

# Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

**Friday 31 January 2014**

**Volume 91, No WA3**



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

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Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)  
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)  
Weir, Peter (North Down)  
Wells, Jim (South Down)  
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

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# Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 31 January 2014

## Written Answers to Questions

### Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

#### **Signature Programme on Numeracy and Literacy**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the schools that will receive teaching assistance as part of the Signature Programme on numeracy and literacy; and when the assistance will commence.

**(AQW 25953/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister):** The Department of Education is taking forward the Delivering Social Change Signature Programme to provide additional literacy and numeracy support within primary and post primary schools, announced by us on 10 October 2012. As a result of these measures, a total of 233.3 full-time equivalent graduated teachers, who are not currently in work, are being recruited to deliver tuition to children in primary and post-primary schools who are currently struggling to achieve educational standards.

Recruitment of the teachers, funded under the Delivering Social Change Signature Programme, is ongoing.

A list of Primary Schools due to receive extra teaching support under the Delivering Social Change Signature Programme on Literacy and Numeracy has been placed in the Assembly Library.

A list of Post Primary Schools due to receive extra teaching support under the Delivering Social Change Signature Programme on Literacy and Numeracy has been placed in the Assembly Library.

#### **North South Bodies: Savings**

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the efficiency saving targets for each of the North South Bodies within this budget period; and (ii) the savings which have been realised to date.

**(AQW 26080/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Since 2011, all North South Bodies have been required to deliver efficiency savings of 3% year-on-year calculated against their 2010 budget.

To date all bodies have met these targets.

#### **Together: Building a United Community**

**Mr Copeland** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the 100 summer camps to be delivered in Together: Building a United Community, to detail the purpose of the camps; and whether there is a planned year round engagement with the young people involved in the camps.

**(AQW 27775/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The preparation work for the planned summer camps is currently in a co-design phase with voluntary and community groups, external stakeholders and other interested groups. We plan to deliver a number of pilot summer camps in Summer 2014 well in advance of the 2015 target set out in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

## Compensation as a Consequence of Legal Actions

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail how much their 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 27957/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** In the last five financial years from 2008-09 to 2012-13, our Department has spent £191,870.74 on legal costs. Nothing has been spent on paying damages or compensation as a consequence of legal action.

## Building a Prosperous and United Community Economic Package

**Mr Lyttle** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the progress made to date under the Building a Prosperous and United Community economic package.

**(AQW 28149/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Executive and the UK Government are continuing to make progress towards the commitments made in the Economic Pact.

We have delivered a successful G8 branded Investment Conference with Tourism Ireland developing a considerable PR campaign to build on the G8 legacy.

Securing the right policy levers, and in particular the devolution of Corporation Tax powers, remains a priority for the Executive. We are continuing to advance the case for devolution of Corporation Tax within the timeframe set out in the Pact.

We have confirmed that we will continue to benefit from 100% assisted area status until at least 2017.

We have undertaken analysis to help inform a number of policy options on the establishment of Enterprise Zones. Officials have also had discussions in relation to establishing Enterprise Zones, including engagement with England, Scotland and Wales.

The Joint Ministerial Taskforce is examining whether tailored support is required for local banks and how support for local businesses can be maximised to improve access to finance. An Access to Finance Implementation Panel has been established as recommended in the Economic Advisory Group's "Review of Access to Finance for NI Business". The first meeting was held on 3 October 2013.

Work is underway to address barriers to access for tourists such as visa recognition and processing.

The Executive has agreed the Asset Management Strategy which includes recommendations to improve processes and deliver significant projects that will unlock value through more efficient and effective management of assets.

We have also made good progress with the Better Regulation Executive, to progress a review of business red tape in the local economy.

## Bright Start

**Mr Agnew** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the (i) funding available for the early actions contained within Bright Start; and (ii) budget to implement the actions of the childcare strategy, when it is released in 2014.

**(AQW 28246/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The £12 million Executive Childcare Fund was put in place in 2011. Its remaining funds are available to support the key first actions.

## Early Actions of Bright Start

**Mr Agnew** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the rationale for choosing a figure of 5,000 to 7,000 school aged childcare places, which are contained within the early actions of Bright Start; and what further actions are being taken to sustain the current level of funding for childcare within the voluntary and community sector.

**(AQW 28301/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The principal rationale for Bright Start aiming to sustain or create up to 7,000 school age childcare places is that school age childcare is the single biggest area of unmet childcare need. That was made clear by parents and stakeholders during consultation.

The places are intended to bring about a measurable increase in services and, thereby, begin to close the gap in current provision. However, they are just a start. Work will continue under the full Bright Start Strategy. We plan to prepare this over the coming months and for it to run until 2020. Preparation will include identifying any additional actions that might be required.

## Equality Coalition

**Ms Fearon** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their discussions with the Equality Coalition.

**(AQO 5008/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Junior Minister Bell and Junior Minister McCann attended a Biannual meeting with the conveners of the Equality Coalition on Wednesday 6 November.

A range of current issues was discussed including: OFMDFM's equality co-ordinating role; Together: Building a United Community Strategy legislation; Delivering Social Change/Social Investment Fund and Anti-Poverty Strategy and OFMDFM led equality strategies.

## Urban Village Regeneration Projects

**Mr Douglas** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what criteria will be used to determine the location of the four Urban Village Regeneration Projects which were included in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

**(AQO 5014/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The process and criteria for identifying the four urban villages will consider a number of options. These could include, but would by no means be limited to, community readiness; area need; geographical spread; and overall cost considerations.

We are currently considering areas that could potentially become sites for the urban villages and will make decisions and announcements on those in the near future.

## Victims and Survivors Service

**Mr Lyttle** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they assess whether victims and survivors, health professionals and non-governmental organisations are being made adequately aware of the services available from the Victims and Survivors Service.

**(AQW 28638/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** In order to communicate their services effectively, the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) has ensured that:

- Victims and survivors have been made aware of the services available via direct communication with all those who previously availed of support through the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund and via ongoing communication with victim/survivor support organisations.
- Health Professionals have been made aware of the services available via ongoing communication with the Health Board, specifically with reference to ensuring that service delivery by the

VSS adheres to the developments of the Psychological Therapies Strategy, and via direct communication with individual clients' General Practitioners (GPs) where necessary.

- Non-government Organisations have been made aware of the services available via communication with VSS-funded groups who are embedded in the community and voluntary sector.
- In addition, all of the above have been made aware of the services available via advertisements in the regional and local press regarding the opening of the Individual Needs Programme in April 2013.

### **Attorney General's Submission to the Haass Talks**

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to clarify and comment on the status of the Attorney General's submission to the Haass talks.

**(AQW 28715/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Attorney General is an independent statutory officeholder and, as such, has contributed his views on the issues which the Panel of Parties has been established to examine. The rationale for appointing an independent Chair and vice-Chair to the Panel of Parties was to protect the integrity of the process and its independence. It would be entirely inappropriate, therefore, for us to offer clarification of any submission made to Dr Haass in the course of his engagement with members of civil society.

### **Public Services Hub: Enniskillen**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the efforts of the Strategic Investment Board to help Fermanagh District Council establish a public services hub on the site of the former Erne Hospital in Enniskillen.

**(AQO 5109/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Work is currently underway on the site of the former Erne Hospital to procure demolition of existing buildings, to assess and deal with contamination, and to develop business cases as a prelude to the sale of the site by the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

In response to a request from the Budget Review Group, the Strategic Investment Board has provided a part-time Project Manager to co-ordinate the activities involved in the sale of the site and has part funded contamination reports.

A Site Transfer Project Team has been established with representation from the Strategic Investment Board, the current owner of the site and those public sector organisations with an interest in acquiring or occupying the site.

We understand that Fermanagh District Council is interested in buying the site subject to certain prior conditions being met in relation to demolition, decontamination and agreements with the South West College. If all goes according to plan, transfer of the site is expected in the next financial year.

The Strategic Investment Board will continue to support the actions required for the sale of the site and will be closely involved with the new owners in developing plans for a public sector hub at the site.

We applaud Fermanagh District Council and the other organisations that are committed to the development of a public sector hub at the Erne Hospital site and we expect this to be an example which others will follow in the future for the delivery of excellent and citizen-focused public services.

### **North South Sectoral Meeting**

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether all the Executive Ministers who attend a particular North South sectoral meeting are taken to endorse the resulting communique from that meeting.

**(AQW 28802/11-15)**



**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Joint Communiqué arising from a North South Ministerial Council meeting is agreed by Ministers in attendance.

### **Oral Assembly Questions: Answers**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what actions they will initiate to ensure that all written and oral Assembly Questions tabled to their Department are answered within the stipulated timescales.

**(AQW 28835/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Our Department has detailed guidance, systems and procedures in place to ensure that questions are answered as expeditiously as possible.

### **Trip to Japan: Meetings**

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide details on the meetings they had during their recent trip to Japan.

**(AQW 29169/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The visit to Japan was at the invitation of Prime Minister Abe and we met with him on Monday 2 December.

The visit was focused on strengthening trade links and, along with Invest NI support, we had a wide range of meetings with existing and potential investors including Fujitsu. We are pleased that these engagements have already created results. In addition, we met with the British and Irish Ambassadors and their trade and investment staff; and the Japanese Senior Vice Foreign Minister. In addition, we hosted a NI Connections event.

### **Trip to Japan: the Taoiseach**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what correspondence they had with the Taoiseach, or his office, prior to their recent trip to Japan.

**(AQW 29174/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We had no formal correspondence with the Taoiseach or his office. We discussed our visit with the Taoiseach informally when we last met shortly before our visit.

### **Trip to Japan: the Taoiseach**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what meetings and events they attended with the Taoiseach during their recent visit to Japan.

**(AQW 29175/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We met the Taoiseach and the Irish Ambassador to Japan briefly at the start of the Ambassadors' reception on Tuesday 3 December.

### **Trip to Japan: the Taoiseach**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether their recent trip to Japan was the result of a joint invite with the Taoiseach.

**(AQW 29176/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** This was not a joint invitation. Prime Minister Abe extended his invitation to us to visit Japan during the G8 Summit to strengthen Government to Government relations and to explore opportunities for business collaboration.

## Trip to China

**Mr Kinahan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what correspondence they had with the Prime Minister or his Office about promoting Northern Ireland prior to his trip to China.

**(AQW 29177/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Our officials have been in contact with the Foreign Office regarding our plans for China and the Prime Minister was fully informed and supportive of our objectives and future actions prior to his visit.

## Trip to Japan: Vice-President Biden

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what prior knowledge they had that their trip to Japan coincided with a visit from Vice-President Biden.

**(AQW 29179/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We were aware of US Vice-President Joe Biden's visit to Japan prior to our going there.

## Trip to Japan: Vice-President Biden

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what meetings during their recent trip to Japan were cancelled or rescheduled as a result of Vice-President Biden visiting at the same time.

**(AQW 29180/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** None of our meetings were cancelled or rescheduled as a result of our visit to Japan coinciding with the US Vice-President Joe Biden.

## Trip to Japan: Vice-President Biden

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what meetings they had with Vice-President Biden or the US Ambassador to Japan during their recent visit to Japan.

**(AQW 29181/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We did not meet with Vice-president Biden or the US Ambassador to Japan during our visit.

## Proposed Agreement among the Executive Parties

**Mr Flanagan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister on how many occasions the proposed agreement among the Executive parties on parades, select commemorations, and related protests, flags and emblems and contending with the past, has been downloaded from the Executive's website.

**(AQW 29586/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Since publication on 31 December 2013 the proposed agreement has been downloaded 3,434 times.

## Total Number of Jobs Promoted in Derry

**Mr Eastwood** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 28009/11-15, why information on the total number of jobs promoted in Derry in 2012/13, broken down by company, has not yet been made available.

**(AQW 29655/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Information on the number of jobs promoted, broken down by company, has not been provided as some of the information would be considered as commercially sensitive.

## Jobs Created in Derry

**Mr Eastwood** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 28009/11-15, when details of how many jobs were created in Derry in 2012/13 will be available.

**(AQW 29672/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Information provided to date includes jobs created and jobs promoted within that period. Ongoing monitoring of this information by the 'One Plan' team will indicate the number of jobs created converted from the jobs promoted.

## Planning, Commissioning and Delivery of Children's Services

**Mr Agnew** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail any policy or legislation that their Department is developing which is aimed at improving the integration of planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services; and on which date they will be published.

**(AQW 29827/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** As the Member will be aware from the answers to previous questions, the planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services is primarily a matter for the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety.

He may wish to note however that a new strategy 'Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People', is being developed and is currently out for public consultation. This strategy will provide an integrated policy framework encompassing policy on children and young people, including child poverty and children's rights.

The 'Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People' strategy proposes a more focused approach to outcomes and more collaborative working across Government and key stakeholders to deliver better outcomes for children and young people. The consultation document is available on our website at [www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/dsc-children-young-people](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/dsc-children-young-people). The final strategy will be published in March 2014.

## Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

### European Funding: Legal Case

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the total amount spent by her Department on legal costs for the recent court case taken against the Department of Finance and Personnel regarding European funding.

**(AQW 29706/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development):** My Department has not yet received the final legal costs associated with the legal action taken against DARD by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

### Adoption of Quad Rigs or Four Nets by the Local Nephrop Fleet

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the adoption of quad rigs or four nets by the local nephrop fleet, and if not, if she will undertake an investigation into the merits of their use.

**(AQW 29763/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Multiple rigs are permitted under EU Technical Conservation Regulations for the Irish Sea. I have no immediate plans to undertake an investigation into the merits of their use as our research focus must remain on developing highly selective fishing gear in order to reduce catches of unwanted fish by the Nephrops fleet. However my Department will monitor use of such gear and its potential impact.

## Farm Safety Partnership

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the work on achievements on the Farm Safety Partnership, including the funding costs.

**(AQW 29806/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** In response to the worsening situation regarding fatalities on farms, the Farm Safety Partnership was established in May 2012 between the Health & Safety Executive NI, DARD and the Ulster Farmers Union. Since then the Partnership has also been joined by NFU Mutual, the Young farmers Clubs of Ulster and NIAPA.

The aim of this Partnership is to improve health and safety standards on farms and strive to significantly reduce work-related deaths, injuries and illnesses. The Farm Safety Partnership developed an Action Plan that sets out its priorities and objectives over 18 months ending March 2014. This was launched at Ravenhill Rugby Ground on 27 November 2012.

The Action Plan contains 44 commitments of which DARD has lead responsibility for 7. The 7 actions allocated to my Department are set out in the table below and includes my Department's actions to date:

Action Number	Action	Comments
2.2	Develop new health and safety training materials and presentation slides for new course for farmers.	Completed. Subject to monitoring and evaluation.
2.6	Deliver a new health and safety awareness course to 3,000 farmers using existing Farm Family Options, Focus Farms and existing trainers by March 2014	To date there have been 2559 registrations with 129 workshops completed with 2400 attendees. A further 9 courses are scheduled.  There has been increased activity at Focus Farm events and an additional 127 local halls/venues have been put forward for use.  To date DARD have spent £159,896 in relation to the Farm Safe Awareness courses which are funded under the Rural Development programme.
2.10	Deliver appropriate health and safety messages at DARD events attended by farmers, which would include CAFRE's training events, open days and focus farm visits.	A number of events have taken place where farm safety material has been disseminated including Balmoral Show, DARD Direct offices.  Since November 2012, CAFRE have held 1027 events with over 17,500 participants where in addition to the main topic of the event, farm safety material has been made available to those attending.

