prison Service are employees of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. Parts (ii) and (iii) of the question are matters for the Trust so the Member may wish to re-direct these queries to it.

Criminal Activities in Border Areas

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Justice to detail how his Department is working in conjunction with agencies across the border to deter criminal activities such as robberies in border areas like Derrylin.

(AQW 28455/11-15)

Mr Ford: The policing of border areas is an operational matter for the PSNI who liaise with An Garda Síochána where necessary. In relation to rural crime specifically, they work closely with agriculture officials on both sides of the border.

The Organised Crime Taskforce, which I chair, has a cross border sub-group in relation to fuel fraud which is a crime that is particularly prevalent in border areas.

Human Trafficking

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Justice how he plans to strengthen the approach, as well as raise awareness, of front line professionals in addressing the crime of human trafficking, as highlighted in the second report of the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking.

(AQO 5031/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am committed to ensuring that Northern Ireland's response to human trafficking is robust. I am a member of the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group. Its report helpfully highlights some of the key elements of our approach, including the joined up response provided through OCTF and in partnership with the other jurisdictions.

In terms of our approach, prevention, training, supporting victims, investigation, prosecution and improving our understanding of trends and emerging threats have been identified as priorities in the Human Trafficking Action Plan. Good progress is being made.

Examples include the work being taken forward by the relevant agencies to ensure that appropriate training is provided to frontline professionals, including the roll out of training to almost 4000 PSNI officers and the publication of guidance on arrangements for the welfare and protection of both child and adult victims of human trafficking.

The Health and Social Care Board has also developed practical advice to staff in Emergency Departments, which is being piloted. In addition last month the Public Prosecution Service published a Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Human Trafficking.

Legal Aid

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Justice to confirm that none of the proposed changes to Legal Aid will not adversely affect the most vulnerable in our society in obtaining an appropriate level of legal representation.

(AQO 5033/11-15)

Mr Ford: In short, the reform of legal aid will not have an adverse impact. My proposals to reform Levels of Representation in the civil and family courts will ensure that everyone who is eligible for legal aid, including the most vulnerable, will continue to be provided with an appropriate level of representation, paid for by the public purse, across all court tiers.

CJINI: Report on the Past

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice when the Criminal Justice Inspection report on the Costs and Impact of Dealing with the Past will be published.

(AQO 5039/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have recently given approval to Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland for this report to be published and I expect them to do so by the end of November 2013.

I would like to thank the inspectors and staff of CJINI in conducting a thorough and detailed inspection, and providing an authoritative report and recommendations to support the work of criminal justice agencies.

I am confident this report will help inform discussions between all parties and Richard Haass as we look to the all-party group on resolving the more difficult issues, including how to address our troubled past.

Firearms: Age Restrictions

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Justice for an update on any plans he has to reduce the age at which people can use firearms.

(AQO 5040/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department, following a consultation process on a range of issues concerning firearms, concluded that the age at which young people can shoot should be reduced to 12, but with appropriate supervision. It is seeking to reach agreement on the other issues in the consultation, such as a revised fee structure to cover costs of the scheme and a possible banded system so that all can be taken forward together.

Victim Impact Statements

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Justice what steps he has taken to formalise the use of Victim Impact Statements in court proceedings.

(AQO 5041/11-15)

Mr Ford: Victim personal statements are intended to give victims, or their representatives, the opportunity to make the court aware of how a crime has affected them. Work on formalising the process for making a victim personal statement is well advanced. The Justice Committee was briefed on the way forward on 7 November and has endorsed my Department's plans.

We are aiming to have the new process in place by the end of December. Once a decision is taken to prosecute, the Public Prosecution Service will advise victims that they have the opportunity to make a statement and provide them with an information leaflet. Victim Support Northern Ireland and the NSPCC will support victims in making their statement. This will improve on the current, rather ad hoc, arrangements.

I also plan to legislate in the near future to give victims a legal entitlement to make a statement.

Inquests: Historic Evidence

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice what steps he will take to ensure that all available documented evidence, including that from the PSNI, the Ministry of Defence and the intelligence services is provided to the Coroner's Court to assist in historic inquests.

(AQO 5042/11-15)

Mr Ford: In terms of policing, the provision of material to the Coroners Service is an operational matter for the Chief Constable. However, I am well aware that the PSNI has committed considerable resources to this area of work and that it is seen as a priority by the Chief Constable. Dealing with these historic inquests is vitally important for the families as well as the Coroners Service, the PSNI and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and I will continue to encourage and support these organisations in their efforts to address these cases.

You will know that as Minister of Justice I have no responsibility for either the Ministry of Defence or the Intelligence Service and therefore have no influence over their engagement with the Coroners Service. That said I would nonetheless encourage both organisations to work closely with the Courts to assist the Coroner in any way possible to conclude his work in these cases.

Drugs: Prison Service

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Justice whether there is a drugs problem within the NI Prison Service estate.

(AQO 5043/11-15)

Mr Ford: Drugs are prevalent in our community and prisons are not immune from the issues that affect wider society. There is a real and concerted effort by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to address what is an issue of genuine concern.

Physical measures are in place to prevent illicit drugs coming into prisons, the use of drugs is monitored by mandatory drug testing and sanctions are taken against those who test positive for illicit substances.

A joint initiative, involving the Prison Service, the Police Service and other partners, to reduce the drugs supply and demand within Maghaberry Prison is ongoing. At all three prisons revised searching strategies have also been developed to drive performance in this respect.

It is also crucial that support is in place for those with addiction issues. Prison staff are currently being selected to work on a new cutting edge addiction programme which will be piloted in Maghaberry in the New Year. This demonstrates the innovative approach prison staff are willing to take to deliver change.

Department for Regional Development

Upper Arthur Street, Belfast: Cycle Lane

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail his Department's response to complaints that the cycle lane on Upper Arthur Street, Belfast is being blocked by bins, delivery vehicles and road signs.

(AQW 26728/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Traffic Attendants patrol Upper Arthur Street several times each day and during the twelve month period to 30 September 2013, six Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued for contraventions in the cycle lane. However, I understand a further 631 vehicles were recorded but drove away before a PCN could be issued. It is also not clear whether these offences can be attributed to parking in the cycle lane as this information is not recorded.

With regard to bins blocking cycle lanes, this has been reported to Roads Service on a number of occasions. Where a bin has been presented for collection and has obstructed the cycle lane, any complaint will be investigated to establish ownership. My officials have, in the past, spoken to the relevant owners and advised them of their responsibility to ensure that the bin is not placed in the cycle lane, and that once it has been emptied by the collection service, it should be removed from the street immediately after. Where ownership has not been established or where owners have failed to cooperate with my officials, these bins have, with the assistance of Belfast City Council, been removed.

Officials will continue to periodically carry out site inspection and take appropriate action, where necessary.

In relation to road signs, my Department has no record of such signs obstructing the cycle lane.

Grass Cutting

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development how much Roads Service spent on grass cutting in the South Belfast constituency in each of the last three years.

(AQW 26963/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not maintain an analysis of grass cutting expenditure by Constituency area.

Grass Cutting

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development how much Roads Service has spent on grass cutting in each of the last three years, broken down by council area.

(AQW 27076/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not maintain an analysis of grass cutting expenditure by council area.

Unadopted Private Roads in Omagh and Strabane District Council Areas

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 26299/11-15, what steps are being taken by his Department to address this issue and reduce the number of unadopted private roads in Omagh and Strabane District Council areas.

(AQW 27153/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are currently 103 developments within the districts of Omagh and Strabane that remain unadopted. Officials from my Department's Roads Service continue to work with developers with a view to achieving adoptions on as many sites as possible without recourse to enforcement action. This pragmatic approach affords developers the opportunity to fulfil their obligations under the determinations and bond agreements.

Where it is evident that a developer is no longer either willing or capable of completing the work and taking account of bond provision, Roads Service will seek to complete the works using enforcement action, if necessary.

The timescales for progression of individual developments is, however, dependent upon their relative priority and the availability of resources. Enforcement action has already commenced and is being progressed on 4 developments across Strabane and Omagh during the current financial year and it is anticipated similar action will be initiated on a further six developments across Strabane and Omagh before the end of the 2014/2015 financial year.

Dualling of the A6 from Derry to the M22

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development when the dualling of the A6 from Derry to the M22 will be completed.

(AQW 27642/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Currently 40 kilometres of the the M2/M22/A6 Belfast to Londonderry route is either motorway or dual carriageway. My Department's Strategic Road Improvement Programme contains two schemes to dual a further 44 kilometres of the route. These two are schemes the 14 kilometre section from Randalstown to Castledawson and the 30 kilometre section from Londonderry to Dungiven.

You will be aware I recently secured funds to enable work to progress on the A31 Magherafelt Bypass and also allow the A26 Frosses Road dualling to be taken forward.

Unfortunately, bids to fund construction on the A6 were less successful on this occasion. However, an allocation has been confirmed that would enable procurement to proceed for the Randalstown – Castledawson Dual Carriageway. I will continue to press the need for this scheme in future bids for funding.

I hope to publish a Departmental Statement before the end of this year, recommending the way forward for the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling scheme.

The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021 envisages an alternative funding package to construct road schemes including the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven scheme in the period 2015/16 to 2020/21. However, a decision to fund the revenue consequences of this package will be required. In the event of this funding not being available, the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven scheme could be included, together with other high priority schemes, in the bidding process for conventional funds, in the next Budget period. Consequently, it is too early to say when the scheme might be constructed.

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Penalty Charge Notices have been (i) issued; (ii) paid; (iii) successfully appealed; and (iv) unpaid in North Down, in each of the last twelve months.

(AQW 27697/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As it takes up to six months for the full statutory appeals process to run its course, that is, through challenges and appeals, I am unable to provide figures for the last twelve months.

However, the table below details figures relating to Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) issued, paid and outstanding in North Down, on a monthly basis, for the financial year 2012/13:

Penalty Charge Notices issued, paid and outstanding in North Down in 2012/13

Month	PCNs Issued	PCNs Paid	PCNs Outstanding
April	423	366	18
May	456	397	26
June	422	369	17
July	450	389	29
August	432	368	26
September	383	317	23
October	415	347	25
November	392	318	18
December	266	219	23
January	246	202	14
February	305	250	17
March	316	265	23

It is not possible to give figures relating to successful appeals as this information is not maintained on a District Council basis.

Replacement of Street Lights: Cost

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the budget allocated for the replacement of street lights in (i) 2013/14; and (ii) 2014/15.

(AQW 27699/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The budget currently allocated for the replacement of street lights in 2013/14 is £7 million.

The budget allocations for 2014/15 have not yet been finalised.

Cycle Lanes and Boxes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the new cycle lanes and boxes that are planned for (i) the rest of 2013; (ii) 2014; and (iii) 2015, broken down by council area.

(AQW 27736/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is fully committed to improving cycling facilities, and cycling and pedestrian schemes will continue to be identified and delivered as resources permit. The information requested, regarding new cycle lanes and boxes, in respect of the current financial year, is set out in the table below:

Council	Detail
Ards Borough Council	Comber Bypass (Ballyhenry Road to Moate Road). New cycle lane. 2013/14

Council	Detail
Down District Council	Castlewellan Road, Newcastle. Extension of existing footway/cycle track to the junction of Carrigs Road. 2013/14
Lisburn City Council	Bridge Street and Graham Gardens, Lisburn. New cycle lanes. 2013/14

Detailed budgets have yet to be agreed for future years and as such, it is not possible to predict levels of spend or where this might be focused for 2014 or 2015.

Adopted Roads: Donaghadee and Millisle

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the areas in Donaghadee and Millisle (i) where roads have been adopted in the last five years; and (ii) where roads are in the process of being adopted.

(AQW 27750/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the roads in Donaghadee and Millisle which my Department has adopted in the last five years are provided below:

- Edgewater, Millisle Road, Donaghadee;
- Hawthornridge, Donaghadee;
- Morey Hills, Donaghadee;
- Brackenridge, Donaghadee;
- The Cornmill, Donaghadee;
- The Meadows, Donaghadee;
- Rockhill, Donaghadee;
- Seahill, Donaghadee;
- Millisle Road, Donaghadee;
- Moss Road, Millisle;
- Pineridge, Donaghadee;
- Abbey Court, Millisle; and
- Banff, Brackenridge, Donaghadee;
- Ballyrolly Cottages, Millisle.