<b>Action Number</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2.11	Deliver key health and safety presentations to all CAFRE students studying agriculture or horticulture.	<p>All CAFRE courses have always contained a high level of farm safety as part of the course. Since the introduction of the farm safety partnership there is a heightened focus on safety. CAFRE have been working with HSENI in relation to course content aiding the increase of focus on safety. Translink have also presented to students in relation to the safety of farm machinery at railway crossing.</p> <p>There are 250 FSA packs being delivered to all students who will be on work placements during the 2013/14 academic year.</p>
3.1	Examine the potential for health and safety standards to be taken into account when awarding grants or loans to farmers and report back to the FSP with recommendations.	The Department is considering the potential to take health and safety standards into account as part of the NEW RDP 2014 - 20
3.2	Explore the potential for financial assistance to farmers to promote improved health and safety on farms.	Over the three Tranches of the Farm Modernisation Programme, some £4.6m of financial support for items that promote safer working on farms was awarded in letters of offer to successful applicant.
4.1	Explore the potential to repeat the Farms and Farm Families in Northern Ireland Social Survey, in order to update information on non-fatal accidents, farm safety awareness and training in the use of hazardous equipment.	<p>A pilot survey was posted to a random sample of 1,000 farmers in December 2013. The survey will remain open until the end of January.</p> <p>The pilot exercise will be evaluated in February 2014</p> <p>Any lessons learned will be incorporated into the main survey which is planned to begin in March 2014.</p> <p>The survey results will provide useful; baseline information and inform the Partnership's forward work post March 2014, when the current action plan will end.</p>

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.

### Single Farm Payments: Reductions

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers have been convicted of, and/or had their Single Farm Payments reduced, for non-compliance regarding environmental matters, in the last three years.

**(AQW 29819/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The number of farm businesses that have had their Single Farm Payment reduced for non-compliance regarding environmental matters in the each of the last three years is:

2011	455
2012	386
2013	244

My Department has not prosecuted any farmer under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations (NI) 2007 for non-compliance regarding environmental matters in the above three years.

### Single Farm Payment Claims

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of Single Farm Payment claims that are yet to be paid, including the number of those that were subject to an inspection in 2014.

**(AQW 29821/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** 2,510 claims for 2013 Single Farm Payment remain to be paid

This figure includes 1,418 claims that were subject to a 2013 inspection

### Single Farm Payment Claims

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the number of Single Farm Payment claims yet to be paid, to detail the number and percentage based in (i) lowland areas; (ii) Severely Disadvantaged Areas; and (iii) Disadvantaged Areas.

**(AQW 29822/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The total number of claims received for the 2013 scheme year was 37,636

The number of 2013 claims remaining to be paid is 2,510 the requested breakdown is as follows:

- 1 Lowland areas = 618 claims, that is, 1.6% of the claims received
- 2 Severely disadvantaged areas = 1,024 claims, that is, 2.7%
- 3 Disadvantaged areas = 868 claims, that is, 2.3%

### Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 Transfer

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what efforts she made to reach a compromise on the Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 transfer, after losing the High Court challenge and before the end of year deadline, including before she sought emergency approval through the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

**(AQW 29832/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** As a result of the High Court judgement on the Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 transfer on Friday 27 December 2013, I immediately sought urgent Executive approval that 7% of the funds available to the north of Ireland under Pillar 1 of the Common Agricultural Policy 2014-2020 should be transferred to Pillar2. I clearly explained the pressing timescale for a decision and that this decision was required no later than 30 December. This was a matter that needed to be dealt with urgently, as the European Commission had indicated that a Member State wishing to avail of the provisions in 2014 must notify its decision by 31 December 2013.

As approval was not granted by this deadline, Defra were advised that Executive agreement had not been reached. As a result, a 0% rate of transfer for the north of Ireland was notified to the European Commission by Defra.

## Farm Businesses

**Mrs Overend** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 29493/11-15, of the 3,529 farm businesses where one or more fields were claimed with an area greater than the Maximum Eligible Area, and that responded to the Department's letter requesting an explanation from the farm business within a ten day period, how many subsequently received payment in December 2013.

**(AQW 29878/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Of the initial 3,529 farm businesses where one or more fields were claimed with an area greater than the Maximum Eligible Area

2,721 of these businesses were paid in December 2013.

A total of 3,104 of these businesses have now been paid up to 23 January 2014

Every effort is being made to progress the remaining 425 cases as quickly as practical to payment. Reasons for delay include the need to apply inspection findings and outstanding information, such as bank account or probate details, which has been requested from relevant farm businesses.

## Farm Businesses

**Mrs Overend** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 29493/11-15, of the 3,529 farm businesses where one or more fields were claimed with an area greater than the Maximum Eligible Area, and that responded to the Department's letter requesting an explanation from the farm business within a ten day period, how many faced delayed payments due to a departmental error.

**(AQW 29879/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Of the initial 3,529 farm business where one or more fields were claimed with an area greater than the Maximum Eligible Area none were delayed payment due to a departmental error.

## Statutory Notice to Farmers: Inspections

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what statutory notice must her Department give to farmers prior to (i) on farm inspections; and (ii) aerial inspections.

**(AQW 29880/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** There is no requirement to provide notice of an on-the-spot control.

## Movement Authorisation Licence

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the circumstances in which a movement authorisation licence (MC2L) can be issued in respect of cattle; and by what criteria can discretion be exercised and by whom.

**(AQW 29901/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** An MC2L is a licence to move cattle that are restricted either individually or on a herd basis. The restrictions are applied for disease control reasons e.g. Tuberculosis (TB) or Brucellosis (Br), or Identification, Registration and Movement (IRM) reasons. MC2Ls must be applied for, by completion of an MC2LA application form. Herd keepers must obtain an MC2L before restricted animals leave the farm. These movement licences cannot be issued retrospectively.

Animals individually restricted for TB/Br such as TB and Br reactor animals and animals with inconclusive test results, if moving direct to slaughter can only be moved using the MC2L movement authorisation licence.

In exceptional circumstances, for example significant animal welfare or human hardship problems, discretion can be exercised for the movement of restricted animals. Permission for such moves may be granted following consideration by the local Divisional Veterinary Officer (DVO) or by the Regional Senior

Principal Veterinary Officer (SPVO) after advice from the local DVO, depending on the reason for the restriction.

### Rural Development Programme: Mid Ulster

**Mr Milne** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much investment has been provided in Mid Ulster via the Rural Development Programme, broken down by each council area. **(AQW 29906/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Table 1 below provides a breakdown of expenditure on Axis 1 and Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-13 by each Council area in the Mid Ulster Constituency.

**TABLE 1**

Constituency Mid Ulster	Priority	Total
Cookstown	Axis 1 - improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	1,018,068.55
	Axis 3 - the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	2,303,958.24
<b>Cookstown Total</b>		<b>3,322,026.79</b>
Dungannon & South Tyrone	Axis 1 - improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	1,002,462.01
	Axis 3 - the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	858,007.15
<b>Dungannon &amp; South Tyrone Total *</b>		<b>1,860,469.16</b>
Magherafelt	Axis 1 - improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	683,039.56
	Axis 3 - the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	2,274,273.15
<b>Magherafelt Total</b>		<b>2,957,312.71</b>
<b>Mid Ulster Total</b>		<b>£8,139,808.66</b>

Expenditure up to and including 31 December 2013

\*Dungannon & South Tyrone represents only those electoral wards which fall into the Mid Ulster Constituency.

DARD does not hold records of expenditure by Council area for Axis 2 measures. Table 2 below shows Axis 2 expenditure for the Mid Ulster Constituency.

**TABLE 2**

Measure 2.1 Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowance Scheme	2,125,549
Measure 2.2 Agri-environment Programme:	16,575,705
Measure 2.3 & 2.4 Forestry Measures	135,000*
<b>Mid Ulster Total</b>	<b>£18,836,254</b>

Expenditure up to and including 31 December 2013

\* DARD does not hold records by Parliamentary Constituency for expenditure on support for existing woodland. Therefore this figure is expenditure for new woodland creation only and excludes support for existing woodland.



## Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture Issues

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the ministerial meetings on agriculture issues which have taken place under the auspices of (i) the British Irish Council; and (ii) the North South Ministerial Council.

**(AQW 29984/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Agriculture issues are not formally listed amongst the areas of work considered by the British-Irish Council. However, the previous DARD Minister attended two meetings at which 'Marine' issues were discussed.

Since May 2007, there have been 14 North South Ministerial Council Meetings for Agriculture and 15 North South Ministerial Council meetings for the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC).

The above response relates to specific Sectoral meetings in Agriculture and FCILC format. However, the NSMC also meets in Plenary and Institutional format and Agriculture issues may also be raised within these forums.

## Rivers Agency's Post-Event Inspection Programme

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the timescale for the completion and reporting of the Rivers Agency's post-event inspection programme following the recent tidal surges.

**(AQW 30052/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Rivers Agency's post-event serviceability inspections are progressing well, with completion anticipated by early February 2014. In parallel, more detailed structural inspections are being progressed, with completion anticipated by the end of March 2014. There are no current proposals to report externally on the outcome of these inspections.

## CAP Pillar 1 Consultation: Qualifications

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to Question 17 of the recent CAP Pillar 1 Consultation, to outline why she is proposing that a Level 3 qualification in agriculture, or an equivalent subject, should be a requirement for young farmers and new entrants to receive an award from the regional reserve.

**(AQW 30053/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Under Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, the Department has discretion to set objective and non-discriminatory eligibility criteria as regards the appropriate skills, experience and/or education of the claimant when making allocations to young farmers and new entrants from the Regional Reserve.

In the recently closed public consultation on 'Policy Options arising from the Reform of the CAP (Pillar I Direct Payments)', I sought stakeholder views on a suggestion that we would include an eligibility criterion that would require young farmers and new entrants to hold a Level III educational qualification in agriculture or a closely related subject.

The consultation has now closed and I will carefully consider all responses received before reaching a decision on the way forward.

## Areas Subjected to Aerial Inspection

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail how her Department selected the areas that were to be subjected to aerial inspection, including whether an equality assessment formed part of the selection process.

**(AQW 30104/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** In accordance with Commission Regulations for area based schemes a minimum of 5% inspections (on-the-spot checks) must be carried out each year. These can be carried out by farms

visits or remotely using aerial imager. To meet our target for inspections by remote sensing in 2013 two areas were needed. The location of each of the areas was selected randomly and satellite imagery for each was requested from the European Commission. An equality assessment was not undertaken because of the random selection process.

### **Import of Finches from Great Britain**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether there are any restrictions or documents required for the import of finches from Great Britain.

**(AQW 30228/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** There are presently no restrictions on the import of finches from Britain. A general import licence is in place to permit the import of captive birds, including finches, and only requires the birds to be accompanied by a commercial document signed by the importer. Veterinary certification is not required. Copies of the licence and a sample commercial document are available on the DARD website.

## Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

### **Renovations to Casement Park**

**Mr Elliott** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether, following funded renovations to Casement Park, it will be available for use by sports other than the Gaelic Athletic Association.

**(AQW 29773/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure):** The matter of the use of the Stadiums by sports other than that of the Governing Body is a matter for the governing bodies in the first instance.

In March 2013, the GAA Annual Congress approved the use of their facilities by the IRFU as part of any proposed bid for the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

The redeveloped Casement Park along with Croke Park is included in the list of potential venues.

### **Tour of the North Cycling Race**

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQT 414/11-15 and the stated need to ensure no funding gaps exist that may prevent the Tour of the North cycling race from going ahead, upon what basis has her Department decided not to fund the event.

**(AQW 29852/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Responsibility for major sporting events, including the Tour of the North Cycle Race, rests in the first instance with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI).

However, as a result of AQT 414/11-15 on 25 November 2013, I asked my officials to meet the race organisers to explore if DCAL could assist in any other way. Officials from DCAL and Sport NI met with the race organisers on 19 December 2013 to discuss such support, including how the event could support my Department's priorities around promoting equality and targeting poverty and social exclusion. Sport NI offered to work with the organisers to explore this further; however, as yet no such request has been received by Sport NI. The organisers were also advised that Sport NI's pilot programme for 2013/14 International Events had closed, however, following a planned evaluation exercise, this may be an option for them to consider in future years, should the programme be implemented beyond 2014.

# Department of Education

## 3G and 4G Sports Pitches

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education to list the schools that have a 3G or 4G sports pitch in their grounds.

**(AQW 29722/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The following schools have a 3G or 4G sports pitch in their grounds.

Education and Library Board Area	School Name
Belfast Education and Library Board Area	Aquinas GS
Belfast Education and Library Board Area	Ashfield Boys HS
Belfast Education and Library Board Area	Boys Model School
Belfast Education and Library Board Area	Orangefield PS
Belfast Education and Library Board Area	Rathmore GS
Belfast Education and Library Board Area	St Dominic's HS
Belfast Education and Library Board Area	St Malachy's College
Belfast Education and Library Board Area	St Patrick's College
Western Education and Library Board Area	Castleberg HS
Western Education and Library Board Area	Erne Integrated College
Western Education and Library Board Area	Holy Cross College, Strabane
Western Education and Library Board Area	Lisnagelvin PS
Western Education and Library Board Area	Omagh CBS
Western Education and Library Board Area	St Columb's College, Derry
Western Education and Library Board Area	St Mary's College, Derry
Western Education and Library Board Area	St Mary's College, Irvinestown
North Eastern Education and Library Board Area	Dalriada School, Ballymoney
North Eastern Education and Library Board Area	St Colm's HS, Draperstown
South Eastern Education and Library Board Area	Assumption GS, Ballynahinch
South Eastern Education and Library Board Area	Bangor GS
South Eastern Education and Library Board Area	Our Lady & St Patrick's College, Knock
South Eastern Education and Library Board Area	St Patrick's GS, Downpatrick
Southern Education and Library Board Area	Abbey GS, Newry
Southern Education and Library Board Area	Drumgor PS (under construction)
Southern Education and Library Board Area	Lurgan Junior HS
Southern Education and Library Board Area	Rathfriland HS
Southern Education and Library Board Area	Royal School, Dungannon
Southern Education and Library Board Area	St Catherine's College, Armagh

Education and Library Board Area	School Name
Southern Education and Library Board Area	St Colman's College, Newry
Southern Education and Library Board Area	St Patrick's College, Dungannon

### Term Service Contracts for Maintenance

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the operation of the Term Service Contracts for Maintenance within the Southern Education and Library Board, how many compensation events payments have been authorised since the commencement of the contract.

**(AQW 29771/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) have advised me that they do not maintain a separate record of compensation events on Term Service Contracts for Maintenance. Therefore I am unable to provide the information requested.

### Term Service Contracts for Maintenance

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the operation of Term Service Contracts for Maintenance, whether all the Education and Library Boards make compensation events payments similar to those paid in the Southern Education and Library Board.

**(AQW 29772/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Currently, only two other Education and Library Boards operate Term Service Contracts (TSC) for the provision of maintenance services. I have been advised by both Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) and South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB), that their TSCs for Maintenance include a clause allowing for Compensation events, which is similar to the Contract operated by the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB).

Similar to the SELB, neither Board maintain a separate record of compensation events on Term Service Contracts for Maintenance.

The Western Education and Library Board (WELB) and the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) are in the process of introducing TSC arrangements for Maintenance and so have not paid any compensation events to date.

### Closed Schools

**Mr Craig** asked the Minister of Education to list the name and location of closed schools, that are registered as owned by his Department or an Education and Library Board, including the date on which these schools were closed.

**(AQW 29829/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department does not own any schools.

Please see below, a table of properties which are no longer in operation as schools but are still owned by the Education and Library Boards.

These properties may still be under consideration for other educational purposes, bound by covenants requiring legal advice, leased or at some stage of the disposal process.

Demolition of the school building may also have been carried out since the closure of the school.