Details of the roads in Donaghadee and Millisle which my Department is in the process of adopting are provided below:

- East Street, Donaghadee;
- Millbank, Millisle.
- Mount Royal, Donaghadee; and

Hard Shoulder on the M2 and M5 Motorways

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has any plans to allow public transport to avail of the hard shoulder on the M2 and M5 motorways.

(AQW 27765/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Currently public transport does use the hard shoulder on the M2 between Browns Road (between Junction 5 and Junction 4) and the Hightown Bridge (just after Junction 4).

My Department's Roads Service has commissioned consultants to investigate what additional parts of the Northern Ireland motorway network might benefit from using the hard shoulder and the cost effectiveness of using motorway hard shoulders for use by all traffic and, separately, for use by public transport only. Roads Service is currently considering the results of this study.

Board Members of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the expenses paid to each Board Member of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 27801/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The payment of expenses to members of the Board of Belfast Harbour Commissioners is the responsibility of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. However, Belfast Harbour Commissioners have provided me with details of expenses paid to Board Members over each of the last three years, as set out in the table below:

Period	Expenses Paid to Board Members
November 2010 – October 2011 inclusive	£1,622
November 2011 – October 2012 inclusive	£689
November 2012 –October 2013 inclusive	£421

Translink: Transport Stock

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how Translink disposes of transport stock which is no longer required.

(AQW 27805/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Disposal of life-expired railway rolling stock is to the highest bidder though the placement of an advert for the vehicles on the Translink website.

In the case of disposals for heritage purposes (i.e. to transport museums, heritage railway operators etc.), transport stock can be gifted, subject to approval of a business case and economic appraisal.

As far as the disposal of redundant buses is concerned, the aim is to maximise value using the most appropriate outlet. The vast majority of buses are life-expired and the highest scrap value is obtained from a handler selected following a tendering exercise.

Selected vehicles which are considered to have further operational life are advertised on the Translink website and, where appropriate, in Industry publications or by use of approved dealerships.

Offers for non-life expired vehicles are considered for approval by the Translink Executive Committee.

Translink: Profitability

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his plans to increase Translink's profitability.

(AQW 27806/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the majority of Translink's capital expenditure is funded by the Department, the expectation is that in the medium to long term the Translink group will breakeven. Translink is obligated to consider 'Going Concern' in its planning.

On an annual basis Translink seeks approval from my Department for the main elements of its Corporate Plan, including its projected financial position and profitability. The Corporate Plan sets out the broad financial plans and key performance measures for a three year period.

My Department is currently in the middle of a three year cycle where the expectation is that Translink will break even, and it has recently commenced preparatory work on next year's planning process which covers the three year period up to 2016/17 and will take account of all relevant factors including funding assumptions, revenue generation, costs and a continued push for increased efficiency.

Lurgan Railway Station

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will ensure that Lurgan Railway Station will be upgraded, in line with other stations such as Londonderry.

(AQW 27858/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am keen to see progress on the redevelopment of Lurgan Station.

Translink is currently developing a Project Mandate for a redevelopment of Lurgan station.

It is hoped this will be ready for submission to the Translink Executive Committee for approval in December 2013.

The project is at an early stage and will be subject to the necessary Economic Appraisal. Funding has also to be secured.

NI Water: Sale of Seventeen Reservoirs

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) why NI Water are planning to sell seventeen reservoirs; (ii) the location of each reservoir; and (iii) the expected impact on water security and demand.

(AQW 27876/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that

- (i) there are 18 former reservoirs which are no longer in operational service and are surplus to requirements. NIW is obliged, under the terms of its Licence, to limit its land and property holdings to the minimum required for the performance of its responsibilities and therefore plans to dispose of these reservoirs at some time in the future. However, a timeframe for offering them to the market has not yet been identified.
- (ii) The reservoirs are located at:

Name	Location
Altmore	Pomeroy
Ballintemple	Armagh
Ballyboley	Larne
Ballydoolagh Lough and Intake	Enniskillen
Ballylane Lough	Coleraine
Ballysallagh Lower	Bangor
Ballysallagh Upper	Newtownards
Ballyversal	Coleraine
Boomers Reservoir	Lisburn
Capagh	Dungannon
Crockacleaven Lough	Enniskillen
Conlig Low (Old)	Newtownards
Craigahullier	Portrush
Dunalis	Coleraine
Killea	Londonderry
Knockbraken	Carryduff
Leathemstown	Dundrod
Sullatober Pond	Carrickfergus

- (iii) As none of the reservoirs are required for operational service there will be no residual impact on water security and demand. All such matters were taken fully into account before any of the sites were identified as surplus.

Granville Road and A4 Junction: Street Lighting

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed street lighting scheme at the Granville Road and A4 junction, as part of the A4 dual carriageway scheme.
(AQW 27895/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Following the October monitoring round, funding has been secured and made available to install street lighting between the existing street lighting at Granville Industrial Estate and the lighting installed as part of the A4 dualling project at Granville Road. It is anticipated the works, which will commence in January 2014, should be completed in approximately one month.

Penalty Charge Notices: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for a breakdown of the street locations of Penalty Charge Notices issued in North Down, in each of the last twelve months.
(AQW 27907/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: A breakdown of the street locations where Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) have been issued in North Down Council Area, on a monthly basis, is not readily available.

However, information in relation to PCNs issued in specific streets can be provided, upon request, from my Department's Roads Service.

Roads Service: Salt and Grit

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether Roads Service procure salt and grit for roads from local sources.
(AQW 27927/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department purchases supplies of salt from a local Salt Mining & Exploration Company. It also purchases its grit supplies, under local contracts, from various quarries across Northern Ireland.

Roads Service: Salt and Grit

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much Roads Service have spent on salt and grit for roads during winter 2013/14.
(AQW 27928/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The purchase of grit and road salt by my Department's Roads Service is subject to a tender process. I am therefore unable to disclose the cost of purchase for reasons of commercial sensitivity and in the interests of securing best value for money in future competitions.

Roads Service: Winter Service Vehicles

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many winter service vehicles are available for use by Roads Service.
(AQW 27929/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service currently has 130 front line Salt Spreading Machines and 8 Snow Blowers available for use during the upcoming winter season.

In addition, I can also confirm my Department can, through contractual arrangements with farmers, agricultural contractors and owners of plant, call upon additional vehicles to assist with the clearance of snow from local roads during severe weather conditions.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

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

(AQW 27949/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has a number of operational depots and section offices distributed throughout Northern Ireland, many of which are located in rural areas or are remote from urban centres. Parking spaces are provided for staff and operatives at these locations to enable the quick and efficient delivery of services to the local communities. This is particularly crucial in relation to winter service and emergency response activities. Details of the costs for maintaining these parking spaces is not available but would be minimal.

Water Abstracted from the River Faughan

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development how much water his Department is licensed to abstract from the River Faughan; and to detail how much water it has abstracted in each of the last five years, including what has removed to date in 2013.

(AQW 27980/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the current Abstraction and Impoundment Licence for Carmoney Water Treatment Works allows up to 55,000 cubic metres of water per day to be abstracted from the River Faughan for the public water supply.

The table below shows the total volume of water abstracted in each of the past five years and to date during 2013, along with the daily average abstraction.

YEAR	Daily Average (cubic meters)	Yearly Total (cubic meters)
2008	24,720	9,022,000
2009	24,130	8,807,000
2010	25,650	9,363,490
2011	23,390	8,536,490
2012	19,420	7,069,260
YTD 2013	17,220	5,441,000

Civil Service Posts in the Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development 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 28012/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The required information for my Department is shown in the tables below.

DRD Posts* at 1 January 2012 by District Council Area

District Council	Analogous Grade Level								Total
	AA	AO	E02	E01	SO	DP	Grade 7	Grade 6	
Antrim	6	3	0	9	3	2	0	0	23

District Council	Analogous Grade Level								
	AA	A0	E02	E01	S0	DP	Grade 7	Grade 6	Total
Ards	5	3	0	5	1	1	0	0	15
Armagh	8	7	0	13	3	2	0	0	33
Ballymena	22	23	7	42	30	13	5	2	144
Ballymoney	5	1	0	6	1	1	0	0	14
Banbridge	5	1	0	6	1	0	0	0	13
Belfast	80	118	77	102	143	119	50	5	694
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Castlereagh	17	26	5	71	48	19	6	2	194
Coleraine	21	22	7	40	21	13	6	1	131
Cookstown	10	3	0	12	2	1	0	0	28
Craigavon	27	25	6	45	28	10	4	1	146
Derry	12	6	4	16	6	5	0	0	49
Down	23	29	8	44	23	14	3	1	145
Dungannon	10	5	0	8	3	1	0	0	27
Fermanagh	13	15	1	16	5	2	0	0	52
Larne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lisburn	15	2	0	8	2	1	0	0	28
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry & Mourne	12	2	0	8	2	1	0	0	25
Newtownabbey	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
North Down	7	2	0	4	1	1	0	0	15
Omagh	20	36	10	49	34	15	5	1	170
Strabane	7	2	0	6	1	1	0	0	17
Total	327	331	125	512	358	222	79	13	1967

* This includes funded and unfunded vacant posts

DRD Posts* at 1 January 2013 by District Council Area

District Council	Analogous Grade Level								Total
	AA	A0	E02	E01	S0	DP	Grade 7	Grade 6	
Antrim	2	7	0	9	3	3	0	0	24
Ards	1	5	0	4	1	1	0	0	12
Armagh	1	11	5	13	2	2	0	0	34
Ballymena	8	29	9	45	28	12	5	1	137
Ballymoney	1	6	0	3	1	1	0	0	12
Banbridge	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	5
Belfast	34	120	89	89	142	119	50	5	648
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Castlereagh	5	34	4	66	42	15	6	1	173
Coleraine	10	22	9	33	18	12	8	2	114
Cookstown	0	11	0	8	1	1	0	0	21
Craigavon	10	39	11	47	25	12	4	1	149
Derry	4	19	4	23	8	6	0	0	64
Down	16	31	9	40	26	11	3	0	136
Dungannon	0	14	1	10	2	1	0	0	28
Fermanagh	1	22	2	16	4	2	0	0	47
Larne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Lisburn	3	12	2	8	2	1	0	0	28
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry & Mourne	1	12	0	8	1	1	0	0	23
Newtownabbey	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
North Down	1	8	0	4	1	1	0	0	15
Omagh	5	42	14	54	34	16	5	1	171
Strabane	0	7	1	6	1	1	0	0	16
Total	103	452	162	493	343	218	81	11	1863

*This includes funded and unfunded vacant posts

Income-Generating Capital Assets

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the income-generating capital assets that were previously earmarked for disposal by the Executive in 2014-15 that will now be retained; (ii) the income they generate; and (iii) how that income is used.

(AQW 28022/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can confirm your understanding of the Executive position but because of the possibility of future reviews, the commercial nature of this matter and potential employment implications I do not think it appropriate to list the assets. I can say they include car parks. The combined income generated by these assets is around £1.54 million which is reinvested within the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company.

Ballynure Waste Water Treatment Works

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of times the pumping station at Ballynure Waste Water Treatment Works has used the overflow mechanism into the Sixmilewater River; and what safeguard is in place to ensure it operates during a cut in power.

(AQW 28044/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the emergency overflow discharge pipe at Ballynure Wastewater Pumping Station has operated on 30 occasions during the past year in times of very heavy rainfall when the capacity of the Station has been exceeded. The Station is consented to discharge to the Six Mile Water River in storm conditions and such discharges will contain high volumes of storm water, while the receiving watercourse will generally be fast flowing

The Station does not have a fixed electricity generator, but in the event of a power failure NIW's Control Centre is alerted by its telemetry system and operational staff are quickly deployed to the Station with a mobile generator.

Ballyclare: Stormwater and Sewage Drains

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made in relation to separating stormwater and sewage drains within the network in Ballyclare.

(AQW 28045/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it expects to commence work on a revised Drainage Area Plan (DAP) for Ballyclare by the end of November 2013, with investment recommendations available by the end of 2014. This follows the completion of a pilot study into storm separation in Ballyclare by the Storm Water Management Group (SMG), which is jointly chaired by my Department and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency of the Department of the Environment.