**LIST OF CLOSED SCHOOLS, STILL THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS**

<b>Closed School &amp; Location</b>	<b>Date Closed</b>
<b>North Eastern Education and Library Board</b>	
Ballypriormore Primary School, Islandmagee	31/08/2003
Glenarm Primary School, Glenarm, Larne	31/8/06
Maghera High School - site, Maghera	31/08/09
Garvagh High School, Garvagh	31/08/13
Bruslee CLASS centre (former Primary School)	Closed as a centre on 1/11/12.
Cullycapple Primary School, Coleraine	31/08/13
Drumard Primary School, Maghera	31/08/13
<b>Belfast Education and Library Board</b>	
Ballygolan Primary School, Belfast	31/8/13
Balmoral High School, Belfast	31/8/08
Beechfield Primary School, Belfast	30/9/10
Castle High School (Land)	31/8/09
City of Belfast School of Music & Porters Annex building	10/2010
Mount Gilbert Community College – Site	31/8/07
Suffolk Primary School, Belfast, (main school building demolished)	31/8/09
Vere Foster Primary School, Belfast	31/8/11
<b>Western Education and Library Board</b>	
Duke of Westminster HS, Kesh, Co Fermanagh	31/08/06
Faughan Valley HS, Londonderry	31/08/07
Bridgehill PS, Castlederg, Co Tyrone	31/08/13
Lisnaskea HS, Co Fermanagh	31/08/13
Ballycolman Nursery School, (now a maintained Nursery Unit leasing site.)	31/03/13
<b>Southern Education and Library Board</b>	
Annaghmore PS, Craigavon	01/09/05
Collone PS, Armagh	31/08/08
Keady PS, Armagh	31/08/12
Toberlane PS, Cookstown	31/08/03
Tullymacarette PS, Dromore	31/08/07
<b>South Eastern Education and Library Board</b>	
Ballycarrickmaddy former PS, Lisburn (remainder)	1/8/02
Charley Memorial Primary School, Dunmurry	31/8/07
Derriaghy Primary School, Lisburn	31/8/11
Dunmurry High School, Belfast	31/8/12
Groomsport Primary School	31/8/07

<b>Closed School &amp; Location</b>	<b>Date Closed</b>
Hilden IPS, Lisburn	30/11/08
Killard House Special School, Newtownards	24/8/09
Lisnasharragh High School, Belfast	31/8/08
Clough Primary School, Downpatrick	30/4/05
Downshire Primary School, Newcastle	30/4/05
Newtownbreda Primary School	31/8/09
Ravarnette PS, Lisburn	31/12/99
Redburn Primary School, Holywood	31/8/12
Kindle PS, Ballykinler	31/08/08

### Free School Meals

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education what percentage of pupils receive free school meals; and how this compares to (i) England; (ii) Scotland; and (iii) Wales.

**(AQW 29934/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The most up-to-date validated figures for free school meal entitlement across the jurisdictions relate to the 2012/13 school year and these are detailed in the table below.

#### FREE SCHOOL MEAL ENTITLEMENT – THE NORTH OF IRELAND - 2012/13

<b>Country</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Post-primary</b>
The North of Ireland	29.9%	19.0%

**Source:** NI school census,

Information relating to the proportion of pupils in England, Scotland and Wales with entitlement to free school meals is detailed in the table below.

#### FREE SCHOOL MEAL ENTITLEMENT –ENGLAND, WALES AND SCOTLAND- 2012/13

<b>Country</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Post-primary</b>
England	18.1%	15.1%
Scotland	22.1%	15.4%
Wales	18.9%	16.2%

**Sources:** England school census, Scottish Healthy Living Survey and Welsh Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

**Note:**

- 1 Figures for primary include nursery, reception and year 1 - 7 classes.
- 2 In Northern Ireland different criteria is applied to primary and post primary age pupils. (See entry for working tax credit in table overleaf)
- 3 Data for primary and post-primary schools in England and Wales include pupils that attend middle schools.
- 4 Data for England excludes pupils in pupil referral units who are registered with other providers and further education colleges.

Free school meal figures for the different jurisdictions are not directly comparable due to the different eligibility criteria applied in each area. These differences are summarised in the table overleaf. For this reason, care should be exercised when making comparisons between regions.

	<b>North of Ireland</b>	<b>England/Wales</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
Income Support	■	■	■
Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance	■	■	■
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance	■	■	■
Child Tax Credit	■ (if not entitled to WTC and annual gross income <£16,190)	■ (if not entitled to WTC and annual gross income <£16,190)	■ (if not entitled to WTC and annual gross income <£15,910)
Working Tax Credit	■ (if annual gross income <£16,190 and child is at nursery or primary school)	X	■ (Both maximum child tax credit and maximum working tax credit and income is <£6,420)
Working Tax Credit run-on	■	■	X
Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	■ (child of an asylum seeker supported by the Home Office National Asylum Service (NASS))	■	■
Guarantee Element of the State Pension Credit	■	■	X
Universal Credit	N/A	■	■
Statement of SEN and designated to require a special diet	■	X	X
Boarder at a special school	■	X	X
None of the above apply and child presents at school hungry	■	X	X

## Programme Board for the Lisanelly Project

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education to outline the (i) Terms of Reference; and (ii) composition of the Programme Board for the Lisanelly project.

**(AQW 30007/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department is in the final stages of reconstituting the Programme Board for the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus with the intention of holding the initial meeting in February. When the composition of the Board has been confirmed and the Terms of Reference agreed the information will be posted on the Department's website.

## Stakeholder Consultation Group for the Lisanelly Project

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education to outline the (i) Terms of Reference; and (ii) composition of the Stakeholder Consultation Group for the Lisanelly project.

**(AQW 30008/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department is in the final stages of reconstituting the Programme Board for the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus with a view to holding the initial meeting in February. The Programme Board will consider the Terms of Reference and composition of the Stakeholder Consultation Group moving forward. When this has been determined the information will be posted on the Department's website.

## Independent Review

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 28966/11-15, when the last independent review was completed.

**(AQW 30009/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Senior Management Pay Review Panel (SMPRP) last reviewed the salary ranges of Chief Executive and Second Tier Officers and made recommendations to the Department in December 2013.

## Delivering Social Change Literacy and Numeracy Project

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 28475/11-15, how many teaching posts in the Delivering Social Change Literacy and Numeracy Project are yet to be filled.

**(AQW 30011/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** As at 23 January 2014, 27.5 FTE posts remain to be filled. In the primary sector this comprises 1 FTE post (5 schools requiring a teacher for 1 day per week) and in the post-primary sector 26.5 FTE posts (12 full-time and 6 part-time English posts, 10 full-time and 3 part-time mathematics posts). The recruitment process for these outstanding posts is currently underway.

## Ministerial Meetings on Education Issues

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Education to detail the ministerial meetings on education issues which have taken place under the auspices of (i) the British Irish Council; and (ii) the North South Ministerial Council, since May 2007.

**(AQW 30036/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** At the British Irish Council (BIC) summit in September 2008, the Council adopted Early Years Policy as a new work sector with the Welsh Government as the lead administration. Since then there has been 10 Summit meetings where Early Years has been discussed. Early Years was the subject of the BIC summit held in Wales in November 2012 which I attended.

The North South Ministerial Council meets in education sector format in order to make decisions on common policies and approaches in areas such as education for children with special needs, educational under-achievement, teacher qualifications and school, youth and teacher exchanges. Since May 2007 there have been 13 meetings.



## Middletown Centre for Autism

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Education how many children are treated in outreach by the Middletown Centre for Autism.

**(AQW 30039/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Chief Executive of the Middletown Centre for Autism has advised that 20 children were referred for outreach support from 1 April 2013 to 30 November 2013.

A further 123 children also benefitted from support offered to the referred children within the same school.

## Ill Health Retirement Benefits

**Mr Irwin** asked the Minister of Education how many teachers, in receipt of ill health retirement benefits, have had their eligibility for this benefit reviewed in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 30040/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The number of teachers in receipt of ill health retirement benefits who have had their eligibility for this benefit reviewed in the last three financial years is detailed in the table below:

Financial Year	No. of Teachers
2013-2014 (to date)	1
2012-2013	0
2011-2012	2

## Priorities for Youth

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the implementation of Priorities for Youth.

**(AQW 30072/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Following publication of Priorities for Youth in October 2013, implementation is being taken forward in partnership with the statutory and voluntary sectors on a phased basis with full implementation anticipated by April 2016.

A key priority in Priorities for Youth is the establishment of a Regional Advisory Group which will involve a range of stakeholders with interest and expertise in youth service policy and delivery. Work is in hand to take this forward so that the Group can be established as soon as possible. The Group will provide advice to the Education and Skills Authority or the Education and Library Boards/Youth Council in the interim.

## Priorities for Youth

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the impact of Priorities for Youth on the work of the Youth Council.

**(AQW 30073/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Youth Council will continue to carry out its statutory duties as outlined in the Youth Service (NI) Order 1989 until the establishment of ESA. Under Priorities for Youth, the Youth Council and Education and Library Boards will work collaboratively to ensure that youth services continue to be provided in line with assessed need. Officials have recently held discussions with the Youth Council and Education and Library Boards in relation to the delivery of key actions arising from Priorities for Youth. I expect the Youth Council to play an integral part in the delivery of the actions arising from Priorities for Youth.

## Finance Expended on Projects

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 22718/11-15, for an update on the amount of finance expended to date in each of the projects listed.

**(AQW 30077/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Finances expended against the 18 capital build projects announced in June 2012 up to 31 December 2013 are shown in the table below.

School Scheme	Type of School	All Expenditure up to 31/03/2013 £000's	2013/14 Expenditure up to 31/12/2013 £000's	Total Spend to Date £000's
Coláiste Feirste, Belfast	Post-Primary	2,645	69	2,714
St Clare's Convent Primary School	Primary	840	155	995
St Colman's Abbey Primary School, Newry				
St Joseph's Convent PS, Newry	Primary	159	376	535
Dromore Central Primary School	Primary	324	309	633
Eglinton Primary School	Primary	160	90	250
Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan	Primary	209	121	330
Ebrington Controlled PS, Derry	Primary	164	27	191
Foyle & Londonderry College	Post-Primary	15073	316	15389
St Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan	Primary	160	55	215
Victoria Park Primary School, Belfast	Primary	720	0	720
Enniskillen Model Primary School	Primary	142	10	152
St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge	Primary	69	124	193
Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast	Primary	52	74	126
Belmont House Special School, Derry	Special	10	1	11
Rossmar Special School, Limavady	Special	19	6	25
Castletower Ballymena	Special	10	13	23
Arvalee School & Resource Centre, Omagh	Special	0	341	341
St Gerards Education Resource Centre	Special	2	2781	2783
		<b>20,758</b>	<b>4,868</b>	<b>25,626</b>

The expenditure up to 31 March 2013 is based on expenditure reported at 2012/13 Final Outturn.

It should be noted that the figure for Coláiste Feirste, Belfast and Foyle & Londonderry College include site purchases of £2,325k and £14,500k respectively.

Expenditure for the current financial year reflects payments against invoices presented as at 31 December 2013.

## Date of Opening of Projects

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 22718/11-15, what is the anticipated date of opening for each of the projects listed.

**(AQW 30082/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The anticipated dates of opening for the new build projects below are based on current programmes but, as is the nature of major construction projects, are subject to change.

School Scheme	Anticipated opening date
Coláiste Feirste, Belfast	Qtr 4 2016
St Clare's Convent Primary School	Qtr 3 2015
St Colman's Abbey Primary School, Newry	
St Joseph's Convent PS, Newry	Qtr 2 2015
Dromore Central Primary School	Qtr 2 2015
Eglinton Primary School	Qtr 3 2016
Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan	Qtr 2 2016
Ebrington Controlled PS, Derry	Qtr 3 2016
Foyle & Londonderry College	Qtr 3 2016
St Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan	Qtr 1 2015
Victoria Park Primary School, Belfast	Qtr 2 2015
Enniskillen Model Primary School	Qtr 3 2016
St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge	Qtr 4 2016
Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast	Qtr 1 2015
Belmont House Special School, Derry	Qtr 2 2017
Rossmar Special School, Limavady	Qtr 1 2017
Castletower Ballymena	Qtr 1 2017
Arvalee School & Resource Centre, Omagh	Qtr 4 2015
St Gerards Education Resource Centre	March 2014

## Pre-School Places in the 2014/15 Academic Year

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of need for pre-school places in the 2014/15 academic year; and how many additional places will be made available to meet this need.

**(AQW 30083/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Executive's Programme for Government Commitment is to provide at least one year of pre-school education for every for every child whose parents want it. During the 2013/14 admissions process, 99.8% of children, whose parents engaged with the admissions process to the end, were offered a funded pre-school place.

The Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) in each Education and Library Board manages the Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) at local level and, as in previous years, the Department has worked with the PEAGs to assess demand for funded pre-school education places for the 2014/15 academic year.

As a result, funding has been made available for 24,159 pre-school places in statutory and voluntary/private pre-school settings. This is an increase on the previous year. In addition, recognising the need for pre-school places in the area, I have recently approved a further 52 places in Dungannon.

The position will be monitored and should pressures arise I will consider how best to respond.

### **Post-Primary Education in the Craigavon Area**

Mrs Dobson asked Minister of Education, in light of the community reaction to the area planning proposals known as Option A concerning the provision of post-primary education in the Craigavon area, whether he has held any discussions with the Southern Education and Library Board on the removal of this option to move on from the current impasse.

**(AQW 30090/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** As you are aware the area planning process is being managed by the Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the consultation on the controlled post-primary in the Craigavon area has been undertaken by the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB).

It is the responsibility of the SELB to determine the appropriate structure for controlled post-primary provision in the Craigavon area and to bring forward proposals to the Department of Education (DE).

I am aware that the SELB voted in favour of Option A which, if approved, would see the reorganisation of post-primary education in the Portadown, Lurgan and Tandragee areas resulting in new bi-lateral schools with both selective and non-selective intake. I have not held any discussions with the SELB on the removal of this or any other option.

### **Post-Primary Schools in the Dickson Plan Catchment Area**

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Education how students from post-primary schools in the Dickson Plan catchment area can voice their opinion about the present impasse over the future of post-primary education in their schools.

**(AQW 30091/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** As you are aware the area planning process is being managed by the Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the consultation on the controlled post-primary in the Craigavon area has been undertaken by the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB).

The SELB published their Draft Post-Primary Area Plan for public consultation between 5 July and 26 October 2012 during which time all interested parties had an opportunity to submit their views on the future of post-primary education in the area.

The SELB also advise that they have also consulted with young people directly on the proposals in their Draft Area Plan throughout the process.

I am aware that the SELB recently issued consultation questionnaires to parents of each pupil, governors, teaching and non-teaching staff of the 7 post-primary and 34 designated feeder primary schools in the Craigavon two-tier system.

An analysis of these responses to the consultation will be presented to the Board at its meeting on 12 February 2014. A decision will then be taken on progression of development proposals for any changes proposed.

It is important to note that the Board's decision is only part of the process. Any significant change to the existing provision requires the publication of a statutory Development Proposal (DP) to support that intent. Following publication of a DP there is a statutory 2-month period during which anyone who wishes can forward objections or comments to DE

I will be happy to meet with pupils, parents, schools, elected representatives and other interested parties throughout the consultation process and will listen to their views and concerns before I make a final decision at the end of the two-month period that follows publication of a DP.

### **Looked After Children: Special Schools**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Education how many looked after children attend special schools; and what percentage of these children are in (i) foster care; (ii) kinship care; and (iii) residential care.

**(AQW 30094/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Data relating to looked after children are collected via the annual school census. The type of care received by looked after children has been collected for the first time in 2013/14. This data will be available at the end of February 2014.

### **Primary Integrating/Enriching Education Programme**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of Education to detail his plans for (i) continuing the legacy of the Primary Integrating/Enriching Education programme, along with other shared education projects; and (ii) using the project as a pilot to encourage further shared education.