Implementation of any recommendations will be within NIW's Price Control 2015 period (April 2015 to March 2021) and will depend on the priority given to investment in sewerage infrastructure as set out in my Department's PC15 Social and Environmental Guidance, which is currently out for consultation.

Reservoirs in Conlig, Co. Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether NI Water intend to refill the reservoirs in Conlig, Co. Down.

(AQW 28081/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the Upper and Lower reservoirs at Conlig have been drained to allow essential safety work to be undertaken. Work on the Upper reservoir has been completed and the reservoir is currently refilling. Work on the Lower reservoir is almost finished and the reservoir will be refilled on completion. Neither of the reservoirs is in service.

Belfast Harbour Commissioners

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the progress made in the releasing of value from the Belfast Harbour Commissioners; (ii) how this value compares to the anticipated income; and (iii) how the difference is impacting on budgetary planning.

(AQW 28089/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer the Member to my previous answer on 21 June 2013 (AQW 24050/11-15). In addition, the £20 million for 2013/14 has been provided in full through the in-year Monitoring rounds.

Hydraulic Fracturing: Water Supplies

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the input from NI Water to the forthcoming Water UK report on the risks of hydraulic fracturing to water supplies.

(AQW 28113/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the report referred to relates to the potential impacts of shale gas fracking on the UK Water Industry and was produced by UKWIR with input from Water UK. NIW had no direct input into the report.

The report provides details of the work both Water UK and UKWIR are doing on this subject and will provide water companies in the United Kingdom, including NIW, with increased knowledge and understanding in terms of any potential risks to water resources in regard to hydraulic fracturing.

Water Consumption: Flushing Options

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of (i) the reduction in water consumption if all dwellings were equipped with toilets with two flushing options; and (ii) offering incentives to households to install toilets with two flushing options.

(AQW 28172/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is well prepared for the incoming winter season and will be able to provide a high standard of service delivery for the salting of roads.

Prior to the start of each winter service period, Roads Service carries out a significant amount of planning to ensure a state of readiness for the coming season. In addition to a number of routine pre-season checks, planning includes ensuring adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, and ensuring all winter service equipment is in working order. Every night, from the end of October 2013 until the middle of April 2014, Roads Service will have almost 300 people on standby ready to salt main roads, helping drivers across Northern Ireland cope with the wintry conditions.

At the start of this season, Roads Service salt barns were at full capacity, with stocks in excess of 70,000 tonnes. Additional salt stock resilience, totalling 38,100 tonnes, is held at six strategic locations throughout Northern Ireland. The current Winter Service salt contract also provides for the supply of a further 15,000 tonnes per month from October 2013 to April 2014, if required.

During periods of heavy rainfall, my Department's primary objective is to deal with the impact of roads-related flooding caused by blocked or overwhelmed infrastructure, such as gullies or other road drainage systems, for which it has responsibility. I am satisfied sufficient quantities of sandbags are in store for emergency purposes and, in line with current policy, my officials will continue to assist other bodies deal with flooding incidents. This includes, for example, the prompt deployment of sandbags, particularly where properties are at risk of flooding.

Members of the public with concerns about flooding can contact the Flooding Incident Line on 0300 2000 100. This service provides a single number to report serious flooding and is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

NI Water: Burst Pipes during Winter

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the advice and assistance provided by NI Water to domestic customers regarding the prevention of burst pipes during winter.

(AQW 28232/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that its 'Beat the Freeze' advertising campaign was launched on 1 October 2013 and will run until February 2014. 'Beat the Freeze' leaflets providing advice on how to prevent and deal with burst pipes, are currently being delivered to every home and business in Northern Ireland. In addition, the first phase of an extensive media advertising campaign consisting of television adverts, radio, online and print media, as well as outdoor advertising on buses and billboards, has already commenced. An extensive stakeholder and public relations campaign has been running alongside the advertising campaign, with NIW staff in attendance at a number of public facing events run by local councils and voluntary organisations.

Repair of Burst Mains Pipes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost to repair burst mains pipes, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28233/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the cost of repairing broken, leaking or burst water mains pipes in each of the last three years is as detailed in the table below:

Financial Year	Cost (£million)
2010/11	6.4
2011/12	6.3
2012/13	5.5

Disused Reservoirs

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of disused reservoirs.

(AQW 28234/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that there are 22 impounding reservoirs under public ownership which are not currently in use. These are as detailed in the table below.

Reservoir	Location
Lough Cowey	Portaferry
Quolie Upper	Broughshane
Quolie Lower	Broughshane
Craigahullier	Portrush
Portavo	Donaghadee
Ballyversall	Coleraine
Boomers	Lisburn
Ballydoolagh	Enniskillen
Stoneyford	Lisburn
Crieghtons Green	Craigantlet

Reservoir	Location
Ballysallagh Upper	Craigantlet
Ballysallagh Lower	Craigantlet
Conlig Upper	Conlig
Conlig Lower	Conlig
Church Road	Hollywood
Knockbracken	Carryduff
Dunalis	Macosquin
Killea	Londonderry
Leathemstown	Dundrod
Cappagh	Dungannon
Altmore	Pomeroy
Lough Money	Downpatrick

Complaints Lodged against NI Water

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of complaints lodged against NI Water, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28235/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the number of complaints lodged against the company, in each of the last three years, is as detailed in the table below:

Year	Number of Complaints
2010/11	4,327
2011/12	2,340
2012/13	3,173

Bus Network: North Antrim

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development what impact the privatisation of Translink would have on the public transport bus network in North Antrim.

(AQO 5017/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have no plans to privatise the bus network provided by Translink in North Antrim or anywhere else. The current system is characterised by a comprehensive and stable network of public transport services across most main roads in Northern Ireland, provided at relatively low fares which have not risen in real terms over the past eight years. I believe that privatisation would jeopardise this.

The public transport system here is regulated. This means that Translink cannot stop running services or increase fares without my approval. This provides passengers, many of whom cannot afford to run a car, with significant protection that is not available in most other areas of the UK. It also means that I require Translink to use the revenue from the profitable routes to help subsidise the more rural routes that have lower passenger volumes. This is illustrated by the situation in the Ballymena district where only 18 out of 43 routes made a net profit. Similarly, in the Coleraine district only 23 out of 60 routes made a net profit.

As a result of these restrictions, it is unlikely that there would be any interest by private operators in running the services. Therefore, talk of competition and privatisation is a distraction from the more important work of continuously trying to improve the standards of existing services and integrating them within the Translink network and with other publicly-funded passenger services.

Roads: ROI Funding

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has received any information that finance from the Republic of Ireland Government will be forthcoming for roads projects in Northern Ireland.

(AQO 5023/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member will be aware, the Irish Government committed £400million to the development of the A5 and A8 dual carriageway projects being taken forward by my Department, with payments linked to progress on the A5 scheme. In February 2012, this commitment was revised to £25million annually in 2015 and 2016 due to prevailing financial circumstances, with further commitments to be reviewed through the Irish Government's Budget Planning process and North South Ministerial Council Transport Meetings.

I have not received any information in relation to funding for road schemes other than the A5 and A8.

Londonderry: Water Supply

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the percentage of Londonderry's water supply that was supplied by water abstracted from the River Faughan, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 28401/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the percentage of water supplied to the Londonderry area during the past five years, by water abstracted from the River Faughan, is as detailed in the table below:

Year	%
2008/09	54
2009/10	57
2010/11	60
2011/12	60
2012/13	63

Roads: Junctions

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the criteria for changing the layout of a road junction where there are concerns over the potential for road traffic accidents.

(AQO 5021/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will agree one fatality on our roads is one too many, however, despite difficult budgetary allocations, my Department has invested, through a targeted collision remedial programme, approx £3.5million since I came to office in May 2011. This has made a valuable contribution towards significantly reducing fatal and serious collisions to record low levels.

Evidence indicates that collisions are now occurring at increasingly random locations, and the focus is now turning towards treating routes instead of individual sites, such as at junctions.

My Department takes into account a range of factors when considering if changes to the layout of a road junction are necessary.

Following each road traffic collision involving personal injury, my officials receive and analyse accident reports prepared by the PSNI that will highlight the specific circumstances and any contributing factors. If, for example, it is considered the layout of the junction was a causation factor, and especially in those instances where there is a previous history of collisions at the location or on that particular route, my officials will develop scheme proposals which will consider a range of potential measures, including engineering measures such as a revised junction layout.

Priority is given to those sites where accidents have occurred most frequently or with the most significant impact and subject to completion of the necessary statutory procedures, schemes are progressed on the basis of the available budget for such works.

Urban Clearway: South Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the trial period for relaxing the urban clearway restrictions on the Lisburn Road, Malone Road and Stranmillis Road in South Belfast. **(AQO 5022/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I met with traders from the Lisburn Road in Belfast and, in an attempt to improve local trading conditions, I decided to relax some of the existing urban clearway restrictions.

The experimental relaxation of the existing urban clearway restrictions changes the hours of operation along the following lengths of road:

- Upper Lisburn Road/Lisburn Road, from Black's Road to Malone Avenue;
- Malone Road, from Upper Malone Road to University Road; and
- Stranmillis Road, from the roundabout at the Embankment to University Road.

At present, those roads are subject to urban clearway restrictions in both the morning (8.00 am to 9.30am) and afternoon (4.30pm – 6.00pm) periods. The proposal is to amend the times of operation such that they will apply in a 'tidal' fashion, with the restriction being removed from the 'out-of-town' side of the road in the mornings, and from the 'into-town' side of the road in the evenings.

My Department now proposes to proceed with the signing and sealing of the Direction Order for the making of the experimental scheme and publication of a Notice stating the scheme has been made.

Officials plan to amend the existing urban clearway signage along these routes and erect temporary driver information signs on Sunday 24 November 2013, with a view to the trial commencing on the following day - Monday 25 November.

A2: Update

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the A2 Shore Road Scheme at Greenisland. **(AQO 5024/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I am pleased to advise work is now well underway on the A2 Shore Road scheme at Greenisland. The contract is almost 40 weeks into a very tight 120 week programme which involves upgrading, to dual carriageway standard, some 3.5 kilometres of the A2 between Jordanstown Road and Seapark. Improvements will also include four new roundabouts at Shore Avenue; Shorelands; Station Road, Greenisland; and Seapark.

To date, the site has been cleared and excavation of earthworks has been carried out. A number of retaining walls and a bridge are currently being constructed. Work is ongoing to Utility services and accommodation works at many adjacent properties.

When I visited the site at the end of August, I was very impressed with the rate of progress. At that time an extensive programme of works within the Belfast High School grounds and at the University of Ulster access had been completed over the summer holiday period.

I am pleased to be able to confirm the scheme is on schedule for completion in summer 2015.

Cycling

Mrs Overend asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he is taking to promote cycling.
(AQO 5025/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has been actively involved in promoting cycling over many years and this has been carried forward by a number of different business units. In order to focus and re-double this work I have established a Cycling Unit in my Department. I have given it responsibility for co-ordinating all cycling issues and for ensuring that cycling provision is a key element in both transport strategy and delivery. It will also work with other interested stakeholders to develop a robust and sustainable strategy and cycling policies.

There are three specific initiatives that my Department is working on that are aimed at promoting cycling. Firstly, there is the Action Plan for Active Travel that I launched at the beginning of August. Contributions to the Action Plan come from eight Departments, nineteen local Councils and a number of other interested stakeholders, including Sustrans and Outdoor Recreation NI. The Plan covers the period up to 2015 and sets out measures to be taken by government Departments, local authorities and voluntary bodies to encourage more cycling and walking and less dependency on private cars.

Secondly, the Active School Travel Programme will provide a programme of cycling and walking skills training and awareness to pupils in 180 schools across Northern Ireland over a three year period in pursuit of the Programme for Government commitment. The objective is to encourage more school pupils to adopt cycling and walking as their main mode of transport to and from school.

Thirdly, I anticipate that hosting the Grande Partenza of the Giro d'Italia in Northern Ireland in May next year will provide a major boost to all forms of cycling and I will seek to ensure that my Department avails of this opportunity to promote cycling and to ensure a legacy that includes more use of cycling as a means of transport particularly to work and to school.

Finally, my Department will continue to promote cycling through its Travelwise initiative.

A1: Speed Restrictions

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development, given that Roads Service is planning to close off the central reservation on the A1 from Hillsborough to Banbridge, whether he is planning to lift the speed restrictions at Dromore and Banbridge which were introduced to improve safety issues along this stretch of roadway at minor junctions.
(AQO 5026/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can confirm my Department is developing plans to provide flyover/underpass type improvements at four locations on the A1 and a north-bound on-slip at Castlewellan Road, Banbridge. The project also includes the provision of a continuous central safety barrier and closing up of all the gaps in the central median between Hillsborough and Loughbrickland.

Whilst I anticipate a preferred option for this proposal could be selected around the end of 2013, there is a considerable amount of work still to be completed before work can commence on site.

I can confirm informal reviews of the speed limits were carried out by the PSNI and my officials earlier this month. Whilst there have been significant improvements to the infrastructure on the A1, it has been concluded, given the number and frequency of crossing points that are still present and in the interests of road safety, the 60mph limit, along those sections of the A1 to which it currently applies, should remain in place at this time.

This position will be reviewed periodically, as work on the proposed A1 Junctions Phase 2 scheme progresses, however, I am sure Members will agree with me that road safety must take precedence over traffic progression.

Potholes: Compensation

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development what was the amount paid out in compensation to motorists, for damage caused to their vehicles by potholes and poor road surfaces, over the last four financial years.

(AQO 5027/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Separate information on compensation paid out for damage caused to vehicles arising from pot holes and poor road surfaces is not available. However, details of all vehicle damage compensation paid out, in each of the last four financial years, are provided in the table below. It should be noted compensation may not be paid out in the financial year the claim was lodged.

Vehicle Damage Compensation

Financial Year	Amount
2009/2010	£214,759.27
2010/2011	£313,912.12
2011/2012	£345,754.15
2012/2013	£127,811.67

A5: Public Consultation

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the dates for commencing the public consultations on the EU Habitats Directive appropriate assessment and the Addendum to the Environmental Statement in respect of the A5 Western Transport Corridor.

(AQO 5028/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: During my predecessor's time, a decision was taken not to carry out full appropriate assessments on the potential impacts on the various designated sites arising out of the A5 Western Transport Corridor (WTC) project. We are now dealing with the consequences of that decision.

There are four reports currently being developed to inform Habitats Regulations Assessments of the potential impacts on those various designated sites, on which it is proposed consultation will commence in spring 2014.

In order to comply with the Judgement, my Department needs to proceed carefully. Therefore, the issues and timing associated with updating the Environmental Statement are still being considered and developed and it is not possible to finalise a programme, at this time.

Department for Social Development

Employment Support Allowance Helpline

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of unanswered calls received by the Employment Support Allowance Helpline in each of the last twelve months.

(AQW 27724/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The latest published statistical information for Employment and Support Allowance covers the period ending 31 May 2013.

During the previous twelve month period (June 2012 to May 2013) the Employment and Support Allowance Centre enquiry line (0845) offered 306,408 calls. A total of 282,481 calls were answered (92%). The number of abandoned calls during this period was 23,927 (8%).

The table below provides a monthly breakdown of the information requested.

Month	Calls Offered	Calls Unanswered	Calls Answered	Response Rate
Jun 12	23,074	1,795	21,279	92%
Jul 12	23,157	1,785	21,372	92%
Aug 12	26,676	1,989	24,687	93%
Sept 12	24,624	1,881	22,743	92%
Oct 12	29,823	2,232	27,591	93%
Nov 12	24,761	1,968	22,793	92%
Dec 12	20,479	1,558	18,921	92%
Jan 13	28,856	2,155	26,701	93%
Feb 13	24,677	2,006	22,671	92%
Mar 13	26,605	2,111	24,494	92%
Apr 13	27,274	2,328	24,946	91%
May 13	26,402	2,119	24,283	92%
Total	306,408	23,927	282,481	92%

Social Housing Schemes Purchased Off the Shelf

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the social housing schemes purchased off the shelf by housing associations since 2007, including (i) the number of purchases; and (ii) the main developer or contractor in each purchase, broken down by the housing association involved.

(AQW 27780/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table attached details the number of off the shelf purchases by Housing Associations for social housing during the period 2007/08–2012/13. The Housing Executive advises that the developer/ contractor column has been compiled from information recorded from Site Registration submissions from Housing Associations, but advise that Housing Associations often respond 'Not Known' or leave this field blank because in most instances they are dealing directly with a selling agent.

Year	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Units	Developer
2007/08	Helm	Bellevue Manor, Lisburn	19	NA
	Helm	1-3 Thorndale Avenue, Belfast	6	NA
	Clanmil	Beechlands, Carnlough	6	NA
	Clanmil	Causeway Meadows, Lisburn	22	NA
	Clanmil	Maple Villas, Springfield Road, Belfast	16	NA
	Clanmil	Springfield Mill, Springfield Road, Belfast	9	NA
	Dungannon & District	Millview, Manor, Dungannon	29	NA
	Fold	162-172 Antrim Road, Belfast	16	NA
	Fold	293 Antrim Road, Belfast	8	NA

Year	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Units	Developer
	Fold	34 Cliftonville Road, Belfast	9	NA
	Fold	45 Cliftonville Road, Belfast	15	NA
	Fold	Carvill Site, Annadale, Belfast	50	NA
	Habinteg	Lawnbrook Avenue, Shankill Road, Belfast	6	NA
	Habinteg	Mill Road, Bawnmore	8	NA
	Habinteg	23 Thorndale Avenue, Belfast	3	NA
	Habinteg	8 Glandore Avenue, Belfast	5	NA
	South Ulster	Springmartin, Martins Lane, Newry	23	NA
	South Ulster	Gilpin Mews, Old Portadown Road, Lurgan	20	NA
	Total 2007/08		270	
2008/09	Belfast Community	Carrickvale Manor, Lurgan	10	NA
	Belfast Community	Glenbryn Park, Belfast	7	NA
	Helm	Chequer Hill, Armagh Road, Newry	33	NA
	Helm	29-31 Beechmount Avenue, Belfast (DPF)	5	NA
	Clanmil	Pottingers Quay, Belfast	27	NA
	Clanmil	Church Lane, High Street, Donaghadee	6	NA
	Clanmil	Glenwood, Newtownards	7	NA
	Clanmil	Foxhill, Derry	5	NA
	Clanmil	The Bush, Dungannon	6	NA
	Clanmil	Wolfhill Manor, Ligoniel Road, North Belfast	8	Templeton Robinson
	Clanmil	Sydney Street West, Belfast	4	NA
	Clanmil	11 Atlantic Avenue, Belfast	3	
	Clanmil	Grange Meadows, Kilkeel	8	NA
	Connswater	Trinity Place, Lisburn	15	
	Fold	Fairy Glen, Crossmaglen	18	NA
	Fold	Upritchard Court, Bloomfield Road, Bangor	14	NA
	Habinteg	Clanrye Avenue, Newry	7	NA
	Habinteg	17 Milltown, Dungannon	6	NA
	Habinteg	Slatequarry Road, Cullyhanna, Newry	6	NA

Year	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Units	Developer
	Habinteg	Ard Grange, Derry	14	NA
	Newington	124-126 Antrim Road, Belfast	6	NA
	Oaklee	7a Glen Road, Derry City	6	
	Oaklee	Antrim Road, Belfast	6	NA
	Oaklee	Throne Retail Park, Whitewell Road, Belfast	11	NA
	Rural	Culowen, Blackwatertown, Co Armagh	6	NA
	Rural	7&8 Beech Tree Lane, Tempo	2	NA
	South Ulster	Mark Street, Lurgan	22	NA
	South Ulster	The Hollows, New Mills, Dungannon (DPF)	9	NA
	Triangle	107a North Road, Belfast	8	NA
	Triangle	Station Road, Dunloy	4	NA
	Ulidia	The Ferns, Rostrevor Road, Hilltown, Newry	10	NA
	Total 2008/09		299	
2009/10	Belfast Community	Carrickvale Manor, Lurgan	6	NA
	Clanmil	Old Bleach Green, Banbridge	8	NA
	Clanmil	Woodbrook Phase 1, Lisburn	7	NA
	Clanmil	Woodbrook Phase 2, Lisburn	10	NA
	Clanmil	Sherman Court, Derry	18	NA
	Clanmil	Curzon Cinema Site, Belfast	42	NA
	Clanmil	Sydney Street West, Phase 2, Belfast (DPF)	4	NA
	Dungannon & District	Gortin Park, Dungannon	4	
	Dungannon & District	Annabeg Park South, Dungannon	2	
	Dungannon & District	Ballygawley Road, Dungannon	5	
	Dungannon & District	Diamond Court, Moy	5	
	Dungannon & District	Lisnaree, Dungannon	4	
	Dungannon & District	Lurgaboy Lane, Dungannon	8	

Year	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Units	Developer
	Dungannon & District	Milestone, Dungannon	5	
	Dungannon & District	Millview Manor, Phase 3, Coalisland	6	
	Filor*	1 Lawnbrook Square/Avenue, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	Fold	Dunanney Avenue, Rathcoole	37	NA
	Fold	The Square, Clough	8	NA
	Fold	Clonard Gardens, Belfast	11	NA
	Fold	37-41 Camden Street, Belfast	9	NA
	Habinteg	1-3 Jubilee Court, Jubilee Road, Dromore	3	NA
	Helm Housing	Bartley's Wood, Ballywalter	14	Dunlop Homes
	Helm Housing	Crossan Court, Lisburn (DPF)	6	
	Helm Housing	Chequer Hill, Phase 2, Armagh Road, Newry	5	O'Hagan Property Group
	Helm Housing	Peggy's Loaning, Banbridge	60	
	Apex Housing	Springtown Road, Derry	23	NA
	Apex Housing	Swilly Park, Portstewart	23	NA
	Apex Housing	Ashdene, Dungannon	11	
	Apex Housing	Dungannon/Coalisland OTS Purchases	11	
	Apex Housing	Lurgaboy Lane, Dungannon	12	Connelly & Fee
	Apex Housing	Millview Manor, Phase 2, Coalisland	24	
	Oaklee	99-103 Henderson Avenue, Belfast	3	NA
	Oaklee	Knocknagreana, Upper Dromore Road, Warrenpoint	12	NA
	Oaklee	Oakfield Court, Tempo Road, Enniskillen	10	NA
	Rural	Aghagay Meadows Phase 1, Newtownbutler	4	
	Rural	Millvale Close, Annaclone	6	
	South Ulster	Gilpins Mews, Old Portadown Road, Lurgan	5	NA
	Triangle	Greenhall Highway, Coleraine	20	NA
	Triangle	Chapel View, Bellaghy, Phase 1	3	NK Construction
	Triangle	Chapel View, Bellaghy Phase 2	3	NK Construction

Year	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Units	Developer
	Triangle	Churchfields, Rasharkin	4	Topaz
	Ulidia	Maloon Manor, Cookstown	5	NA
	Total 2009/10		467	
2010/11	Apex Housing	Bramblewood, Dungannon	11	GMAC Properties
	Apex Housing	Tudor/Shankill OTS	5	
	Apex Housing	Ballycanice Close, Eglinton	4	NA
	Apex Housing	Lenamore Gardens/Leafair Park, Derry	2	NA
	Apex Housing	Forthglen, Cookstown	2	JJ McMahon Builders
	Apex Housing	Forthglen Phase 2, Cookstown	2	JJ McMahon Builders
	Apex Housing	Tobermore Road, Draperstown, Phase 2	17	
	Apex Housing	Workspace, Tobermore Road, Draperstown	6	
	Clanmil	Abbey Row, Main Street, Greyabbey	3	C/o Reeds Rains
	Clanmil	81 Castle Meadows, Cloughey	1	P&J McCullough
	Clanmil	Glenview, Glenavy Road, Lisburn	2	Lester Construction
	Clanmil	McBriar Meadows, Main Street, Carrowdore	4	NA
	Clanmil	Ringbouy Cove, Cloughey	2	Higginson Homes
	Clanmil	St Marks, Thomas Street, Newtownards	3	C/o Reeds Rains
	Clanmil	6-12 Whitewell Road, Belfast	15	TAL Ltd
	Clanmil	Woodbrook Phase 3, Lisburn	8	
	Fold	Dufferin Avenue, Bangor	6	NA
	Fold	Springfield Heights, Belfast Phase 1	16	McFeeley Group
	Fold	Upritchard Gardens, Bangor	9	New Quay
	Helm Housing	75-77 Cliftonville Road	6	NA
Helm Housing	Rossnareen OTS Belfast	2	Mr P Walsh	