**(AQW 30105/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** As I indicated in my statement to the Assembly on 22 October 2013, I am committed to delivering the Programme for Government commitments to advance shared education through a variety of actions. My Department is currently working with the Office of the First and deputy First Minister and the Atlantic Philanthropies on a funding programme to support shared education.

The Primary Integrating/Enriching Education (PIEE) programme, along with two others, was subject to evaluation by the Shared Education Learning Forum (SELF), with the Education and Training Inspectorate taking forward evaluations of a number of other shared education projects. Lessons learnt from these evaluations are being taken into account in developing the new funding programme, thus building on the legacy of the Sharing in Education Programme.

The PIEE project has already been used as an example of shared education and my Department will continue to use this and other similar projects to encourage further shared education.

### **Public Private Partnerships or Private Finance Initiative Contracts**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education to list the (i) schools in North Down that are subject to Public Private Partnerships or Private Finance Initiative contracts; (ii) length of each contract and its remaining term; (iii) cost of each contract; and (iv) date on which each contract was signed.

**(AQW 30108/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** ( i ) There is one school in the North Down Constituency, Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College which is part of a Public Private Partnership (PPP) contract. This PPP contract also includes Nendrum College, Comber (Strangford Constituency). Both schools are in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area.

- (ii) The PPP project has a 30 year contract and there are 25 years remaining of this contract.
- (iii) The cost of the contract, covering both schools, is £160m over the 30 years of the project.
- (iv) The contract, for both schools, was signed on 1 September 2006 and Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College became operational on 1 May 2008.

## Schools: New Capital Development

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education to detail the primary schools in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area that have been identified as requiring new capital development, including those that are a priority.

**(AQW 30127/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My announcement of June 2012 and January 2013 represents a capital investment of approximately £393m in 40 schools projects.

One of the primary projects in the NEELB area has been withdrawn and of the remaining 39, twenty-four are in the primary sector but none are in the SEELB area.

I am liaising with all Managing Authorities, including those in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area, to identify priorities for new capital investment, and I will continue to review the position within the constraints of the available Education capital budget.

## Pupils with Special Education Needs in the Lurgan Area

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Education whether there are plans to provide a facility for post-primary pupils with Special Education Needs in the Lurgan area.

**(AQW 30138/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Assessment of the need for special educational needs (SEN) provision and the delivery of services to meet this need are the responsibility of each Education and Library Board (ELB).

The Southern Education and Library Board SELB has confirmed that it has no current plans to submit a development proposal to the Department of Education for a post-primary facility for pupils with SEN in the Lurgan area.

I can, however, confirm that SELB has lodged an application to my Department under the Schools' Enhancement Programme for an extension to Ceara Special School to meet anticipated need. An economic appraisal has been submitted and is currently being assessed by officials.

## New School Building Projects

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the forty new school building projects that had been approved in recent months.

**(AQW 30151/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** In my Capital Statement of 25 June 2012, 18 schools were announced to receive new facilities as part of a £173m investment in the schools estate. Of the 18, three projects have started construction work on site with a further 4 expected to be on site by the end of April 2014. A further 4 schemes are at procurement stage and the remaining 7 projects are at various stages of the planning / design process.

In my capital announcement of 22 January 2013, 22 school projects are to be advanced in planning representing a further investment of £220. The majority of these projects are at an early stage in planning, principally Development Proposal or economic appraisal stage.

## Travel Expenditure

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Education to detail the total expenditure on (i) ministerial travel; and (ii) Special Adviser travel in 2013.

**(AQW 30184/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Flight Costs only

(i) £3547.01

(ii) £4865.43

## January Monitoring Round

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister of Education why his Department did not submit a bid for funding in the January Monitoring Round.

**(AQW 30206/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** As the ability of DE funded organisations to commission and incur significant additional resource expenditure prior to the 31 March 2014 is limited at this late stage of the financial year it was not considered prudent to bid for additional funding; due to the risk that the budget could not be effectively utilised. Similarly, the ability to incur additional capital spend at this late stage of the financial year is also limited.

## School Crossing Patrols

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of Education whether his Department makes resources available to schools to secure the services of a school crossing patrol; and what opportunities exist for schools to address road safety concerns outside the school gates.

**(AQW 30213/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Funding provided within the Department of Education overall Block Grant to the Education and Library Boards is used for the purposes of determining the need for, and, if required, the deployment of school crossing patrols.

The revised curriculum which has been taught to all pupils of compulsory school age in grant-aided schools since 2009/10 provides teachers with a number of opportunities to cover the issue of road safety. For example through their delivery of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) Area of Learning at primary level and the Learning for Life and Work (LLW) Area of Learning at post-primary level pupils are provided with the opportunity to learn about road safety. As with all aspects of the curriculum, the specifics of what is taught, and how it is taught, under each Area of Learning is a matter for each teacher/school.

The Department of the Environment, which has statutory responsibility for road safety, has produced a number of road safety resources and lesson plans which are available to all schools through the C2k elearning platform, Fronter. Schools may also approach the Department of the Environment to explore further their local traffic conditions and the suitability of introducing a range of safety measures.

## Education and Skills Authority Bill

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the progress of the Education and Skills Authority Bill.

**(AQW 30311/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** I would refer the Member to my answer to AQO 5300/11-15, tabled by Anna Lo MLA and published in the Official Report on 17 January 2014.

## Department for Employment and Learning

### Departmental Procurement Process

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning in regard to his departmental procurement process, to detail the checks carried out to ensure that organisations are only appointed to the areas they applied for during the Pre-Qualification Quotation stages.

**(AQW 29611/11-15)**

**Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):** The Central Procurement Directorate operates an ISO 9001 accredited procurement process and documentation is subject to quality checks

throughout the process. This process has ensured organisations will only be appointed to areas for which they applied.

At Stage 2 of the competition separate tenders will be requested and submitted for each individual contract area, this will ensure that organisations can only submit a tender against one of the contract areas they were successful for during Stage 1 of the procurement process.

### Consultancy Fees

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how much money has been spent by his Department on consultancy fees in each of the last two years, including a breakdown of each consultancy firm used.

**(AQW 29909/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The Department and its Non-Departmental Public Bodies have spent a total of £387,119 on consultancy fees (rounded to the nearest pound) in the last two full financial years and the current financial year to 30 September 2013. The breakdown per supplier is as follows:

#### 1 APRIL 2011 TO 31 MARCH 2012

Supplier	Expenditure £
PricewaterhouseCoopers	22,720
Professor Robert Kirk	400
FXL Training	5,456
EMQC	3,000
KPMG	51,995
Mr Pat Toal CB	14,900
Deloitte	15,452
<b>Total</b>	<b>113,923</b>

#### 1 APRIL 2012 TO 31 MARCH 2013

Supplier	Expenditure £
Harry McConnell	20,998
EMQC	2,767
Grant Thornton	53,250
RSM McClure Watters	34,938
Just Economics	8,532
Deloitte	4,200
RLA	2,995
Puro Solutions	8,868
FIG PC Limited	135
Quadra Limited	1,170



<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Expenditure £</b>
Questor Centre - Queens University	4,620
ADP Architects	12,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>155,073</b>

### **1 APRIL 2013 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2013**

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Expenditure £</b>
Just Economics	4,268
RLA	1,996
Deloitte	75,697
FIG PC Limited	1,490
Microsoft Premier Service	29,522
Grant Thornton	1,900
UCEA	3,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>118,123</b>

**Note:**

The latest available data broken down by supplier is for the quarter ended 30 September 2013.

### **Coleraine Campus, University of Ulster: Teaching Facility**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the perceived benefits of the £5.1 million teaching facility at the Coleraine Campus, University of Ulster due for completion in 2015.  
**(AQW 29920/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The new teaching facility is being built as part of the University's overall estates strategy. It will replace teaching facilities currently located in its South Buildings which have reached the end of their economic life. The new teaching block will improve the functionality of the teaching space for students and improve the research experience at the campus. The development will ensure that the University can maintain its estate more effectively and will improve both its space utilisation and management.

It will also allow the University to reduce its carbon emissions as the new teaching block will be more energy efficient. Finally, the new facility will improve the student's learning experience.

### **Travel Expenses to Apprenticeship Students**

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline whether his Department pays travel expenses to apprenticeship students; and if not to detail any plans to introduce travel payments, for apprentices to travel to and from their workplace.  
**(AQW 30029/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The ApprenticeshipsNI programme is an employer-led provision, with employers creating apprenticeship positions and recruiting suitable individuals as apprentices in line with future business needs. The programme aims to provide participants with the opportunity to take part in a Level 2/Level 3 Apprenticeship where the apprentice, in paid employment from day one, works towards achieving an industry-approved Level 2/Level 3 Apprenticeship Framework.

My Department, through the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, funds the 'off-the-job' training element of an apprenticeship and provides an Employer Incentive payment on the apprentice's achievement of the full framework qualifications. ApprenticeshipsNI currently offers no subsidy towards the cost of an apprentice's travel to and from their place of work, nor do we have any plans to offer such a subsidy in the future.

As the member will be aware, I announced my proposals for the future of apprenticeships in Northern Ireland during an oral statement to the Assembly on Monday 13 January 2014. The proposals outlined are now subject to a 12 week consultation period. Feedback received through this consultation will be used to inform our final policy for apprenticeships and this will be published in the early summer of 2014. I am keen to hear views on the findings of a review - a link to the consultation document can be found below.

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/apprenticeshippreview>

## **Looked After Children Attending University**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline any specific packages of support his Department provides for looked after children attending university.

**(AQW 30080/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Access to Success, my Department's regional strategy for widening participation in higher education, has identified care leavers as an under-represented group in higher education. My Department makes funding available to all higher education providers, including the Further Education Regional Colleges, to support various outreach initiatives in schools and the community, which are targeted at increasing representation in higher education, including by children from a care background. In addition, my Department pays an annual financial premium to support the extra costs to higher education institutions of recruiting and retaining students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In academic year 2013/14 this premium amounts to £1.34m.

Access to Success has introduced a new Widening Access & Participation Plan (WAPP) reporting process, within which all higher education providers must demonstrate their clear commitment to supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds into and through higher education. Institutions are specifically required to target financial support to under-represented groups, including children from a care background. This support may take the form of bursaries and other direct financial support such as fee waivers, and free or discounted accommodation. It will also include post-entry support activities such as mentoring and additional tutoring to ensure the students' progression and success.

For example, the University of Ulster has committed to providing a support package for care leavers, which includes assistance with the higher education application process, a bursary of £1,000 per annum, access to year round accommodation and increased pastoral care. Under its "Fostering Aspiration" programme it will support a wide range of projects and activities that look to raise the educational aspiration of care leavers.

In addition, the University has joined forces with The Fostering Network Northern Ireland and the Health and Social Care Board to launch the "Tick the Box" awareness raising campaign. This initiative aims to encourage young people who have spent time in care to self report that fact on their Universities and Colleges Admissions Service application form to ensure that they get the extra support that they may need while at university.

My Department has been strongly supportive of the work that has been done by ButtleUK with all higher education providers in Northern Ireland to provide a framework to improve and accredit support for looked after children in higher education.

## **Looked After Children: Education**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail what specific policies and programmes of support are available to facilitate looked after children to avail of Further Education.

**(AQW 30081/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Whilst my Department does not have specific policies relating to looked after children in further education, it provided financial assistance to enable two colleges, Belfast Metropolitan College and North West Regional College, to attain the Buttle UK (FE) Quality Mark for Care Leavers, as part of a pilot programme for the award in April 2011.

Since then, Southern Regional College and South Eastern Regional College have attained the Buttle UK Quality Mark in September 2013. The remaining colleges, Northern Regional College and South West College, are currently working towards achieving this quality mark.

The Quality Mark provides a set of standards and guidelines to ensure appropriate action is taken to raise the aspirations of care leavers in relation to accessing further education provision. This is achieved through:

- outreach activities in local communities;
- developing effective links with key organisations;
- adapting application arrangements to ensure that the additional needs of care leavers are met; and
- providing the necessary support to secure recruitment and retention in further education.

All colleges provide a wide range of support for students from this background in relation to entering, sustaining and achieving in further education.

### **Pre-enrolment**

Outreach activities are designed to present the opportunities available in further education, and to highlight the support available to students whilst in provision. These include visiting care homes, regular contact with professional staff in social work teams, Education and Library Boards, the Careers Service and voluntary sector organisations such as Include Youth.

Colleges maintain close links with feeder schools where they deliver information talks. There are also taster sessions and college open days to allow young people to experience colleges at first hand. College literature and websites contain information specifically targeted at looked after children.

### **Enrolment and on provision support**

All colleges already have in place, or are working towards implementing, arrangements to identify looked after young people at an early stage. This allows colleges to establish appropriate additional support arrangements for individual students and also provides information on the level of participation by this particular cohort of students.

Colleges provide additional support for students from a care background by designating specific staff to arrange the support required, as well as delivering training and awareness sessions for all staff on the potential additional barriers faced by these students. Students can then be given extra support, if needed, by learning support staff, counsellors and student finance officers.

## **Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment**

### **InvestNI Supported Jobs**

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of jobs that InvestNI have supported, broken down by constituency, including (i) the financial assistance offered to secure these jobs; and (ii) the investment provided by business to create these jobs, for each of the last five years.

**(AQW 29677/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):** Tables 1 to 5 below detail the number of jobs promoted and safeguarded in each Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) in each of the last five financial years (2008-09 to 2012-13). The tables also detail (i) the financial assistance offered

to secure these jobs; and (ii) the investment planned by businesses to create these jobs. It should be noted that the total planned investment figure represents the total value of the funds required to implement the projects being supported, and will be the aggregation of what the business will generate from its operations, and the amount from external sources such as the banks, and other lenders/funders (including Invest NI). It is not possible to collate the investment figure specifically provided by the business itself.