Year	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Units	Developer
	Helm Housing	Linen Hall Street, Banbridge	7	Stevenson & Cummings
	Newington/Filor	Delaware Building 119 Limestone Road, Belfast	22	NA
	Oaklee	93 to 105 Great Victoria Street, Belfast	58	Russell Simpson Construction
	Oaklee	Brookfield Meadows, Peggy's Loaning, Banbridge	16	G McGreevy Construction
	Oaklee	Riverside Meadows, Ballynahinch	36	Nevada Properties
	Oaklee	5-21 Beechmount Avenue, Belfast	15	NA
	Oaklee	94-96 Woodland Park, Lisburn	15	NA
	Oaklee	1-5 Fedorna Heights, Poyntzpass	5	NA
	Rural	Eglisk Road, Eglisk, Armagh	6	
	South Ulster	Mark Street, Lurgan Phase 2	13	NA
	South Ulster	Ravens Glen, Chancellors Road, Newry	13	Enda Boylan
	South Ulster	The Demesne, Carnagat, Newry	20	John Rogers
	South Ulster	Fifth Avenue, Derrybeg, Newry	8	E Kelly
	South Ulster	Moorfield Court, Moor Road, Kilkeel	7	Kelly Brothers
	Ulidia	The Moorings, Killyleagh	16	O'Hagan Property Group
	Apex Housing	21 & 22 Gortin Crescent	2	Kieran Gallagher
	South Ulster	Oliver Plunkett Park, Newry	2	NA
	Oaklee	Hosford House/Skainos, Belfast	13	
	Total 2010/11		400	
2011/12	Apex Housing	Killyman Road, Dungannon	6	
	Apex Housing	Aghagay Meadows, Newtownbutler	3	Darren Chapman
	Clanmil	Redwoods, Dunmurry	45	McAleer & Rushe
	Connswater	Ashely Park, Dunmurry	6	Sean Kelly
	Connswater	Glenavy Gardens, Lisburn	4	Lisburn Community Self Build

Year	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Units	Developer
	Fold	Mill Road, Bawnmore (Ben Madigan)	55	NA
	Fold	2B Killinchy Road, Comber	12	Patterson Miller
	Fold	Carnmoney Court, Eglinton	6	Gerry Heaney
	Fold	Glenabbey, Skeoge Road, Derry	22	Braidwater
	Fold	Glenabbey, Skeoge Road, Derry Phase 2	23	Braidwater
	Oaklee	College Court Central, Belfast	31	Gareth Graham
	Oaklee	Greyabbey Road, Ballywalter	6	Dunlop Homes
	South Ulster	Burren Road, Warrenpoint	12	Kelly Brothers
	South Ulster	Hillcrest, Lurgan	7	NA
	South Ulster	The Demesne, Carnagat Phase 3, Newry	12	John Rogers
	South Ulster	5 Abbey Manor, Lurgan	1	G Reynolds
	South Ulster	169 Banbridge Road, Kinallen	4	Samual Clinghan
	South Ulster	Carnagat, Newry	20	B&D Property Services
	Total 2011/12		275	
2012/13	Habinteg	Moorelands, 86 Andersonstown Road	2	TDR Commercial Property
	Oaklee	Barcroft, Hillside, Newry	5	
	Apex Housing	Bull's Hill, Newry	4	EDB Properties
	Apex Housing	Burren Road, Warrenpoint	14	Kelly Brothers
	Apex Housing	Salter's Bridge, Magherafelt	8	Joe McGinnis
	Apex Housing	Gortevin, Coalisland	12	G&V Construction
	Apex Housing	Gortgonis, Coalisland	4	G&V Construction
	Apex Housing	1A & 1B Aileen Terrace, Newry	2	EDB Properties

Year	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Units	Developer
	Clanmil	33-35 Templemore Avenue, Belfast	2	Habitat for Humanity
	Clanmil	The Demesne, Carnagat Road, Newry	18	Bill Davidson
	Fold	Peters Court, Newry	8	Alan Fitzpatrick Developments
	Oaklee	Riverview Quarter, Dromore Street, Ballynahinch	4	via Agents
	Oaklee	Cloona Glen, Upper Dunmurry Lane	21	Bill Davidson
	Oaklee	Glenville Mews, Whiteabbey	6	Barry Owens
	Oaklee	Throne Retail Apartments, Whitewell Road, Belfast	20	NA
	Total 2012/13		130	

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Employment Support Allowance Appeals

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what percentage of Employment Support Allowance appeal applications have been successful in each of the last three years.

(AQW 27807/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The chairman of the Tribunal records whether the decision made on appeal was either more or less advantageous than a previous decision. A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award be made. A less advantageous decision may reduce the allowance or make no change to the original determination.

The table below details, for each of the last three financial years, the number of Employment and Support Allowance appeals which received a final determination/outcome and percentage which were more advantageous.

Year	Final Outcome	Number more Advantageous	Percentage more Advantageous
2010/11	5035	1461	29%
2011/12	6318	2193	35%
2012/13	8559	2855	33%

New Social Housing Builds: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to outline any plans for social housing new builds in North Down.

(AQW 27809/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Table attached details the social housing new builds that are currently programmed to be delivered within North Down over the period 2013/14 – 2015/16.

The Social Housing Development Programme is managed on the basis of a three year rolling programme. The Housing Executive is currently in the process of formulating the new draft Social Housing Development Programme for the period 2014/15 – 2016/17 which subject to my approval will be published on the Housing Executive's website early in 2014.

Year	Association	Scheme/ Location	Units	Needs Group
2013/14	Clanmil	117A Donaghadee Road/ 7 Summerhill Park, Bangor	10	General Needs
	Clanmil	South Circular Road, Extension, Bangor	4	General Needs
	Helm Housing	22 Croft Road, Holywood	20	General Needs
	Oaklee	Clifton Special Care School, Old Belfast Road, Bangor	106	General Needs
	Trinity	78 Rathgael Road, Bangor	6	General Needs
		Total	146	
2014/15	Ark	North Down Older People, Ravara, Bangor	24	Elderly Housing with Care
	Clanmil	Corner of Faulkner Road/ Clandeboye Road, Bangor	54	General Needs
	Habinteg	34-36 Bangor Road, Holywood	8	General Needs
	NIHE	Rathgill Greenfield, Phase 1 Site A	100	General Needs
	NIHE	Rathgill, Phase 2, Bangor	50	General Needs
	Triangle	PSNI Site, 5 Millisle Road, Donaghadee	10	General Needs
	Trinity	West Church, Bangor	18	General Needs
		Total	264	
2015/16	Apex Housing	Killoughey Road, Donaghadee	24	General Needs
	Apex Housing	Moss Road, Millisle, Phase 2	3	General Needs
	Fold	122-124 High Street, Holywood	18	General Needs
	Fold	High Bangor Road, Donaghadee	12	General Needs
	Fold	Rathgael Road/ Clandeboye Road, Bangor	30	General Needs
	NIHE	Kilclief Gardens, Bangor	13	General Needs
		Total	100	

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Disability Living Allowance Appeals

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what percentage of Disability Living Allowance appeals were upheld in each of the last three years.

(AQW 27810/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Chairman of the Tribunal records whether the decision made on appeal was either more or less advantageous than a previous decision. A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award may be made. A less advantageous decision may reduce the allowance or make no change to the original determination.

The table below details, for each of the last three financial years, the number of Disability Living Allowance appeals that have received a final determination/outcome, how many and the percentage which were more advantageous.

YEAR	Number of Appeals with a final outcome	Number More Advantageous	Percentage More Advantageous
2010/11	4607	1651	36%
2011/12	3826	1511	39%
2012/13	3819	1395	37%

Disability Living Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance Appeals

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what is the annual cost of providing transport for (i) Disability Living Allowance; and (ii) Employment and Support Allowance appeals.

(AQW 27813/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The annual cost to The Appeals Service in providing transport for Disability Living Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance appeals during the period April 2012 to March 2013 is detailed in the table below:

	DLA	ESA
April 2012 –March 2013	£343.58	£896.30

Houses of Multiple Occupancy Registration Scheme: Review

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 720/11, (i) what were his Department's findings from their review of the Houses of Multiple Occupancy registration scheme, in respect of addressing and managing anti-social behaviour; and (ii) whether any subsequent recommendations have been implemented.

(AQW 27834/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development undertook a review of Houses in Multiple Occupation regulation in 2011/12. This concluded that the current HMO definition and regulatory controls, including those for anti-social behaviour, were inadequate. Consultation on a new regime of HMO control took place in late 2012 and my officials reported the outcome of that exercise to the Social Development Committee on 25 April 2013. Since then officials have been developing proposals which include a new HMO definition, mandatory and discretionary licensing schemes for HMOs and updated physical and management standards, which will include anti-social occupancy clauses. This work is included in my "Facing the Future Housing Strategy" and is timetabled for completion in 2015/16.

Houses of Multiple Occupancy Registration Scheme: Holylands, Belfast

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 720/11, (i) what special control provisions to address anti-social behaviour, contained within the Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO)

registration scheme, have been employed in the Holylands area of south Belfast; (ii) on how many occasions have these controls been used; and (iii) how many HMO registrations have been revoked as a result of failing to adhere to the conditions on anti-social behaviour imposed by the Housing Executive.
(AQW 27835/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive is responsible for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) regulation and enforcement. The Housing (NI) Order 2003 allows the Housing Executive to apply Special Control Provisions (SCPs) to prevent HMOs from adversely affecting the amenity or the character of an area, due either to the behaviour of an HMO's residents or the existence of an HMO.

SCPs can only be applied to individual properties if the owner/manager has failed to take reasonable steps to abate the nuisance. Under the current statutory registration scheme, the Fitzroy area in Belfast is the only designated SCP area.

The Housing Executive has advised me it has neither applied SCP provisions nor had reason to revoke any HMO registration, as any nuisance has been resolved through, for example, ongoing action of Police, Belfast City Council and the Landlords.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development what differences exist in the eligibility and financial assessment rules of the boiler replacement scheme compared with the rest of the UK.
(AQW 27847/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Boiler Replacement Scheme is currently the only Government grant funded scheme in Great Britain to replace boilers and is unique to Northern Ireland. Therefore differences in financial assessments and rules cannot be made with elsewhere in the UK.

In the UK, there is an Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme which is funded by the energy/utility companies to help UK households lower their energy bills by becoming more energy efficient. However this is not a Government funded scheme. Under ECO scheme some customers may be eligible for a boiler replacement/repair under if they are in receipt of certain benefits. However to meet their obligation targets, energy companies are free to decide how best to deliver this obligation across the UK as a whole, in a way that limits the costs to all consumers.

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.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Contractors

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 27042/11-15, whether there is no documentation in the possession of his Department upon which he based his statement to the Assembly on 10 June 2013 that four contractors had overcharged the Northern Ireland Housing Executive by £18m.

(AQW 27848/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I would refer the Member to the answer I gave in AQW 27042/11-15.

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas: Funding

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the level of funding allocated to; and (ii) the per capita spend in, each Neighbourhood Renewal area in the 2012/13 financial year.

(AQW 27896/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The tables below details funding allocated to, and the per capita spend in each Neighbourhood Renewal Area in the 2012/13 financial year. They provide:

the level of capital funding,

the level of revenue funding and

the combined level of capital and revenue funding.

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2011 Census Population	Total Capital Spend	Total Capital Spend Per Capita
Andersonstown	8,952	£1,343,147.96	£150.04
Colin	18,557	£189,216.53	£10.20
Crumlin/Ardoyne	14,493	£248,620.90	£17.15
Greater Falls	16,877	£1,254,757.91	£74.35
Greater Shankill	18,089	£1,297,800.51	£71.75
Inner East	23,799	£4,450,719.25	£187.01
Inner North	12,444	£249,208.79	£20.03
Inner South	8,688	£830,462.42	£95.59
Lenadoon	2,329	£185,300.65	£79.56
Ligoniel	7,897	£242,584.14	£30.72
Rathcoole	7,408	£27,967.33	£3.78
South West	6,369	£39,204.45	£6.16
Tullycarnet	2,092	£8,348.18	£3.99
Upper Ardoyne/Ballysillan	3,051	£533,248.83	£174.78
Upper Springfield/Whiterock	11,327	£16,412.86	£1.45
BRO Total	162,372	£10,917,000.71	£67.23
Triax	16,109	£3,833,136.00	£237.95
Outer North	15,255	£469,186.00	£30.76
Outer West	8,640	£147,801.00	£17.11
Strabane	5,583	£361,000.00	£64.66
Waterside	9,577	£1,342,481.00	£140.18
Limavady	2,364	£0.00	£0.00
NWDO Total	57,528	£6,153,604	£106.97
Armagh	5,372	£149,995.56	£27.92
Ballyclare	1,247	£0.00	£0.00
Ballymena	4,199	£264,564.09	£63.01
Bangor	2,644	£229,051.91	£86.63
Brownlow	8,658	£257,438.77	£29.73
Coalisland	2,681	£71,364.09	£26.62
Coleraine	6,394	£262,452.06	£41.05
Downpatrick	6,080	£202,120.75	£33.24
Dungannon	1,575	£0.00	£0.00

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2011 Census Population	Total Capital Spend	Total Capital Spend Per Capita
Enniskillen	3,115	£531,078.50	£170.49
Lurgan	8,919	£305,291.70	£34.23
Newry	10,559	£640,893.58	£60.70
NW Portadown	2,704	£308,961.05	£114.26
Omagh	2,594	£551,217.61	£212.50
RDO Total	66,741	£3,774,429.67	£56.55

Notes:

1. Figures include; Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund capital expenditure, expenditure from physical regeneration programmes (Urban Development Grants, Comprehensive Development, Environmental Improvements Schemes and Public Realm).
2. Caution is advised in making comparisons of expenditure across Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. The expenditure is influenced by factors such as; the population of the area, the historic expenditure and/ or proposed capital investment in an area from other initiatives or mainstream sources, geographical location and proximity to existing services and the needs identified in Action Plans. Some NRA's encompass their city centre or town centre and this has a significant impact on the level of expenditure reported for those areas.

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2011 Census Population	Total Revenue Spend	Total Revenue Spend Per Capita
Andersonstown	8,952	£423,044.83	£47.26
Colin	18,557	£1,036,591.21	£55.86
Crumlin/Ardoyne	14,493	£1,048,854.85	£72.37
Greater Falls	16,877	£889,907.74	£52.73
Greater Shankill	18,089	£1,513,435.69	£83.67
Inner East	23,799	£860,113.34	£36.14
Inner North	12,444	£820,481.69	£65.93
Inner South	8,688	£447,715.04	£51.53
Lenadoon	2,329	£481,712.43	£206.83
Ligoniel	7,897	£180,474.54	£22.85
Rathcoole	7,408	£389,601.55	£52.59
South West	6,369	£694,603.23	£109.06
Tullycarnet	2,092	£341,350.02	£163.17
Upper Ardoyne/Ballysillan	3,051	£255,100.81	£83.61
Upper Springfield/Whiterock	11,327	£1,098,210.52	£96.96
BRO Total	162,372	£10,481,197.49	£64.55
Triax	16,109	£1,140,000.00	£70.77
Outer North	15,255	£855,000.00	£56.05
Outer West	8,640	£631,000.00	£73.03

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2011 Census Population	Total Revenue Spend	Total Revenue Spend Per Capita
Strabane	5,583	£463,000.00	£82.93
Waterside	9,577	£685,000.00	£71.53
Limavady	2,364	£197,000.00	£83.33
NWDO Total	57,528	£3,971,000.00	£69.03
Armagh	5,372	£391,322.74	£72.84
Ballyclare	1,247	£29,550.90	£23.70
Ballymena	4,199	£428,585.25	£102.07
Bangor	2,644	£270,949.91	£102.48
Brownlow	8,658	£611,037.61	£70.57
Coalisland	2,681	£189,035.57	£70.51
Coleraine	6,394	£369,762.71	£57.83
Downpatrick	6,080	£488,683.82	£80.38
Dungannon	1,575	£332,773.79	£211.28
Enniskillen	3,115	£437,098.13	£140.32
Lurgan	8,919	£685,010.21	£76.80
Newry	10,559	£570,310.30	£54.01
NW Portadown	2,704	£214,198.37	£79.22
Omagh	2,594	£381,777.22	£147.18
RDO Total	66,741	£5,400,096.53	£80.91

Notes:

Caution is advised in making comparisons of expenditure across Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. The expenditure is influenced by factors such as; the population of the area, the historic expenditure in an area, revenue investment in an area from lead Departments or from other initiatives;

and the needs identified in Action Plans.

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2011 Census Population	Total Spend	Total Spend Per Capita
Andersonstown	8,952	£1,766,192.79	£197.30
Colin	18,557	£1,225,807.74	£66.06
Crumlin/Ardoyne	14,493	£1,297,475.75	£89.52
Greater Falls	16,877	£2,144,665.65	£127.08
Greater Shankill	18,089	£2,811,236.20	£155.41
Inner East	23,799	£5,310,832.59	£223.15
Inner North	12,444	£1,069,690.48	£85.96
Inner South	8,688	£1,278,177.46	£147.12

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2011 Census Population	Total Spend	Total Spend Per Capita
Lenadoon	2,329	£667,013.08	£286.39
Ligoniel	7,897	£423,058.68	£53.57
Rathcoole	7,408	£417,568.88	£56.37
South West	6,369	£733,807.68	£115.22
Tullycarnet	2,092	£349,698.20	£167.16
Upper Ardoyne/Ballysillan	3,051	£788,349.64	£258.39
Upper Springfield/Whiterock	11,327	£1,114,623.38	£98.40
BRO Total	162,372	£21,398,198.20	£131.79
Triax	16,109	£4,973,136.00	£308.72
Outer North	15,255	£1,324,186.00	£86.80
Outer West	8,640	£778,801.00	£90.14
Strabane	5,583	£824,000.00	£147.59
Waterside	9,577	£2,027,481.00	£211.70
Limavady	2,364	£197,000.00	£83.33
NWDO Total	57,528	£10,124,604.00	£175.99
Armagh	5,372	£541,318.30	£100.77
Ballyclare	1,247	£29,550.90	£23.70
Ballymena	4,199	£693,149.34	£165.07
Bangor	2,644	£500,001.82	£189.11
Brownlow	8,658	£868,476.38	£100.31
Coalisland	2,681	£260,399.66	£97.13
Coleraine	6,394	£632,214.77	£98.88
Downpatrick	6,080	£690,804.57	£113.62
Dungannon	1,575	£332,773.79	£211.28
Enniskillen	3,115	£968,176.63	£310.81
Lurgan	8,919	£990,301.91	£111.03
Newry	10,559	£1,211,203.88	£114.71
NW Portadown	2,704	£523,159.42	£193.48
Omagh	2,594	£932,994.83	£359.67
RDO Total	66,741	£9,174,526.20	£137.46

Notes:

1. Figures include; Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund capital expenditure, expenditure from physical regeneration programmes (Urban Development Grants, Comprehensive Development, Environmental Improvements Schemes and Public Realm).

2. Caution is advised in making comparisons of expenditure across Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. The expenditure is influenced by factors such as; the population of the area, the historic expenditure and/or proposed capital and/or revenue investment in an area from other initiatives or mainstream sources, geographical location and proximity to existing services and the needs identified in Action Plans. Some NRA's encompass their city centre or town centre and this has a significant impact on the level of expenditure reported for those areas.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Spend on Properties

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development for a breakdown of the spend on properties by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in each estate in the (i) Ards Borough Council; and (ii) North Down Borough Council areas, over the last three years.

(AQW 27920/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by housing estate. However, the tables below details the spend on capital improvement and maintenance in each Housing Executive district office area covering both the Ards and North Down Borough Council areas over the last three years: -

2012/2013	Capital Improvement £k	Maintenance £k	Total
Bangor	20	2,521	2,541
Newtownards	480	7,433	7,913
Total	500	9,954	10,454

2011/2012	Capital Improvement £k	Maintenance £k	Total
Bangor	807	3854	4,661
Newtownards	577	6049	6,626
Total	1,384	9903	11,287

2010/2011	Capital Improvement £k	Maintenance £k	Total
Bangor	1,124	3,462	4,586
Newtownards	1,226	4,319	5,545
Total	2,350	7,781	10,131

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Employment and Support Allowance Appeals

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the average time taken for a decision to be reached on Employment and Support Allowance appeals.

(AQW 27931/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the period 1 April 2013 to 31 October 2013, the average time taken for a decision in an Employment and Support Allowance appeal from receipt of a valid appeal until the final tribunal determination is 19 weeks.

Social Housing in North Belfast

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of a letter from his Department to a residents' group in North Belfast in October 2013 which denied the existence of religious inequality in social housing, on what basis this assessment was made, especially in relation to social housing in North Belfast.

(AQW 27935/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In September the Department received a letter from five residents setting out a range of concerns about their current accommodation. While the letter made reference to religious inequality in social housing, no evidence was supplied to support this statement. The Department, in its response, explained that DSD and NIHE operate at a regional level across Northern Ireland, where housing services are widely recognised as being delivered on fair and equitable basis. Different geographical areas within Northern Ireland inevitably have their own localised housing issues, and the most appropriate solutions to these will vary.

All social housing in Northern Ireland is allocated using the Housing Selection Scheme. The selection scheme, which is maintained and administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, uses common criteria to assess the housing needs of all applicants. Applicants are awarded points based on an assessment of their individual housing need and then placed on the waiting list for the area of their choice.

Car Parking Spaces: Spend

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

(AQW 27950/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development introduced revised guidance with effect from 15 November 2010 for staff applying for, and using, officially provided car parking facilities in Belfast City Centre.

The revised guidance introduced a number of key changes relating to the qualifying criteria for car parking spaces, tighter administrative controls and the reduction and removal of leased spaces.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Double Glazing Schemes in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the expected completion date for Northern Ireland Housing Executive double glazing schemes in North Down.

(AQW 27966/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they have two phases of double glazing still to go on site in the North Down area. In the current financial year a scheme for 244 dwellings in Bloomfield/Rathgill, Groomsport and Kilcooley is programmed to start in March 2014.

In 2014/15 a scheme for 196 dwellings in Holywood and Conlig is currently programmed to start in April 2014 but it is likely to slip to later in 2014. These schemes should address any remaining double glazing for Housing Executive homes in the North Down area.

Total Housing Debt

Ms Fearon asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total amount of housing debt for the most recent five years, including (i) how this compares with figures for Britain and the South of Ireland; and (ii) how this varies by constituency.

(AQW 27982/11-15)

Mr McCausland: According to statistics published by the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) there are currently 11.2 million homeowners in the UK who have a residential mortgage, with loans worth £1.2

trillion. The numbers in mortgage arrears representing 2.5% or more of the outstanding balance for each of the last five years is as follows:

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| ■ 2012/13 | 159,700 | ■ 2009/10 | 196,500 |
| ■ 2011/12 | 159,100 | ■ 2008/09 | 203,900 |
| ■ 2010/11 | 171,900 | | |

CML arrears data relates to the UK as a whole. No breakdown of data is available for the regions or for individual countries (or constituencies) within the UK however, it is estimated that Northern Ireland accounts for between 1.5 and 3% of the UK mortgage market. Should the proportion of homeowners in Northern Ireland that are in arrears mirror the proportion of homeowners in Northern Ireland within the overall UK mortgage market, it could be estimated that at March 2013 there were between 2,396 and 4,791 homeowners in mortgage arrears of 2.5% or more of the outstanding balance, which could represent an estimated total outstanding mortgage balance of £0.5 billion.

Information available from the Central Bank of Ireland website indicates that there are currently 770,000 homeowners in the Republic of Ireland who have a residential mortgage, with loans worth €109.1 billion. The numbers in mortgage arrears of 90 days or more (and the estimated value of these mortgages) for each of the last four years (the data for 2008/09 is not available) is as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------|--------|---------------|
| ■ 2012/13 | 95,554 | €18.1 billion |
| ■ 2011/12 | 75,679 | €14.9 billion |
| ■ 2010/11 | 49,609 | €9.6 billion |
| ■ 2009/10 | 32,321 | €6.1 billion |

The total rent and domestic rates arrears due to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in each of the last five years are as follows:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| ■ 2012/13 | £14,604,000 |
| ■ 2011/12 | £13,988,000 |
| ■ 2010/11 | £12,567,000 |
| ■ 2009/10 | £13,412,000 |
| ■ 2008/09 | £13,923,000 |

The total rent arrears due to the Housing Associations in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years available (2012/13 data is not yet available) are as follows:

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| ■ 2011/12 | £8,134,334 |
| ■ 2010/11 | £7,409,308 |
| ■ 2009/10 | £7,004,266 |
| ■ 2008/09 | £7,797,754 |
| ■ 2007/08 | £7,669,468 |

Information on the amount of domestic rate debt in each of the last five years is not available. Information is available for the last four financial years.