**TABLE 1: INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED BY PCA IN 2008-09**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>Total Assistance £m</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment £m</b>	<b>New Jobs</b>	<b>Safe Jobs</b>
Belfast East	24.35	545.20	1,157	55
Belfast North	1.01	13.80	178	0
Belfast South	2.25	28.03	335	1
Belfast West	0.39	2.25	121	3
East Antrim	3.99	15.46	107	0
East Londonderry	0.63	4.76	150	51
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	3.73	26.23	541	326
Foyle	1.91	11.35	301	29
Lagan Valley	0.95	5.03	154	36
Mid Ulster	2.74	36.98	474	10
Newry & Armagh	7.27	80.05	1,008	81
North Antrim	1.57	8.76	272	0
North Down	0.78	7.69	143	18
South Antrim	2.83	18.46	268	0
South Down	7.17	23.47	649	0
Strangford	0.63	8.41	181	0
Upper Bann	13.33	66.92	357	154
West Tyrone	0.58	5.40	179	48

**TABLE 2: INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED BY PCA IN 2009-10**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>Total Assistance £m</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment £m</b>	<b>New Jobs</b>	<b>Safe Jobs</b>
Belfast East	7.00	31.13	434	135
Belfast North	4.37	35.18	522	324
Belfast South	14.01	55.99	676	700
Belfast West	0.59	5.17	107	8
East Antrim	0.52	3.21	109	21
East Londonderry	0.73	4.32	160	4

<b>PCA</b>	<b>Total Assistance £m</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment £m</b>	<b>New Jobs</b>	<b>Safe Jobs</b>
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	1.85	11.74	270	35
Foyle	14.99	60.96	338	47
Lagan Valley	2.36	11.04	244	73
Mid Ulster	6.93	53.36	352	312
Newry & Armagh	2.64	17.88	202	45
North Antrim	2.07	8.23	91	107
North Down	0.96	5.84	201	5
South Antrim	1.96	9.24	170	79
South Down	1.79	11.83	226	14
Strangford	2.08	9.23	175	56
Upper Bann	12.76	59.69	780	250
West Tyrone	1.26	7.50	217	8

**TABLE 3: INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED BY PCA IN 2010-11**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>Total Assistance £m</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment £m</b>	<b>New Jobs</b>	<b>Safe Jobs</b>
Belfast East	11.84	61.11	1,003	77
Belfast North	3.29	21.30	491	13
Belfast South	8.08	55.72	975	2
Belfast West	0.04	0.20	83	0
East Antrim	1.69	14.57	177	0
East Londonderry	0.39	2.84	188	2
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	1.22	18.70	330	6
Foyle	1.64	10.78	439	0
Lagan Valley	3.84	29.59	336	3
Mid Ulster	0.89	8.58	303	5
Newry & Armagh	5.65	39.12	714	7
North Antrim	5.48	37.09	163	1,212
North Down	0.24	1.63	88	5
South Antrim	6.00	50.26	767	7
South Down	0.57	5.68	210	0
Strangford	0.32	2.68	109	11
Upper Bann	1.12	10.99	197	32
West Tyrone	0.29	1.79	167	0

**TABLE 4: INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED BY PCA IN 2011-12**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>Total Assistance £m</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment £m</b>	<b>New Jobs</b>	<b>Safe Jobs</b>
Belfast East	1.92	14.17	274	0
Belfast North	1.38	13.01	468	0
Belfast South	7.62	66.15	1,025	4
Belfast West	1.76	19.62	295	0
East Antrim	0.41	2.09	144	0
East Londonderry	0.61	2.66	171	0
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	1.29	9.99	270	0
Foyle	2.41	24.71	397	0
Lagan Valley	2.68	19.78	381	123
Mid Ulster	3.47	31.23	660	20
Newry & Armagh	1.15	11.27	264	0
North Antrim	0.77	7.95	179	0
North Down	1.15	7.66	154	0
South Antrim	1.30	10.31	272	0
South Down	1.37	9.73	291	0
Strangford	0.65	5.35	169	0
Upper Bann	0.54	3.87	224	0
West Tyrone	0.70	4.03	201	0

**TABLE 5: INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED BY PCA IN 2012-13**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>Total Assistance £m</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment £m</b>	<b>New Jobs</b>	<b>Safe Jobs</b>
Belfast East	1.35	8.92	216	3
Belfast North	1.33	10.98	244	0
Belfast South	7.95	78.03	1,220	24
Belfast West	2.14	16.51	375	1
East Antrim	2.55	18.65	520	0
East Londonderry	1.23	9.46	166	45
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	2.28	16.72	491	9
Foyle	3.67	21.90	468	93
Lagan Valley	2.12	12.08	278	8
Mid Ulster	5.55	36.72	820	7

PCA	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	New Jobs	Safe Jobs
Newry & Armagh	1.31	12.22	309	0
North Antrim	0.95	7.66	210	0
North Down	0.35	2.40	103	0
South Antrim	2.07	11.16	256	68
South Down	0.65	4.16	125	15
Strangford	2.44	21.01	167	68
Upper Bann	4.08	28.52	519	20
West Tyrone	5.21	36.47	678	0

Notes to tables 1 To 5:

- 1 Jobs Promoted figures include the Regional Start Initiative (formerly the Enterprise Development Programme), which does not offer financial assistance but provides advice and guidance to individuals wishing to start a new business.
- 2 Jobs Promoted represents the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
- 3 Jobs Safeguarded represents the number jobs that would have been lost if the project was not supported.
- 4 A further £1.9m was offered to promote 193 jobs, the location of which have not yet been determined.
- 5 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.

### Farm Incidents Investigated by the Health and Safety Executive

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of farm incidents investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in each of the last five years, including the number of fatalities in each year and the funding costs of the HSE.

**(AQW 29727/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The table below gives the number of fatal incidents, HSENI investigations and total funding for the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) in each of the last five financial years.

Regrettably there have been 31 work related fatalities which have occurred on farms in Northern Ireland during the last 5 years. All of these fatalities have been investigated by HSENI.

In relation to non fatal accidents, as the majority of those working in the industry are self employed, a very high proportion of non fatal incidents on farms are not reportable to HSENI under the Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999. However, where major injury incidents are reported they are investigated by HSENI.

Year	Fatal Incidents	Investigations	Total HSENI Funding <sup>2</sup>
2013/14	3 <sup>1</sup>	111	£6,468,000
2012/13	11	17	£6,465,000
2011/12	9	21	£6,233,000
2010/11	6	11	£6,352,000
2009/10	2	10	£6,064,000

1 Figures to date (21/1/2014)

2 Total HSENI funding is shown for the financial years 2009/10 to 2013/14

## Going for Growth Policy Recommendations

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what progress has been made in formulating and funding the Going for Growth policy recommendations of the Agri-Food Strategy Board; and to detail the timescale to which her Department is working.

**(AQW 29729/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** This matter remains under consideration at the Executive.

## Tourism: Irish Community in the USA

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) any proposals it may have to promote tourism to the Irish community in the USA during 2014; and (ii) the total cost of the plans.

**(AQW 29755/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The United States is an important tourism market for us.

Tourism Ireland will spend £8.6 million on marketing both Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland in North America in 2014. This will include marketing to a variety of target sectors including the Irish diaspora community.

Opportunities for promoting Northern Ireland throughout the year include:

- The Toronto Irish Film Festival.
- The annual Ireland Fund Canada St Patrick's Day luncheon,.  
The USA PGA Merchandising Show in Orlando Florida.
- Sales blitzes in Atlanta, Florida, Texas, Chicago/Boston and in Canada.
- At food fairs in Austin, Texas and Aspen, Colorado.
- The Barclay's Championship PGA Golf tour and at the Deutsche Bank PGA Golf Championship in Boston.

## Strategic Partnerships

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the strategic partnerships that have been forged to ensure adequate infrastructure is in place to service any potential new business investment.

**(AQW 29783/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Northern Ireland's investment proposition is based on a number of factors, such as its talented and loyal workforce, advanced telecoms and transport infrastructure, high skilled business clusters, the pro-business environment, competitive operating costs and proximity to major markets.

Any perceived weaknesses or reasons not to locate highlighted by potential investors are captured primarily by the Invest Northern Ireland's Investment Managers and overseas business development executives. Invest NI has a range of mechanisms in place to raise and address significant strategic issues, such as infrastructure, that may impact on attracting potential investment.

Invest NI's Chief Executive is a member of the Northern Ireland Economic Advisory Group which consists of a focused group of experts in economics, business and skills who provide advice on the key issues impacting the economy and the measures required to address these issues.

In addition, Invest NI is represented on a wide range of cross Departmental bodies and working groups. For example, there are regular formal meetings between DETI, DEL and Invest NI to discuss skills issues and the development of policies and practices to address skills shortages in specific areas.

In terms of Infrastructure Northern Ireland has world class communications infrastructure with fast reliable road, rail, air and telecoms links between Northern Ireland and the rest of the world. London



is one hour away by air from Belfast, with Dublin only two hours by road or rail. There are daily direct flights to a variety of European business locations such as Paris and Amsterdam. In addition Project Kelvin provides a transatlantic link for excellent communications throughout the region.

Invest NI continues to liaise with a number of other Government Departments. For example:

- The Department of Regional Development over key issues of access and, in particular, air route access to Northern Ireland;
- The Department of Social Development over the implementation of those elements of the Jobs Fund initiative which are focused on Neighbourhood Renewal Areas;
- The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure over the development and implementation of support for the Northern Ireland Creative Industries sector; and
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development over the development and implementation of agri-food strategies.

## Regulatory Framework

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the justification of the Regulatory Framework, which is preventing an increase in electricity infrastructure investments.  
**(AQW 29785/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The EU Third Package of energy legislation (IME 3) published in 2009 sought, among a range of objectives, to harmonise the powers and independence of regulators at a national and EU level. The Regulator is responsible for considering and approving required investment in the electricity network through Price Determination arrangements. In setting Price Determinations the Regulator is obliged to strike the appropriate balance between necessary investment and the interests of consumers who will ultimately bear the costs.

## Locally Extracted Unconventional Oil and Gas

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that locally extracted unconventional oil and gas will have on energy prices.  
**(AQW 29828/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Local unconventional oil and gas remains at the prospecting stage, and it is therefore not possible to accurately assess any future impact on local energy prices, but experience elsewhere points strongly to a downward pressure on energy prices.

## 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow: Tourism

**Mr Humphrey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans Tourism Ireland have to promote Northern Ireland during the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.  
**(AQW 29834/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The 2014 Commonwealth Games offer the opportunity to highlight Northern Ireland to local and visiting international media and participants alike.

My Department, through Tourism Ireland, will identify tour operators in relevant Commonwealth countries who are packaging trips to the Games and work to influence them to include Northern Ireland in their programmes. Tourism Ireland will also work with Games committee members and others to identify any other avenues for promoting Northern Ireland.

Whilst plans are not yet finalised, engagement with the media is underway and potential activity will be rolled out through traditional and social media in advance of, during and after the Games.

## Grants and Finance Opportunities: Wind Turbines and Anaerobic Digestion Facilities

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the grants and finance opportunities available to individuals who wish to install small scale (i) wind turbines; and (ii) anaerobic digestion facilities.

**(AQW 29978/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department does not provide grant assistance towards the installation of renewable electricity technologies. Instead, renewable electricity is incentivised through the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) which provides a revenue stream in the form of Renewables Obligation Certificates for electricity generated by a range of technologies including small scale wind turbines and anaerobic digestion.

The Department does not keep information on finance opportunities from individual lenders; however, the Green Investment Bank will consider anaerobic digestion projects.

## InvestNI's Jobs Fund

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how many jobs have been (i) created; and (ii) promoted in Derry by InvestNI's Jobs Fund since it was set up.

**(AQW 30019/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Invest NI's Jobs Fund has (i) helped create 456 new jobs and (ii) helped promote 575 new jobs in the Derry City Council area since its inception in April 2011.

## Companies Licensed by Trading Standards

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to Regulation 3(1) of The Measuring Instruments (Liquid Fuel delivered from Road Tankers) Regulations 2006, how many companies are licensed by Trading Standards to deliver less than 500 litres in road tankers.

**(AQW 30032/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Measuring Instruments (Liquid Fuel delivered from Road Tankers) Regulations 2006 do not require businesses selling liquid fuel to be licensed.

The Regulations apply to equipment for measuring fuel from road tankers first placed on the market or put into use after 30 October 2006. The Regulations do not specify that deliveries must be of a certain minimum quantity. The verification process for equipment that is subject to these Regulations does not require the Department to be notified when they are put into trade use by the operator. The Department, therefore, has no accurate figure as to the proportion of such vehicles that can legally carryout deliveries in quantities less than 500 litres. However, through its enforcement activity with the oil industry the Trading Standards Service estimates that approximately 20% of the Northern Ireland fleet can legally make such deliveries.

## InvestNI's Jobs Fund: South Tyrone

**Ms McGahan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how many jobs have been (i) created; and (ii) promoted in South Tyrone by InvestNI's Jobs Fund since it was set up.

**(AQW 30047/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Invest NI's Jobs Fund has (i) helped create 438 new jobs and (ii) helped promote 501 new jobs in the Fermanagh & South Tyrone constituency area since its inception in April 2011.

## InvestNI's Jobs Fund

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the firms in which the 456 jobs in the Derry City Council area have been created by InvestNI's Jobs Fund, up to December 2013.

**(AQW 30103/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The table below indicates the businesses that created jobs as a result of the Jobs Fund in the Derry City Council area between April 2011 and December 2013. Due to commercial sensitivity, details of firms whose projects have not been publicly announced have been withheld. Please also be aware that for reasons of data protection, the names of individuals trading as sole traders or partnerships cannot be disclosed; therefore, this information has been included on an aggregated basis.

<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Jobs Created at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013</b>
AXA Insurance Limited	13
Fresh Food Kitchen Products Ltd	5
Golfstoreeurope Ltd	2
Hostsure Northern Ireland Limited	13
Lucid Interactive Ltd	1
One Stop Data Limited	13
Projects Not Announced – Employment Grant	42
Sole Traders – Employment Grant	7
Sole Traders – NRA Business Start Grant	262
Sole Traders – NEET Business Start Grant	40
DEL Employer Subsidy	58

## Department of the Environment

### **Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the reasons for the delay in making a decision on the implementation of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

**(AQW 28362/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment):** The adoption of a development plan represents the final stage of the plan process and can only be done once the Department is satisfied that all the necessary statutory and procedural requirements have been completed.

The Plan was awarded a Certificate of Conformity with the Regional Development Strategy by the Department for Regional Development on 21 October 2013. An Equality Impact Assessment and a Habitats Regulations Assessment have recently been completed.

My Department has now completed its scrutiny and review of all relevant materials and processes and is satisfied that all necessary statutory and procedural requirements for adoption of the draft plan have been satisfied.

Therefore, subject to the agreement of my Ministerial colleagues, I will instruct my Department, by order under Article 8 (1) of the Planning (NI) Order 1991, to adopt and make operational the Plan.

### **Royal Society Report into Shale Gas 2012**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of the Environment, given that the Royal Society Report into Shale Gas 2012 states that at present the environmental regulator does not permit fracturing below freshwater aquifers, whether such a position will be taken locally.

**(AQW 29585/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** No applications have been received and hence no decisions on hydraulic fracturing have yet been taken. I have publicly stated my position on hydraulic fracturing on a number of occasions. Granting permission relating to fracking operations will only take place when it has been supported by very strong evidence which indicates that fracking is safe for public health and the environment. I believe to do otherwise, given the scale of ongoing research, would be reckless and irresponsible. I have yet to see that evidence.

That is why I have directed my officials in NIEA to work with the EPA in Ireland to take forward a major programme of research to examine the potential impact of fracking on the environment. This programme of research is currently being progressed and the outcomes of this all-island research will help assist the NIEA in making these important regulatory decisions.

## **Pollution of Waterways**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of the Environment what steps are being taken to ensure that Departments work together to combat the pollution of waterways with refuse such as cooking fat and oils, coffee granules and other food waste, as well as small non perishables being washed down domestic pipes.

**(AQW 29718/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** I fully recognise the need for Departments to work together on important issues such as the pollution of waterways by cooking fat and oils and other food waste.

My Department has recently completed a consultation on the introduction of restrictions on the landfilling of food waste. One of the policy proposals consulted on was the proposed introduction of a ban on the non-domestic discharge of food waste into the public sewer network in order to ensure the value of this important resource is realised and in response to the detrimental effect food waste is having on the sewer network.

The policy was developed by the Department working closely with the Department of Regional Development and NI Water. This close liaison will be maintained during the post consultation process and in further policy development.

Recent media coverage has highlighted the implications of disposing of fats, oils and grease and other inappropriate items into the sewerage system, which can ultimately lead to sewer blockages, out of sewer flooding and water pollution.

I understand that NI Water recently hosted a "Partners Against Pollution" event on 29 November 2013 which explored opportunities for environmental stakeholders in Northern Ireland to develop partnership approaches to prevent widespread abuse of the sewerage system through raising the profile of education and awareness. Officials from my Department and other Government Departments and Agencies were in attendance at this event. A key theme to emerge was the importance of ensuring that the voluntary sector and government bodies work in tandem to achieve this common goal.

The inappropriate disposal of household items and food waste is a problem for NI Water both in financial and reputational terms, yet it is largely caused by lack of public understanding.

My Department will continue to work alongside NI Water, local councils and other Departments, including the Department of Regional Development, in highlighting the impact of such practices on the water environment and in progressing solutions to this issue and in providing advice, education and guidance for the general public and businesses on the proper disposal of food waste and household items.

## **Planning Service: Aerial Photography**

**Mr Clarke** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether Planning Service use aerial photography; (ii) if so, how often it is used; (iii) what the cost of aerial photography has been in each of the last three years; and (iv) for what purposes is aerial photography used.

**(AQW 29778/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** While DOE Planning makes use of aerial photography on a regular basis, it can be difficult to quantify. It is used in the normal course of work for a range of activities such as planning enforcement and identifying breaches of planning control, assessing planning applications and work associated with the preparation of area plans.

The Department makes regular use of the range of free aerial photography which is available on the internet for example; Google Maps, Google Earth and Bing Maps. It also has access to online aerial photography from Land and Property Services (LPS), which is supplied as part of the Northern Ireland Mapping agreement (NIMA).

On some occasions, staff may also require aerial photography from Ordnance Survey/LPS directly. While it is not possible to provide an exact figure for these costs, they have not been significant in the last three years.

The Department may also make use of other methods to obtain aerial photographs for specific cases if required, such as hiring of a plane to capture the required information. Table 1 below outlines the cost to the Department for such activities in the last three years;

**TABLE 1**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>
2011	362
2012	374
2013	350

### **Public Hire Plated Taxis**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment whether Belfast public hire plated taxis are permitted to have dual tariffs programmed into their meters.

**(AQW 29800/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** I can confirm that Belfast Public Hire plated taxis are permitted to have dual tariffs programmed into their meters. The first tariff, the regulated fare, must be displayed when the driver is providing a public hire service. The secondary, lower, tariff can be used when the vehicle has been pre-booked and operating on a private hire basis.

### **Driver and Vehicle Agency Enforcement Officers**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment on how many occasions, between March 2013 and September 2013, Driver and Vehicle Agency Enforcement Officers have attended Ravenhill Rugby Ground on Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast, for the purposes of making an assessment.

**(AQW 29848/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** DVA Enforcement Officers have attended Ravenhill Rugby Ground on three occasions between March 2013 and September 2013 for the purposes of assessing compliance with Taxi Operator Licensing requirements.

### **Private Hire Taxi Drivers**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment how many private hire taxi drivers have been prosecuted for taxi touting at Central Station, Belfast, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 29849/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** DVA has no records of any private hire taxi drivers being prosecuted for taxi touting at Central Station, Belfast.

## Driver and Vehicle Agency: Ravenhill Rugby Ground

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28436/11-15, whether any of the Driver and Vehicle Agency officers involved in the four test purchase booked their taxi via Ravenhill Rugby Ground staff; and if not, where they booked their taxi and were these details collected.

**(AQW 29850/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** DVA Enforcement Officers did not book their taxis via Ravenhill Rugby Ground staff but rather upon leaving the rugby ground they proceeded to Mount Merrion Avenue where fonaCab taxi marshals made provision for a booking and in conjunction with their drivers recorded the necessary booking particulars.

## Domain Names for Council Websites

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of the Environment what guidance or regulations are in place regarding the domain names for council websites.

**(AQW 29858/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** There is no specific guidance or regulation on this matter which councils must adhere to, unless the new council name ends in '.gov.uk'. I understand that the UK Cabinet Office has produced guidance for NICS Departments wishing to use domain names ending in '.gov.uk'. Councils are not required by regulation to use a '.gov.uk' domain naming convention, but if they do, they must adhere to this guidance. I understand a number of Statutory Transition Committees have already registered domain names for their new council in preparation for April 2015. However, the final decision on the name of the new council domain names rests with the new successor councils appointed following the local government elections in May 2014.

## People with a Disability: Taxi Charges

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether he is aware of an article published in The Independent on Sunday on 12 January 2014 regarding of people with a disability being charged extra for taxi services in Middlesbrough, and specifically to note operators have been warned that this is discriminatory practice; (ii) if this practice is evident amongst local private hire taxis; and (iii) whether his Department would view this current practice as discriminatory.

**(AQW 29881/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** I am aware of the article in question and the action taken to remind operators of their duties under the relevant equalities legislation in place in Britain. I have asked officials to liaise with Disability Action and the Inclusive Mobility & Transport Advisory Committee to consider if further advice should be provided by my Department to operators in Northern Ireland regarding their responsibilities around these issues.

The Member will be aware that private hire taxi fares are not regulated in NI. Further, my Department is not aware that the practice is evident amongst private hire taxi operators. Over the past 12 months, there has been one complaint made to DVA in relation to a private hire taxi driver allegedly overcharging a disabled customer. During the investigation by DVA, of which the relevant operator was informed, the allegation was denied and the investigation concluded that no further action should be taken.

I would reiterate my previous statements in my responses to AQW 28439/11-15 and AQW 29126/11-15 that the Equality Commission has advised that DDA legislation makes it unlawful for organisations such as transport service providers, including taxi operators, to discriminate against disabled people in the way in which they provide or do not provide their services.

## Private Hire Taxis: Registered in Belfast

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment how many private hire taxis are currently registered in Belfast; and of those, how many cater for (i) seven passengers; and (ii) are wheelchair accessible.  
**(AQW 29882/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** Departmental records show that 1,119 private hire taxis have a registered keeper postcode within Belfast (BT1-BT17), of which 38 are licensed to carry 7 passengers or more.

It is not possible to say how many of these vehicles are wheelchair accessible as currently there is no legislative requirement for any taxi to be wheelchair accessible unless it is to be licensed as Belfast Public Hire. Therefore, taxi vehicles operating as private hire or as public hire outside Belfast do not have to comply with the legislative wheelchair accessible vehicle specification.

However, I am bringing forward new legislation that will remove this anomaly. From September 2014, all taxis advertising as wheelchair accessible will have to comply with the legal specification for a wheelchair accessible taxi. In addition, the new regulation will update the current specification for a wheelchair accessible vehicle to one more suited to accommodate modern wheelchairs and the safety and comfort of wheelchair users.

Please note these figures are not part of official statistics and have not been subject to data validation.

## Private Hire Taxis

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment whether dual tariffs are permitted in private hire taxis; and if so, in what circumstances this can be applied.  
**(AQW 29884/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** Within the current taxi licensing regime private hire taxi fares are unregulated; therefore there is no requirement to adhere to a particular fare tariff, tariff structure or to use a taximeter.

The number of tariffs installed in taximeters in such taxis is therefore a matter for the taxi operator.

## Belfast Public Hire Taxi Twitter Account

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment whether departmental consideration has been given to the images and evidence posted on the Belfast Public Hire Taxi Twitter account which appears to show regulation breaches by private hire sector taxis; and if so, what action will be taken.  
**(AQW 29885/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** The images posted on the Belfast Public Hire Twitter account do not provide any evidence to ascertain whether there are any regulation breaches being committed by private hire sector taxis. They do however raise a possible issue with regard to directing traffic but that would be a matter for the PSNI to consider and take action where they feel appropriate.

## Unconventional Oil and Gas Development

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment whether unconventional oil and gas development will feature in the new strategic planning policy framework.  
**(AQW 29918/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** I will be publishing the draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement (dSPPS) for public consultation on 4th February 2014.

The dSPPS will be pitched at a broader and more strategic level than existing PPS documents so as to afford councils the flexibility in bringing forward detailed operational planning policy, through new local development plans, tailored to the needs and opportunities of their local areas.

The dSPPS will mainly involve a consolidation of existing planning policies including the prevailing Minerals Policy, within 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)'. However, the more recent issue of unconventional hydrocarbon extraction will also feature in the SPPS.

I propose to use the SPPS consultation to take into account everyone's views prior to finalising the SPPS in time for the transfer of planning functions to local government.

### **Department's Strategic Planning Division**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment given the findings of the Mills Report (i) for his assessment of whether the failure of his Department's Strategic Planning Division to take effective enforcement action between 2000-2011 has been pivotal in enabling this unprecedented environmental crime; (ii) for his assessment of the Strategic Planning Division's view in 2009 that it had no grounds to take formal enforcement action because it was in receipt of a retrospective planning application; (iii) why it was considered that the Planning Appeals Commission would be an impediment to formal enforcement action; and (iv) whether he intends to initiate an independent public inquiry into why his Department repeatedly ignored warnings of environmental harm, including from other competent authorities.

**(AQW 29919/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** The report by Chris Mills highlighted many issues with enforcement of waste crime in Northern Ireland including the resourcing needed to provide a robust system, the systems of communication that need to be improved and the overall approach to enforcement of this nature. While it is appreciated that a review of the previous investigations may have highlighted areas for improvement, it is important to note that the operator of the site is the person responsible for the breach, for the infilling and for the failure to meet his responsibilities. The Department's Strategic Planning Division has undertaken numerous site visits and carried out enforcement investigations in relation to this site since 2000 and have secured retrospective applications and compliance through negotiation and formal enforcement action. It is important to remember that these activities developed from minor infringements and it is the cumulative situation that we are now seeing. As each assessment of the situation demonstrates further non compliance the approach of the SPD enforcement unit so too increases. The Department has a range of enforcement powers at its disposal to remedy non compliance and the use of those powers will be reassessed following the Mills Report findings.

Breaches of planning control are not offences and the Department can secure a remedy through a number of approaches. These approaches are detailed in the Department's Planning Policy Statement 9. The approaches range from a written warning to formal enforcement action including stop notices. The approaches require consideration and are based on a number of factors including whether the development is or can be made acceptable. Unauthorised development is not removed or ceased simply because it is unauthorised. The submission of a retrospective application allows the Department to assess, control and mitigate development allowing the economy to continue but at the same time protecting the environment. Formal enforcement action, retrospective applications and written warnings are all approaches that can be taken by the Department.

The ultimate aim of any enforcement action is to remedy a breach. This can be achieved through negotiation or through formal enforcement action, i.e the offender can be advised to cease or legally required to cease. Upon issuing an enforcement notice, the recipient has the opportunity to appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission. This can often lead to lengthy periods of delay, during which the enforcement notice has no effect. The Department may consider that informal enforcement action is a more expedient remedy to ensuring a breach ceases.

The Department in processing applications and investigating enforcement cases will take into account the comments and advice of relevant authorities, however, the Department is the decision maker and the final decision rests with the Department. It is the role of professional planners to consider, challenge where necessary and balance the plethora of advice and representations received in processing cases. The Mills report has highlighted a number of areas where the Department can improve. The Department will be putting in place an action plan to address the issues raised in the



report and to reorganise structures to become better, more proactive, more responsive and more coherent.

### **Driver and Vehicle Agency: Medical Advisers**

**Mr Elliott** asked the Minister of the Environment how many (i) full-time; and (ii) part-time doctors, licensed by the General Medical Council, are employed by the Driver and Vehicle Agency as Medical Advisers; and whether (a) medical records can be accessed; and (b) medical assessments can be made, by personnel who are not qualified medical practitioners licensed by the General Medical Council.

**(AQW 29957/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:**

- (i) and (ii) The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) do not employ doctors. Applications for driver licences which require medical investigation are referred to the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) Occupational Health Service (OHS) who are contracted by the Department to provide professional medical advice.
- (a) Medical records provided in connection with a driving licence application are processed by a dedicated section within DVA Driver Licensing in Coleraine. The records are treated as confidential and are accessible only by the staff who have a business need to view them and, where expert medical opinion is required, by OHS doctors or consultants contracted to provide specialist medical advice to OHS.
- (b) Where an applicant for or a holder of a driving licence notifies the Department of a medical condition staff in the DVA's Medical & Vocational section assess the application using guidelines agreed with OHS. This process enables applications where there are minor conditions not requiring further investigation to be filtered out. Where medical assessment is required the application is referred to OHS.

Where necessary, OHS will seek further medical evidence from the applicant's doctor or consultant, or refer the applicant to an independent specialist consultant for examination. Following consideration of the relevant medical evidence, including that provided by the doctor, consultant or independent specialist consultant, OHS will make a recommendation to DVA as to the applicant's fitness to drive.

While the decision to grant, refuse, restrict or revoke a licence lies solely with the Department, in practice DVA does not act outside the OHS recommendation.

### **Equality Commission**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28439/11-15, (i) whether he consulted the Equality Commission about this reply; (ii) if so, what was the Commission's advice; and (iii) if not, whether he will undertake to meet with Equality Commission to canvas its views.

**(AQW 29974/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** I can advise that the Equality Commission were not consulted about my reply: bespoke advice to taxi operators is available to all on the Commission's website.

Given the issues in the media in recent weeks, I have asked officials to confirm with the Commission that the advice to taxi operators on the Commission's website remains current.

### **Taxi Companies: Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of the Environment whether taxi companies are legally obliged to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles.

**(AQW 29975/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** Currently there is no legislative requirement for any taxi to be wheelchair accessible unless it is to be licensed as Belfast Public Hire (yellow plate). Therefore, taxis operating as private hire or

as public hire outside Belfast do not have to comply with the legislative wheelchair accessible vehicle specification, regardless of whether or not they are advertising themselves as wheelchair accessible.

In September 2014 the Department intends to introduce new legislation for taxi vehicles which will address this issue. This legislation will ensure that all taxis advertising as wheelchair accessible will have to comply with the legal specification for a wheelchair accessible taxi. If they do not, they will be guilty of an offence. In addition the new legislation will update the current specification for a wheelchair accessible vehicle to one more suited to accommodate modern wheelchairs and the safety and comfort of wheelchair users.

I have set out the legislative requirements on taxi operators as regards provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles in my answer to question AQW 29977/11-15.

## **Mills Report**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail all the recommendations of changes made by his Department to the Mills report.

**(AQW 30000/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** As I stated on 18 December last year when I released the Mills Report, I will be providing a full response to the report. This will include a response and actions in relation to all of Mr Mills' recommendations. I expect to provide this response in the next month.

## **Public Hire Taxis Operating in Belfast**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29566/11-15, to explain the disparity in the figures put forward by departmental officials to the Committee for the Environment on Thursday 12 December 2013, who advised that around 300 public hire taxis were operating in Belfast; and on what basis officials based their information.

**(AQW 30050/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** My officials have advised that the figure of 437 vehicles licensed as Belfast public hire quoted in AQW 29566/11-15 is indeed correct, but that it was misread by them as 347 during the 12 December 2013 meeting.

There are a number of vehicles licensed as Belfast public hire (yellow plates) which are in private hire fleets and do not sit at ranks in Belfast; this was the basis on which officials reduced the misread figure of 347 to an estimation of 300 vehicles working as Belfast Public Hire from ranks.

I have asked my officials to inform the Committee Clerk of this incorrect reading of the figure.

## **Findings of the Mills Report**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the findings of the Mills Report, whether he will be bidding to the Department of Finance and Personnel for the estimated £250 million required to clean up illegal waste sites; and where such quantities of illegal waste can be disposed off safely.

**(AQW 30070/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** DOE is currently commissioning experts to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the major illegal dump at Campsie. This will provide advice on the best environmental management options for dealing with the waste, including possible disposal options and including cost estimates.

It is critical to note that in this and any other cases of illegal waste sites, DOE will pursue the polluters with the full force of the law to make them pay for clean-up costs.

In instances where full clean-up costs cannot be recovered, I will investigate other funding options.

## Owenkillew Special Area of Conservation

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment whether the Habitats Regulation Assessment carried out on planning application K/2013/0072/F (i) was assessed against an established ecological baseline for the Owenkillew Special Area of Conservation; (ii) whether that baseline was informed by the outcome of the required review of extant planning permissions likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of this European Site; and (iii) whether any such review of extant permissions has been carried out.