Information on the comparative figures for Britain and the South of Ireland is not available. No direct comparisons can be drawn. Information is also not available at constituency level.

The table below (supplied by the Department of Finance and Personnel) shows the domestic rate debt at the end of each rating year. The figures for the years ending 31st March 2012 and 31st March 2013 include debt arising from empty domestic property which became liable for rates on 1st October 2011. They are therefore not directly comparable with the two previous years.

Domestic Rating Debt at End of Year

Financial Year Ending:	NI Total
31st March 2010	£57,299,206
31st March 2011	£62,034,581
31st March 2012	£70,656,674
31st March 2013	£78,801,619

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 27342/11-15, to outline why 32 properties in the Ballymena District Office of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive are deemed difficult to let, having been void for at least four weeks and having no eligible applicants, given the large number of applicants on the housing waiting list.

(AQW 27984/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that 28 of the 32 properties that are deemed as “difficult to let” are located in the Drumtara, Doury Road and Dunclug estates in Ballymena. They advise that these estates are low demand where the turnover of properties is greater than the housing need. These estates are currently the subject of DSD/NIHE strategies to eliminate blight and encourage regeneration. With regard to the remaining four properties, they are situated in various estates in Ballymena town and have been offered to and refused by more than four waiting-list applicants, and are therefore coded as “difficult to let”.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 27342/11-15, in relation to the 32 properties in the Ballymena District Office of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive deemed ‘difficult to let’, to detail (i) the location of these properties; and (ii) the length of time these properties have been void.

(AQW 27985/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that of the 32 properties coded as difficult to let, nine are located in Drumtara, seven are in Doury Road and twelve are located in Dunclug.

Eight of the properties in Drumtara were subject to extensive vandalism and have been vacant for four years. The ninth property in Drumtara was void from June this year but has now been allocated.

The seven properties in Doury Road range from being void from two months to three years. The 12 properties in Dunclug range from being void from six months to three years. The remaining four properties are located in various estates in Ballymena town, one of which was allocated on 21 October 2013, and one is now being used for decanting purposes.

Mortgage Arrears

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development what support is available to home owners who are in mortgage arrears; and for his assessment of the extent of the problem of mortgage arrears.

(AQW 28005/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am aware that a large number of people in Northern Ireland are experiencing difficulty in meeting mortgage payments which can lead to the distressing prospect of court action and possible repossession and I empathise with those finding themselves in this situation.

The most recent information from the Council of Mortgage Lenders in August 2013 indicated that, in the UK, the proportion of mortgages with arrears of three months or more stood at 1.85% of the total mortgages.

My Department funds the Mortgage Debt Advice Service and I would urge anyone experiencing mortgage difficulties to access the services available. This free advice service, operated by the Housing Rights Service, has received funding until March 2015. The service operates during office working hours and includes an online advisor and evening opening hours to 8.00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and can be contacted directly on 0300 323 0310.

My Department also provides help through Support for Mortgage Interest to people receiving certain social security benefits.

Number of Civil Service Posts in Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development 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 28013/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Programme for Government 2011-2015 provides the overarching direction for the Department's work which is organised across three areas, namely the Social Security Agency, Resources and Social Policy Group and Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group. As work is not organised by local council area it is not possible to provide staff information broken down on this basis.

The number of funded posts in the Department in January 2012 and January 2013, at the general service grades requested is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Grade	January 2012	January 2013
G6	11.00	12.00
G7	88.67	99.55
DP	199.30	206.22
S0	402.21	426.73
EO1	598.51	615.44
EO2/SS01	1858.83	1955.04
AO/SS02	3229.42	3222.14
AA	514.77	497.27
Total	6902.71	7034.39

Housing Executive Applicants: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive applicants, who are in housing stress, in North Down are currently resident in hostel accommodation.

(AQW 28061/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the number of people with Full Duty Applicant status who were in temporary accommodation at 12 November 2013 was as follows:-

- In Housing Executive hostels 6
- In voluntary sector hostels 2

The Housing Executive has further advised that these figures only refer to applicants placed by them in response to their homelessness duties. They do not include those who self refer to the voluntary sector.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Staff

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development when the 1 per cent pay rise awarded in July 2013 will be paid to Northern Ireland Housing Executive employees.

(AQW 28063/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department has passed the pay increase request for Northern Ireland Housing Executive staff to the Finance Minister for his approval. Once approved any increase will be paid as soon as possible thereafter.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Social Housing Reform Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development what is the cost of the new Project Director, Finance Adviser and Asset Management Adviser recruited by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as part of its Social Housing Reform Programme.

(AQW 28065/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total cost of the new Project Director, Finance Adviser and Asset Manager is £1,407,000 (excluding National Insurance Contributions) over the four year period of the DSD Social Housing Reform Programme.

The post holders were recruited by the Strategic Investment Board Ltd (SIB) on four year fixed term contracts and are SIB employees.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Staff

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development what action he is taking to ensure that Northern Ireland Housing Executive staff receive the 1 per cent pay increase awarded in July 2013.

(AQW 28073/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has passed the pay increase request for Northern Ireland Housing Executive staff to the Finance Minister for his approval. Once approved any increase will be paid as soon as possible thereafter.

Work Related Activity Group

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development what assessment or reviews take place of a person in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance and in the Support Group before they are transferred to the Work Related Activity Group.

(AQW 28090/11-15)

Mr McCausland: All Employment and Support Allowance claimants are subject to the Work Capability Assessment process which determines their entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance by assessing their ability to work and carry out everyday tasks. Following participation in the initial Work Capability Assessment, claimants may be placed in the Work Related Activity Group or Support Group.

However, it is accepted that medical conditions can improve or deteriorate over time with treatment and therefore all claimants are subject to periodic reviews to ensure that they are receiving the correct amount of benefit and support.

Depending on the outcome of future reviews, claimants who were previously placed in the Support Group may be removed from that group and placed in the Work Related Activity Group and vice versa.

Project 24 Art Pods

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what will happen to the Project 24 art pods after the two years is complete.

(AQW 28106/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department in partnership with North Down Borough Council undertook a Revitalisation Project on Queen's Parade with the aim of encouraging economic regeneration by encouraging increased footfall in the town centre. Project 24 aimed to build on the town's vibrant art and craft scene by creating a new space for artists to work and display their art. Project 24 was developed on the basis that it would be an interim project while plans were being prepared for the comprehensive development of the Queen's Parade site by the Department. Given the success of the project, Council has agreed that Project 24 will then be relocated to another site within the borough when construction work commences on Queen's Parade development.

Project 24 Art Pods: Running Costs

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what are the running costs of the Project 24 art pods.

(AQW 28108/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department in partnership with North Down Borough Council undertook a Revitalisation Project on Queen's Parade with the aim of encouraging economic regeneration by encouraging increased footfall in the town centre. DSD provided capital funding for the project and North Down Borough Council is responsible for the management of the project and the running costs.

Houses of Multiple Occupation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development when his Department intends to commence and complete the review of Houses of Multiple Occupation; and (ii) for an update on the position and charge of owner-occupiers within a property which also comprises rented accommodation.

(AQW 28191/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The review of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) concluded in 2012 and found the definition and regulatory controls were inadequate. Consultation on a new regime of HMO control took place in late 2012 and my officials reported the outcome of that exercise to the Social Development Committee on 25 April 2013. Since then officials have been drafting legislative proposals which include a new HMO definition, mandatory and discretionary licensing schemes for HMOs and updated physical and management standards. This work is included in my "Facing the Future Housing Strategy" and is timetabled for completion in 2015/16.

The Housing Executive is reviewing its enforcement practices under the current HMO regulatory regime as far as they relate to converted owner occupied self-contained flats, with completion expected by the end of December. Pending the outcome of the review, the Housing Executive is not pursuing registration in respect of owner occupied properties.

Social Housing on the Girdwood site

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 27382/11-15, whether a planning application has been lodged for the development of social housing on the Girdwood site.

(AQW 28240/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A planning application for the Girdwood site was submitted on 27 June 2013 by Apex Housing Association and validated by the Department of Environment (Planning Service) on 03 July 2013.

The planning reference number is Z/2013/0726/F and the proposal was described as:

'Residential development comprising 19 three bedroom and 17 two bedroom dwellings, 20 duplex units, 4 apartments, construction of new access road and associated site works (60 residential units in total)'

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Staff Pay

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) why the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has not yet paid members of staff the one percent pay increase awarded in July 2013; and (ii) when the pay increase will be actioned.

(AQW 28253/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) Approval for the 1% pay increase has been granted by the Finance Minister on 14 November 2013.
- (ii) The Northern Ireland Housing Executive intends to pay this as soon as possible.

Public Realm Works Scheme for Donaghadee

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the planned public realm works scheme for Donaghadee.

(AQW 28284/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Over the past 12 months my Department has been working with representatives from Ards Borough Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the local community to develop a major public realm scheme for Donaghadee.

The works will address all aspects of street design including paving, kerbstones, street furniture, lighting and planting. The total value of the works is estimated to be £2.4 million, with my Department investing £1.4 million and Council investing £1 million.

The design for each town was completed with the help of the many different stakeholders and these schemes will build upon the individuality and unique attributes of each town.

A contractor is due to be appointed in early June 2014 and construction work will commence in late June 2014. The scheme will take 1 year to complete.

Throughout the construction phase my Department will continue to work with the local representatives and the wider public to keep them fully informed about the programme of works.

Savings due to Outsourcing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 26721/11-15, to detail the anticipated savings to his Department through outsourcing over each of the five years; and what these estimates are based on.

(AQW 28303/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The decision by the Department for Social Development to outsource its Soft Services was an operational one driven by a need to achieve efficiencies. It forms part of a wider NICS procurement exercise being taken forward by the Department of Finance and Personnel for the provision of Security and Ancillary Services within which departments specify their individual requirements. With the tendering process at an early stage, disclosure of the anticipated efficiencies at this point in time is likely to prejudice the Department's commercial interests. That said, significant efficiencies are anticipated.

Disability Living Allowance Payments

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development why Disability Living Allowance payments are considered as household income when calculating entitlement to the Boiler Replacement Scheme.
(AQW 28325/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The boiler replacement scheme was launched in September 2012 to help as many low to medium income owner occupier households as possible to replace their old inefficient boilers using the limited amount of money (£12 million) that was available to the scheme which had been provided by the NI Executive.

This is a totally new scheme unique to Northern Ireland, which falls outside any other Government scheme where receipt of Disability Living Allowance would be disregarded for other grant applications. The annual household income and grant limits were set for the scheme to provide an incentive to those low to medium income owner occupier households, including the working fuel poor who would not normally have access to energy efficiency grants, to replace their old inefficient boiler, thus improving the energy efficiency of their homes and saving them money in the long term. The criteria for the scheme is applied to each individual applicant equally.

The scheme was also never intended to provide the full cost of a replacement boiler for homeowners who may have been in receipt of a disregarded benefit for other Government grants. There is no provision within the legislation to disregard any income, therefore all income (including Disability Living Allowance) is counted towards the grant threshold.

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.

Phase 4 of the Village Regeneration Programme

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development what is the status of Phase 4 of the Village Regeneration programme; and when this phase will proceed.
(AQW 28337/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As I stated in my response to Mr J Allister on this matter (AQW 26652/11-15), it was always the intention to regenerate the Village with three phases of social housing followed by a fourth phase of private affordable housing. The Housing Executive has determined that three phases of social housing totalling 114 new homes will meet their current assessment of social housing need in the area.

The first two phases of 87 new homes are complete or nearing completion. The third phase of 27 houses will start in early 2014. Once planning approval is granted for the third phase, the Housing Executive will commence consultation with the local community about the provision of the affordable housing element.

The need for additional social housing will be reviewed in the event that affordable housing does not proceed as anticipated or there is a significant increase in demand for social housing in the area.