**(AQW 30071/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** The Habitat Regulations Assessment undertaken on the planning application was assessed against the conservation objectives of the SAC as is required by the Habitats Directive. The Directive does not use the term ecological baseline. The assessment was determined using information from a variety of sources. These include ongoing NIEA monitoring of the protected species, habitats, water quality and morphology, Loughs Agency habitat survey data, preliminary results and data from the INTERREG IVA Freshwater pearl mussel project and information supplied by the developer. The legislation does not require a review of permissions that have been completed. The Department has not undertaken a full review of extant permissions but reviews these on a case by case basis. In this case there were no other significant uncompleted planning applications in the area to review.

## Councils: Cluster Costs

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of the Environment how he intends to apportion the costs of the new Shadow Councils between the existing Councils in a particular cluster.

**(AQO 5349/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** My Department issued specific guidance to Statutory Transition Committees and their constituent councils on 9 January 2014 setting out the process for apportioning the new council costs by total population, as this is the most equitable and accurate solution.

In arriving at this decision, I took into account the views raised at the Regional Transition Committee meeting on 27 November 2013, by considering three separate options.

The option I chose was the apportionment of costs on the basis of total population of the new district. This provides for costs to be apportioned on the basis of total population. This option gives the most accurate representation of the population, as it includes groups such as children and those not registered to vote, since councils provide services for these groups of people too. Defrayal of costs on the basis of this option will ensure that the existing councils will be able to prepare their annual budget for 2014/15 on the basis of this approach without having a further wait for agreement on a method of cost apportionment.

The option of using costs apportioned on the basis of the tax base, as measured by the Gross Penny Rate Product (GPRP) was considered, but this method assumed that the only method of paying for reform was through rates, and this is not the case.

The option of allowing existing councils in each cluster to have the option of selecting the apportionment method to be used was also considered. However, as the purpose of the shadow period is to give the new councils the time and resources to take the key decisions necessary to ensure their effective operation from 1 April 2015, I felt that it would be preferable to avoid any undue doubt in relation to how they will be funded.

## Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan: Publication

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29781/11-15, to detail the expected date of publication of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

**(AQW 30142/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** As you will be aware from previous correspondence, my Department has progressed the Plan through the remaining statutory and procedural processes.

Subject to the agreement of Ministerial colleagues, I will instruct my Department, by order under Article 8 (1) of the Planning (NI) Order 1991, to adopt and make the Plan operational.

### Taxi Operator Licences: Foyle Constituency

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29620/11-15, to detail the number of drivers that are operating under each of the licences outlined.

**(AQW 30155/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** The number of drivers affiliated to each operator licence at 24 January 2014 has been provided below:

<b>Name of Operator</b>	<b>No. drivers</b>
A Cabs	27
A1 Taxi Derry	25
Anthony Carton	1
Barry O'Neill	1
BE-KAB	18
Bernadette Doherty	1
Biju John	1
Brendan Gourley	1
Brendan O'Neill	1
Brian Patrick Keenan	1
City Cabs (Derry) Ltd	283
Culmore Taxis	72
Damian Griffiths	1
Daniel McLaughlin	1
Feeny Cabs	1
Brown's Taxi	1
Waterside Taxi	32
Declan O'Donnell	1
Derry Taxis LTD	42
Nippy Taxis	31
Eamonn Denis Burke	1
Edward Burke	1
Eglinton Taxis	11
Elite Executive Travel	1
Eoighan McCauley	1
C F B Taxis	1
George Hegarty	1

<b>Name of Operator</b>	<b>No. drivers</b>
Gerard John Moore	1
GMC Taxi	1
DMK Taxi	1
Gerard Thomas Conaghan	1
Gregory Brady	1
Gregory Feeney	1
Hugh Colm McIntyre	1
Tony Morrison Taxi Service	1
SEA - MC	1
James Gerarde Harkens	1
James Grieve	1
Call A Cab	18
James McCarron	1
John Gerard McGinley	1
John Hutton	1
JJ's Taxi	1
John Joseph Robinson	1
J L Taxi	1
John Parke	1
John Sweeney	1
Foyle Taxis	146
Joseph Ebbs	1
JS Cab Services	1
Kenneth Laurence Bradley	1
Sunvale Taxis	1
Kieron Brian Coyle	1
Laurence McGowan	1
Liam Farren	1
Link Cabs	13
Glassagh Taxis	61
Swift Cabs	16
City Tours	3
Michael's Taxi	1
Michael Brolly SNR	1
Michael Browne	1

<b>Name of Operator</b>	<b>No. drivers</b>
MC Taxi	1
Michael Harkin Wedding Cars	1
Michael McGrath	1
Mr Santhosh Vazhangattil	1
Neil Benedict Campbell	1
Niall Martin McGilloway	1
Oliver Lynch	1
Patrick Barton	1
Patrick Doherty	1
3D Limos	3
Patrick Killen Taxi's	1
Paul McMullan	1
Paul Vincent Mullan	1
Pauline Gallagher	1
Peter Hutton	1
Peter Joseph Fleming	1
Raymond McCafferty	1
Rijumon Varghese	1
Robert Cooke	1
Bob's Easy Park	4
K Cab	1
R K Taxis	1
Sean Doherty	1
Terence McDermott	1
The Taxi Company NI Limited	224
Thornhill Taxis	58
Tony Begley	1
V Cab	1
William Gill	1
William Joseph Havlin	1
Sackville (Coop) Taxis	16
W R Ross	1
<b>Total Drivers</b>	<b>1,177</b>

Please note these figures are not part of official statistics and have not been subject to data validation.

## Department of Finance and Personnel

### Third Sector Organisations

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) all third sector organisations funded by his Department who provide services to the public; and (ii) the value of each contract.

**(AQW 29541/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel):** Details of the third sector organisations who provide services to the public to which my Department currently provides funding are provided overleaf.

Organisation	Value of contract
Business in the Community	£100k
Royal National Institute of Blind People	£25k
Somme Association	£47k pa
East Border Region: Energy Efficiency & Micro Generation	£141k
Centre for Cross Border Studies	£170k
SALUS: Action Mental Health	£59k
East Border Region: Action for Biodiversity	£148k
North West Region Cross Border Group	£533k
Sabhal Mor Ostaig	£62k
North East Partnership: Business Improvement Districts	£93k

### Land and Property Services: Rates Relief

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of applications to the Land and Property Services for Rates Relief that are still awaiting conclusion (i) one month; (ii) two months; (iii) three months; (iv) four months; and (v) over four months from the date of the initial application.

**(AQW 29660/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The total number of applications to Land & Property Services for Rates Relief\* that are still awaiting conclusion from the date of the initial application are; (i) one month - 507; (ii) two months - 549; (iii) three months - 468; (iv) four months - 320; and (v) over four months - 1,648. The total claims awaiting completion currently stands at 3,628\*\*.

\* The total number includes applications for Rate Relief and Housing Benefit. Claimants are assessed for both, depending on circumstances.

\*\* Includes 136 applications received, to date, in January 2014

### Inflation Rate of Food and Energy

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the local inflation rate of (i) food; and (ii) energy, in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 29693/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** Inflation rates are not produced on a regional basis.

**Northern Ireland Civil Service: Vacant Positions**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) location; and (ii) number of vacant posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service at (a) Administrative Assistant; (b) Administrative Officer; (c) Executive Officer II; (d) Executive Officer I; (e) Staff Officer; and (f) Deputy Principal grades, broken down by Department.

**(AQW 29726/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The information requested is set out in the table attached.



**AQW 29726/11 - LOCATION & NUMBER OF VACANT POSTS IN THE NICS AT AA, AO, E01, E02, E01, SO & DP at 14 January 2014 \*\*\***

	AA	Location	AO	Location	E01I	Location	E01	Location	SO	Location	DP	Location
DARD	4	1 Coleraine	8	1 Londonderry	7	1 Ballymena	10	1 Armagh	8	Stormont	3.6	0.6 Cookstown
		1 Enniskillen		7 Stormont		1 Enniskillen		1 Belfast		3 Stormont		
	2 Stormont		1 Newtownards		1 Craigavon							
			4 Stormont		7 Stormont							
DCAL	0		3	Belfast	1	Belfast	2	Belfast	2	0	Belfast	
DE	1	Bangor	1	Bangor	2	1 Bangor	3	Bangor	7.5	Bangor	2	1 Bangor
						1 Londonderry						
*DEL	0.5	Belfast	13.6	1 Bangor	17.4	14.4 Belfast	24.12	22.12 Belfast	32	1 Armagh	5	Belfast
				10.6 Belfast		1 Coleraine		1 Downpatrick		25 Belfast		
				1 Larne		1 Newry		1 Londonderry		1 Larne		
				1 Lisburn		1 Omagh				1 Lisnagelvin		
										1 Lurgan		
										2 North West		
						1 Portadown						

*DETI	2	Belfast	0		2	Stormont	1	Belfast	3	1 Belfast	2	1 Belfast	1 Belfast
						2 Stormont		2 Stormont		1 Stormont			
DFP	3	Belfast	25	22 Belfast	5	Belfast	10	2 Bangor	17	Belfast	2	1 Bangor	1 Belfast
				2 Londonderry		8 Belfast		1 Belfast		1 Belfast			
				1 Stormont									
DHSSPS	3	Stormont	4	Stormont	2	Stormont	5	Stormont	0	Stormont	5	Stormont	Stormont
DOE	3	2 Belfast	15.6	0.5 Ballymena	6	4 Belfast	5	3 Belfast	22	20 Belfast	6	Belfast	Belfast
		1 Lisburn		12.5 Belfast		1 Coleraire		2 Coleraire		2 Coleraire			
				1 Coleraire		1 Londonderry							
				0.6 Londonderry									
				1 Omagh									
*DOJ	0		8	5 Belfast	12	7 Belfast	4	1 Belfast	11	2 Belfast	4	1 Belfast	1 Belfast
				1 Omagh		1 Bangor		2 Carrickfergus		2 Carrickfergus		1 Carrickfergus	
				1 Londonderry		2 Carrickfergus		1 Stormont		2 Carrickfergus		2 Stormont	
				1 Carrickfergus		2 Stormont				5 Stormont			

**AQW 29726/11 - LOCATION & NUMBER OF VACANT POSTS IN THE NICS AT AA, AO, E01, E02, E01, SO & DP - AT 14 JANUARY 2014 (CONTINUED)**

<b>DRD</b>	3	1 Belfast 2 Coleraine	2	1 Belfast 1 Enniskillen	3	2 Coleraine 1 Omagh	4	2 Belfast 2 Coleraine	10	9 Belfast 1 Ballymena	8	Belfast
		2 Antrim 1 Ballymena 15 Belfast		104 Belfast 1 Limavady		14 Belfast 6 Londonderry		18 Belfast 4 Londonderry		1 Ballymena 50 Belfast		6 Belfast 1 Londonderry
<b>DSD</b>	26	5 Limavady 1 Lisburn 1 Londonderry 1 Magherafelt	105		20		22		51		7	
<b>OFMDFM</b>	0		1	Stormont	0		3	Stormont	3	Stormont	0	
<b>PPS</b>	0		2	Belfast	7	Belfast	3	1 Belfast 2 Londonderry	4	1 Ballymena 3 Belfast	1	Belfast
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.5</b>		<b>188.2</b>		<b>84.4</b>		<b>96.12</b>		<b>170.5</b>		<b>45.6</b>	
<b>Total Vacancies</b>			<b>630.32</b>									

**Notes**

\*\*\*DOJ Current vacancies at 1 January 2014 (latest information available).

\*DEL 11.5 of the vacancies listed (0.5 AA, 1 AO, 3 E02, 4 E01 and 3 SO) are currently on hold awaiting the outcome of staffing reviews.

\*DETI Information includes vacancies in HSENI.

## Rates Payments: Vacant Domestic Properties

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount generated in rates payments from owners of vacant domestic properties in the year ended 31 March 2013.

**(AQW 29794/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** Domestic properties move in and out of occupancy on an ongoing basis. From 1st October 2011, vacant domestic property rating liability changed from zero to full liability, with the exception of a number of prescribed exclusions.

In the year ended 31st March 2013 a total of £11.1 million was received for vacant domestic properties.

## Total Value of Procurement

**Ms Fearon** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the total value of procurement for the most recent consecutive five years for which data is available.

**(AQW 29842/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** Since 2002 Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) has provided the Procurement Board with details of procurement expenditure by departments and their agencies, NDPBs and public corporations. This information is provided by departments and is published on CPD's website – [www.DFPNI.gov.uk/CPD](http://www.DFPNI.gov.uk/CPD).

A summary table of total expenditure between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2012 is attached. Figures for 2012/2013 are currently being finalised and will be published when available.

Year	07/08 year	08/09 year	09/10 year	10/11 year	11/12 year
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2.2b</b>	<b>£2.4b</b>	<b>£2.3b</b>	<b>£2.7b</b>	<b>£2.6b</b>

## Northern Ireland Statistic and Research Agency

**Ms Fearon** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the role and functions which the Northern Ireland Statistic and Research Agency undertake relating to the Net Fiscal Balance Report.

**(AQW 29845/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has no role in the production of the Net Fiscal Balance Report.

## Sufferers of the Asbestos-Related Lung Condition, Pleural Plaques

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail whether any funds have been set aside to compensate sufferers of the asbestos-related lung condition, pleural plaques.

**(AQW 29866/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The aim of the Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 is to ensure that a claim in negligence can be made with regard to certain asymptomatic asbestos-related conditions, including asymptomatic pleural plaques. However, the Act does not provide for an automatic payment of damages, nor does it establish an administrative compensation scheme, similar to the time-limited scheme which was introduced in England and Wales.

As individual claimants are expected to pursue claims under the customary rules of the law of negligence, no funds have been set aside centrally to compensate people who have been diagnosed with pleural plaques. However, individual Departments may have set aside funds to meet claims for which they are responsible.

## Business Tenancies Order

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration has been given to bringing the provisions of the Business Tenancies Order into line with provisions in Great Britain in terms of requiring a house owner's consent before a company owning solar panels on the roof of the property can renew their lease at the end of the twenty year term.

**(AQW 29902/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The Business Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 gives business tenants in Northern Ireland a measure of security of tenure. The corresponding legislation in England and Wales enables parties to "contract out" of the protection of its legislation. In Northern Ireland, however, the 1996 Order contains an absolute prohibition on any agreement which purports to "contract out" from the security of tenure regime. Scotland has never introduced a comprehensive system of business tenancy protection legislation.

It is by no means clear whether solar panel agreements would come within the terms of the 1996 Order or the corresponding legislation in England and Wales.

The Northern Ireland Law Commission recently undertook a review of the 1996 Order, and, in the context of that review, considered in some detail the case for and against removing the absolute prohibition on contracting out. However ultimately, it recommended an exemption in respect of complex transactions, rather than absolute market freedom.

My Department is considering the terms of the recommendation. However, even if it was to be implemented, it would not bring the provisions of the 1996 Order into line with the provisions in England and Wales. As the Commission has recently reviewed the 1996 Order I have no plans, at this stage, to undertake a further review.

## Rates Collected in the South Belfast Constituency Area

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the rates collected in the South Belfast Constituency Area in 2006 and 2007, broken down by ward.

**(AQW 29907/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The information requested is not available.

## Rates Collected in the South Belfast Constituency Area

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there has been a significant rise in rates collected in the South Belfast constituency area following the implementation of the Rates Amendment Order 2006.

**(AQW 29910/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The information requested is not available.

## Drug Misuse Deaths

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cause of each drug misuse death in 2013, including the drugs involved.

**(AQW 29944/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** There were 75 deaths due to drug misuse registered in Northern Ireland in 2012, which is the latest available data.

Table 1 overleaf details the cause of death and a breakdown of the drugs involved, as recorded on the death certificate.