Helm Housing

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development what assurance he can give that the £8 million grant provided to Helm Housing for 200 new homes in the Great George Street area will be recovered.
(AQO 5050/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department's position has always been that it will recover any payments of grant where these fall due - but will do so in a way that does not jeopardise the viability of an Association or services to tenants. The Housing Executive and Helm Housing are in discussions regarding the recovery of this grant at present and I will let you know the position when these discussions have concluded.

Housing: Regeneration Schemes

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the criteria used for the six regeneration schemes rolled out by his Department.

(AQO 5051/11-15)

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: Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland, 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, that is, 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 scored both amongst those most in need according to the regeneration indicators, and those 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, urban and rural environments and differing housing problems.

Double Glazing: South Down

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the double glazing schemes planned for the South Down constituency.

(AQO 5052/11-15)

Mr McCausland: You may be interested to know that in relation to the Programme for Government target on double glazing, the Housing Executive has already carried out 8,856 double glazing window installations and despite the delay in awarding their new double glazing contracts, the Programme for Government target to ensure that all Housing Executive properties are double glazed by 2015 will be met.

In relation to the question the Housing Executive has advised me that the information is not available in the format requested as they do not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, they have further advised that there are three phases of double glazing planned in their Downpatrick District office area as follows:-

- Phase 1 – Downpatrick town, Ardglass and Killough for 401 dwellings
- Phase 2 – Ballynahinch, Drumaness and Saintfield for 155 dwellings
- Phase 3 – Castlewellan and Newcastle for 303 dwellings

The first of these schemes is programmed to start in March 2014, with the others following later in the year.

Social Security: Fraud

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the new initiatives being pursued to combat Social Security fraud.

(AQO 5053/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The level of Fraud and Error at 0.9% of total expenditure on benefits administered by the Social Security Agency was the lowest ever level. Despite this success, my Department is not complacent and is developing a range of new initiatives to further enhance its counter fraud capabilities. This is in line with similar initiatives taken forward by the Department for Work and Pensions in Great Britain. Three main initiatives are currently being taken forward:

- First is the establishment of a new Single Investigation Service to tackle fraud across the benefit system and bring greater cohesion to counter-fraud operations;
- Secondly improved targeting of fraud through new IT systems with enhanced data matching; and
- Thirdly tougher penalties to deal with fraudulent behaviour are contained within the Welfare Reform Bill.

In addition, my Department is currently considering a number of future new measures including a Single Fraud Hotline phone number to report both benefit and tax credit fraud.

Procurement: Local Companies

Mrs Hale asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the action he is taking to ensure that procurement opportunities, created by his Department, maximise the opportunities for small local companies.

(AQO 5054/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department's contracts are predominately awarded through the Department of Finance and Personnel's Central Procurement Directorate. We rely on their advice to ensure that small and medium sized businesses are not disadvantaged.

Welfare Reform

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the dates in 2013 that he, or his senior officials, met with each of the political parties represented in the Assembly in relation to the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQO 5055/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The dates I and my officials met with political parties represented in the Assembly in relation to the Welfare Reform Bill are set out below:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| ■ 28 January 2013 | ■ 22 April 2013 |
| ■ 25 February 2013 | ■ 3 June 2013 |
| ■ 14 March 2013 | ■ 27 June 2013 |
| ■ 19 March 2013 | ■ 2 July 2013 |

Social Enterprise Hub: Enniskillen

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed location of a Social Enterprise Hub in Enniskillen.

(AQO 5056/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is finalising lease negotiations on the preferred locations for the Social Economy Incubation Hub in Enniskillen. It is anticipated that the negotiations will be completed later this month, with the hub becoming operational in March 2014.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the introduction of a new Warm Homes scheme.

(AQO 5057/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The existing Warm Homes Scheme is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and delivered by Bryson Energy and H&A Mechanical Services under contract. That contract will end on 30 June 2014 and there is no provision to extend it further. My Department in partnership with the Housing Executive, the mid Ulster cluster of Councils (Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt) and Newtownabbey Council are conducting a pilot exercise targeting households with low

incomes to provide energy efficiency improvements. The findings of this pilot exercise will be evaluated and a public consultation on proposals for a new Warm Homes Scheme will be undertaken in early 2014. My Department intends to have a new scheme in place for 1 July 2014 which will target those householders most affected by fuel poverty and provide energy efficiency improvements.

Social Enterprises: County Down

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development, given that County Down accounts for 23 per cent of the population but only 13 per cent of departmental social enterprises, whether he will concentrate his efforts in the development of social enterprises in that county.

(AQO 5058/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment has lead policy responsibility for social enterprise. Whilst my Department does not have any departmental social enterprises, it does have a Programme for Government commitment to 'Invest in social enterprise growth to increase sustainability in the broad community sector.'

The figure of 13% which the member refers to relates to a recent report jointly commissioned by DETI and DSD, and refers to the number of third sector organisations located in County Down. It should also be noted that this figure excludes Belfast which was categorised separately in the report due to the volume of third sector organisations based there.

The mapping report looked at the potential of the third sector to become more enterprise driven. An action plan to implement the key recommendations from this report will be developed and agreed with DETI.

The focus of this action plan will be to develop and support social enterprise activity across the region to include County Down.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Insurance: Assembly Policy

Mr Brady asked the Assembly Commission what steps it has taken to ensure all Members are aware of the Assembly's public liability insurance policy.

(AQO 5065/11-15)

Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The provision of insurance for Members, in particular the annual Combined Employers' and Public Liability policy is set out at sub-paragraphs (3) to (5) of paragraph 28 of the Financial Support to Members Handbook. Sub-paragraph (5) states that "The Commission undertakes to provide insurance cover annually for Employers' and Public liability. Details of the Assembly insurance policies are available from the Finance Office". Therefore, while a copy of the entire annual policy document is not routinely issued to Members it is available, on request, from the Finance Office.

The Combined policy covers Members in respect of their employees and, most notably for the public liability element, their constituency office. As required by Regulation 5 of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998, a certificate is issued to Members each year for display in their constituency offices. For the current financial year, the certificates were emailed to Members on 12 April 2013 and a reminder letter was also issued to all Members on 23 May 2013.

Cycle to Work Scheme

Mr McAleer asked the Assembly Commission what plans are in place to encourage staff to cycle to work.

(AQO 5066/11-15)

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): In an attempt to encourage Secretariat staff to cycle to work, the Assembly Commission introduced a Cycle to Work Scheme in February 2013. It is proposed that the Scheme will run annually with new applications accepted during February and March each year.

Following the introduction of the Cycle to Work Scheme the Sustainable Development Office has worked in conjunction with Cycling Ulster, DRD Travelwise NI and CTC (The National Cycling Charity) to provide cycling advice sessions. These sessions aim to provide information on safe cycling and encourage members of staff who would like to cycle but have yet to join the Cycle to Work Scheme.

Additional cycle racks have been located in the vicinity of Parliament Buildings and additional lockers have been provided in one of the shower rooms in Parliament Buildings.

The Sustainable Development Office also promotes the annual 10 Minute Cycle Challenge, organised by Smarter Travel Workplaces and Travelwise NI and the Active Belfast Workplace Cycle Challenge. Such events promote cycling to work, engage new participants through challenge incentives and continue encouragement through interactive websites.

Information on cycling is available to all staff via the Sustainable Development Office Cycle to Work Scheme page on the Assembly intranet, AssISt.

Parliament Buildings: Security Staff

Mr Copeland asked the Assembly Commission for an update on the implementation of the changes to the Usher/Security Officer posts.

(AQO 5068/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): In March 2012, the Assembly's Business Efficiency Review project board approved a report produced by the Business Efficiency Review team, that concluded that the Assembly's Security Officer and Usher disciplines be amalgamated into a unified cadre of Security Operatives. The Board also approved a related recommendation that management consider whether special arrangements are required for control room roles.

Following further discussions and consultation between Management Side, Trade Union Side and staff, both recommendations were subsequently endorsed by the Director General. A small cross Directorate Amalgamation group was set up to oversee the transition to the new amalgamated model, and a planning process was put in place by the Assembly's Head of Security so that the necessary steps could be taken to deliver amalgamation as planned. The new amalgamated model rolled out on 28th October 2013, with the formation of new teams of Control Room Operatives and Ushers (amalgamated from existing Ushers and Security Officers).

Parliament Buildings: Union Flag

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission for an update on increasing the number of days on which the Union Flag is flown from Parliament Buildings.

(AQO 5069/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): At a meeting of the Assembly Commission held on 5 February 2013 the Commission tasked officials to:

- consult with Parties to review the number of days upon which the Union Flag flies from Parliament Buildings,
- to detail a range of options,
- and to set out how a process of public consultation could be carried out and arrangements for completing an Equality Impact Assessment.

On 6 March 2013 Parties were invited to submit written statements on this issue, with a closing date for comments of 10 April 2013. Seven Parties submitted written responses. A paper on the motion was

listed for initial consideration at the Commission meeting on 26 June 2013. However, it was agreed that it would be brought back to the Commission following the summer recess. A paper, detailing a range of options, will be considered at the Assembly Commission meeting to be held on the 20 November 2013. This will be the first meeting of the Commission since June 2013.

Parliament Buildings: Drainage

Mr Agnew asked the Assembly Commission whether a drainage system will be required as a result of the work at the rear of Parliament Buildings.

(AQO 5071/11-15)

Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The construction work to the rear of Parliament Buildings was carried out to create a service yard for contractors during the forthcoming roof project in order to minimise the impact on access and car parking during the works. On completion of the roof project the area will be used to improve access, facilities for deliveries and recycling and to create a small number of additional car parking spaces.

The works were completed during the summer recess to minimise disruption to building users and, while a full drainage system was included in the scheme design, time did not permit the contractor to include this in the works. Subsequently, consideration has been given to how best to incorporate adequate drainage, to prevent the ponding that has occurred, without causing undue disruption to building users. It is proposed to install drainage of a temporary or semi-permanent nature at the next available opportunity.

Parliament Buildings: Security Procedures

Mr G Kelly asked the Assembly Commission to outline any changes to security procedures at Parliament Buildings.

(AQO 5072/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): A new amalgamated model for Security & Usher staff was rolled out on 28th October 2013, with the formation of new teams of Control Room Operatives and Ushers (amalgamated from existing Ushers and Security Officers).

This has not resulted in any significant changes to Assembly security procedures as such, as in essence it simply means that some staff are performing tasks and procedures that are already in existence, but that are new to them. Clearly we are at a very early stage in this new model, however early signs are most positive and encouraging.

Naturally the new model and all aspects of Assembly security procedures are kept under review as a matter of course.

Section 75

Ms Fearon asked the Assembly Commission to outline the steps it is taking to ensure it meets its statutory obligations under Section 75.

(AQO 5073/11-15)

Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Schedule 9 (4) (1) to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Assembly Commission, as a designated public authority, to set out how it proposes to fulfil its Section 75 duties through its Equality Scheme.

The Assembly Commission's current Equality Scheme was approved on 28 March 2012 and is based on a model equality scheme promulgated by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. It meets both the legal requirements of Schedule 9 of the 1998 Act and recommendations contained within the Equality Commission's "Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities" which was issued in 2010.

The Assembly Commission's Equality Scheme is a statement of the arrangements for fulfilling the statutory duties and it also the plan for their implementation. The arrangements for assessing the compliance with the statutory duties are outlined in relevant parts of the Equality Scheme. For example, it includes arrangements for monitoring, for undertaking Equality Impact Assessments, for dealing with complaints, and for ensuring access to information and services. Indeed the Commission recently received a very positive endorsement, in relation to its Section 75 Progress report for 2012/13, from the Equality Commission.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 22 November 2013

(AQW 27847/11-15)

The Boiler Replacement Scheme is currently the only Government grant funded scheme in the UK to replace boilers and is unique to Northern Ireland. Therefore differences in financial assessments and rules cannot be made with elsewhere in the UK.

In GB, there is an Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme which is funded by the energy/utility companies to help GB households lower their energy bills by becoming more energy efficient. However this is not a Government funded scheme. Under the ECO scheme some customers may be eligible for a boiler replacement/repair if they are in receipt of certain benefits. However to meet their obligation targets, energy companies are free to decide how best to deliver this obligation across GB as a whole, in a way that limits the costs to all consumers.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.



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