**TABLE 1: DEATHS REGISTERED DUE TO DRUG MISUSE<sup>1</sup>, BY CAUSE OF DEATH AND ASSOCIATED DRUGS<sup>2</sup>, NORTHERN IRELAND, 2012**

<b>Underlying Cause (ICD-10 codes)</b>	<b>Mental and behavioural disorders due to drug use (excluding alcohol and tobacco) (F11-F16, F18-F19)</b>	<b>Accidental poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances (X40-X44)</b>	<b>Intentional self-poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances (X60-X64)</b>	<b>Poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances, undetermined intent (Y10-Y14)</b>
Total Number of Deaths	13	18	4	40
Drugs taken	Codeine Diazepam Dihydrocodeine Heroin Lorazepam Methadone Morphine Tramadol	4-Methoxyamphetamine Amitriptyline Buprenorphine Chlorpheniramine Chlorpromazine Cocaine Codeine Diazepam Dihydrocodeine Dothiepin Escitalopram Fentanyl Flecainide Heroin MDA MDMA Methylethylcathinone Morphine Oxycodone Promethazine Propranolol Temazepam Tramadol Zopiclone	Codeine Cyclizine Flentanyl Mirtazapine Morphine Oxycodone Sertraline Temazepam Tramadol	Alprazolam Carbamazepine Chlordiazepoxide Citalopram Clozapine Cocaine Codeine Diazepam Dihydrocodeine Dosulepin Duloxetine Flentanyl Heroin MDMA Methadone Methylethylcathinone Mirtazapine Morphine Olanzapine Quetiapine Sertraline Temazepam Tramadol Trazodone Venlafaxine Zolpidem Zopiclone

1. Classified as a death where the underlying cause of death is recorded as one of the following ICD10 Codes: F11-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, Y10-Y14; and a drug controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is also mentioned on the death certificate.
2. Drugs listed may have been mentioned on more than one death certificate, but have only been listed once in each category. For example, if heroin is recorded on five death certificates, it has only been listed once.

## Access Rights of Grandparents

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the current access rights that grandparents have to their grandchildren, including whether there are plans to make amendments to access rights.

**(AQW 29979/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** Our law does not set out who may or may not have contact with a child. It does, however, allow a court to make a contact order in favour of a named person and that order will detail the contact arrangements. Ordinarily, a grandparent will need the court's permission to make an application for a contact order. In considering whether to grant permission the court will take a number of matters into account, including the applicant's connections with the child. In the coming months I hope to elicit views on the issue of contact, with a view to determining whether any legislative amendments are required.

## Drug Related Deaths

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many drug related deaths have been reported in (i) Portadown; (ii) Lurgan; and (iii) Banbridge, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 29998/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The table overleaf shows the number of drug related deaths registered between 2010 and 2012 in District Electoral Areas within Craigavon and Banbridge Local Government Districts.

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DRUG RELATED<sup>1</sup> DEATHS REGISTERED IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREAS WITHIN CRAIGAVON AND BANBRIDGE, 2010 - 2012<sup>2</sup>**

Local Government District	District Electoral Area	Year of Registration		
		2010	2011	2012
Craigavon	Central	3	1	3
	Loughside	0	1	1
	Lurgan	2	1	1
	Portadown	0	1	0
Banbridge	Banbridge	0	1	4
	Dromore	0	2	1
	Knockiveagh	0	0	0
<b>All Drug Related Deaths in Northern Ireland</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>110</b>

1. International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes:  
 F11-F16, F18-F19 - Mental and behavioural disorders due to drug use (excluding alcohol and tobacco)  
 X40-X44 - Accidental poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.  
 X60-X64 - Intentional self-poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.  
 X85 – Assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.  
 Y10-Y14 - Poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances, undetermined intent.

- 2 Mortality data for the 2012 registration year are the latest available. Provisional data for 2013 will be available in summer 2014.

### **Drug Related Deaths: Upper Bann Constituency**

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many drug related deaths have been reported in the Upper Bann Constituency in the last twelve months.

**(AQW 29999/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** There were nine drug related<sup>1</sup> deaths registered in the Upper Bann Constituency in 2012, which is the latest available data.

- 1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes:
- F11-F16, F18-F19 - Mental and behavioural disorders due to drug use (excluding alcohol and tobacco)
  - X40-X44 - Accidental poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
  - X60-X64 - Intentional self-poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
  - X85 – Assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
  - Y10-Y14 - Poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances, undetermined intent.

### **Late Payment of Commercial Debts Legislation**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel in relation to the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Legislation can he (i) confirm whether it is his Department or the Department of Business Innovation and Skills which is the competent authority; and (ii) to list all guidance issued by his Department since August 2002 relating to the Late Payment Legislation.

**(AQW 30042/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The Department of Business Innovation and Skills is the competent authority in this area.

Since August 2002, DFP has issued the following guidance relating to late payment:

DAO(DFP)19/02:	Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002 (August 2002)
DAO(DFP)12/08:	Supporting Businesses: prompt payment of invoices (November 2008)
DAO(DFP)04/13:	Prompt payment of invoices (March 2013)

### **Rate Debt**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 29607/11-15, to detail (i) whether the bad debt of £33.8 million was assumed for 2013/14; (ii) whether the debt was added into the overall rate requirement; (iii) what happens to any recovery of bad debt; and (iv) whether the assumption in the following year is discounted to reflect any recovery.

**(AQW 30102/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:**

- (i) The £33.8 million which was set aside for write-off during the Estimated Penny Product (EPP) calculations was calculated using various provision percentages for different categories of rating debt, bankruptcy and liquidation trends, and the age of debt. Once the write-off amount for each Council is set, LPS will not write-off more than the estimate unless approval from the Council is given.
- (ii) The debt which is forecast to be written-off in 2013/14 is a 'loss' in the EPP calculation and therefore is accounted for in the striking of the District Rate.



- (iii) When LPS recovers a debt which has been previously written-off, the amount which is recovered is subsequently written back onto the account. In the Actual Penny Product (APP) calculation, write-ons are netted off against write offs.
- (iv) In setting the estimated write-off LPS looks at debt profile and previous trends which include write-ons and so the estimated write-off will take account of subsequent recovery.

### **North Down Constituency: Office Space**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many offices are available in the North Down constituency; and to detail the square footage of 'Grade A' office space.

**(AQW 30131/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** My Department does not hold the information requested.

## Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

### **Shortage of Emergency Doctors**

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what action he has taken to tackle the shortage of emergency doctors available in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) how much has been spent on recruitment campaigns for emergency doctors for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; and (iii) how successful were these campaigns.

**(AQW 29714/11-15)**

**Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** Part (i): My Department has taken a range of measures over the past few years to address the shortage of doctors in a number of specialties. The current shortage of doctors in emergency medicine is a UK wide problem which has made it very difficult for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to fill these posts. My Department continues to work closely with the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency and with Trusts to address this issue..

Part (ii): The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust reports that during the financial year 13/14 to date it has incurred expenditure of £3,956 on two recruitment campaigns for emergency doctors at consultant and speciality doctor grades.

The management costs associated with this recruitment activity have not been separately identified above. Such costs are difficult to identify separately as the recruitment activity is embedded within the respective management team roles.

Part (iii): The Trust reports that the campaign in July 2013 to appoint Specialty Doctors (9 vacancies) in emergency medicine yielded 3 applicants and 2 appointments were made. In January 2014 further advertisements were placed for both Consultant and Speciality Doctor posts in emergency medicine.

### **Ambulances: Fixed Penalty Speeding Fines**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what liaison has taken place between his Department, the Department of Justice and the PSNI to ensure that ambulances are not subject to fixed penalty speeding fines whilst in pursuit of their work.

**(AQW 29723/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** My Department has not engaged with the Department of Justice or the PSNI on the issue of fixed penalty speeding fines for ambulances as it is not necessary to do so.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) is legally required to adhere to the requirements of the Road Safety Act 2006 which stipulates exemptions that may be applied to ambulance emergency response vehicles relating to "speeding" and "traffic control signals".

However, Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued if speed cameras do not register the blue lights on ambulances engaged on emergency activity. In that case, NIAS checks the details against its records and, if appropriate, advises the Fixed Penalty Processing Centre that an ambulance was on emergency activity and no further action is taken. If it transpires the ambulance was not on emergency activity, its driver is then subject to the same road traffic restrictions as other drivers and is liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **Ovarian Cancer Awareness Campaign**

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce an Ovarian Cancer Awareness campaign to educate women on the symptoms of the condition during the official Ovarian Awareness Month.

**(AQW 29740/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Public Health Agency (PHA) is currently developing a cancer awareness campaign for Northern Ireland. In taking forward this public information campaign the PHA has advised they need to take various points into consideration including an evidence review to determine which specific tumour sites are included and evaluating current cancer awareness campaigns being conducted throughout England and Scotland as a guide to the development of the Northern Ireland campaign.

Public information campaigns are just one element of a communications approach that can be utilised to raise awareness of particular issues. With specific regards to ovarian cancer awareness, the 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 referral pathway will reflect the evidence-based approach as set out in NICE guidance for ovarian cancer. It is expected that the pathway will be issued this month (January 2014).

### **Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service**

**Mr Elliott** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what impact the implementation of EU Directive 561/2006 will have on the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, including job losses, potential of voluntary severance payments and the reduction in available staff.

**(AQW 29768/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) has advised that there has been no adverse impact as a consequence of this EU Directive. NIFRS also state that there have been no job losses, nor reduction in available staff, as a consequence. NIFRS does not currently operate a voluntary severance scheme

NIFRS continue to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis.

### **Five Hours Out of Station Meal and Subsistence Allowance**

**Mr McElduff** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Five Hours Out of Station meal and subsistence allowance is available to all Ambulance Service personnel in every Health and Social Care Trust.

**(AQW 29797/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Day meal subsistence allowance is available to all Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) staff employed under Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions of Service provided they are away from base for 'more than five hours'.

## **Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioners**

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioners are in place in each Health and Social Care Trust; and to list the positions available to the trainees when they qualify, including the location.

**(AQW 29810/11-15)**

### **Mr Poots:**

#### **Western Trust**

The Western Trust has one Advanced Nurse Practitioner working within Neonatal the Services at Altnagelvin. In addition they are 2 trained Advanced Nurse Practitioners in Paediatrics. Advanced Nurse Practitioner posts will only be available when additional investment is secured to develop this service and establish substantive posts.

#### **South Eastern Trust**

The South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust currently has no Advanced Nurse Practitioner Trainees. The Trust has two Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) working in Neonatology and, as part of its workforce planning for Emergency Department services, is considering an ANP role in this speciality. On completion of training it is envisaged that these practitioners would work in a Level 1 Emergency Department environment where they would be part of a medical rota supporting a Consultant Led Team.

#### **Northern Trust**

The Northern Trust have 2 WTE Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioners.

#### **Southern Trust**

The Southern Trust has two nurses in training to become Advanced Paediatric Nurse Practitioners (APNP). There are two APNP posts available within the Trust when they successfully complete their programme.

These two staff will augment the APNP workforce already practising within the Trust, as well as the Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioners in post in Craigavon Area Hospital.

#### **Belfast Trust**

There are three Advanced Paediatric Nurse Practitioners within Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and two nurses in training for the Advanced Nurse Practitioner role in Emergency care.

Advanced Nurse Practitioner posts will only be available when additional investment is secured to develop this service and establish substantive posts.

## **Agency Staff**

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how long agency staff must work in a Health and Social Care Trust before they are offered a temporary contract.

**(AQW 29811/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Employment as an Agency Worker in a Health and Social Care Trust does not confer a right to a temporary contract with that Trust. The contract of employment for an Agency Worker is the responsibility of the employing Agency.

## Health and Social Care Trusts: Scans

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) outpatient; and (ii) inpatient (a) MRI; and (b) CT scans take place on a daily basis in each Health and Social Care Trust; and whether this figure includes weekends.

**(AQW 29812/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** It is not possible to provide information on a daily basis covering an extended period of time. As such the most recent week, prior to the question being asked, has been provided i.e. 6th January – 12th January 2014.

HSC Trusts were instructed to count one unit of activity for each scan carried out. If multiple areas of the body were investigated using the same scan, this would be counted as one unit of activity i.e. no multiplier was to be applied.

The number of outpatients MRI scans during week commencing 6th January 2014 at each HSC Trust is outlined in the table below:

### NUMBER OF OUTPATIENT MRI SCANS CARRIED OUT DURING WEEK COMMENCING 6TH JANUARY 2014P

HSC Trust	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
Belfast	56	54	46	50	40	0	0	<b>246</b>
Northern <sup>1</sup>	18	19	22	13	7	20	20	<b>119</b>
South Eastern	52	32	24	36	22	0	0	<b>166</b>
Southern	20	15	25	12	20	10	10	<b>112</b>
Western	37	29	33	42	28	0	0	<b>169</b>

**Source:** HSC Trusts

P Data is provisional

The number of inpatient MRI scans during week commencing 6th January 2014 at each HSC Trust is outlined in the table below:

### NUMBER OF INPATIENT MRI SCANS CARRIED OUT DURING WEEK COMMENCING 6TH JANUARY 2014P

HSC Trust	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
Belfast	10	17	10	25	15	5	4	<b>86</b>
Northern <sup>1</sup>	5	3	3	2	7	0	0	<b>20</b>
South Eastern	6	17	15	4	5	0	0	<b>47</b>
Southern	7	10	4	14	9	0	2	<b>46</b>
Western	3	5	7	11	11	0	0	<b>37</b>

**Source:** HSC Trusts

P Data is provisional

The number of outpatients CT scans during week commencing 6th January 2014 at each HSC Trust is outlined in the table below:

**NUMBER OF OUTPATIENT CT SCANS CARRIED OUT DURING WEEK COMMENCING 6TH JANUARY 2014P**

<b>HSC Trust</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Total</b>
Belfast	111	120	120	105	113	21	12	<b>602</b>
Northern <sup>1</sup>	48	72	33	57	50	0	0	<b>260</b>
South Eastern	50	59	60	71	50	9	5	<b>304</b>
Southern	40	35	49	23	36	0	0	<b>183</b>
Western	52	44	56	57	46	0	0	<b>255</b>

**Source:** HSC Trusts

P Data is provisional

The number of inpatients CT scans during week commencing 6th January 2014 at each HSC Trust is outlined in the table below:

**NUMBER OF INPATIENT CT SCANS CARRIED OUT DURING WEEK COMMENCING 6TH JANUARY 2014P**

<b>HSC Trust</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Total</b>
Belfast	65	60	47	45	66	22	15	<b>320</b>
Northern <sup>1</sup>	36	44	48	43	41	26	24	<b>262</b>
South Eastern	27	20	26	29	33	5	15	<b>155</b>
Southern	32	43	42	35	41	36	25	<b>254</b>
Western	36	36	40	39	30	20	15	<b>216</b>

**Source:** HSC Trusts

P Data is provisional

The number of MRI and CT scanners in each Health and Social Care Trust is provided in the following table:

<b>HSC Trust</b>	<b>Number of MRI scanners</b>	<b>Number of CT scanners</b>
Belfast	7	9
Northern	1	4
South Eastern	2	4

HSC Trust	Number of MRI scanners	Number of CT scanners
Southern	1	3
Western	2	4

**Source:** HSC Trusts

The working hours of MRI and CT scanners varies across hospitals even within each HSC Trust. The core working hours for MRI and CT scanners are mainly Monday to Friday between 8:00am and 5:00pm although some scanners may only carry out a few sessions per week dependent on the size of scanner or funding available. Additional activity can also be carried out in the evenings and at weekends to meet elective demand or to provide out of hours and emergency on-call services.

## Lagan Valley and Downe Hospitals Emergency Departments

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions have taken place with the Ambulance Service about the early closure of the Lagan Valley and Downe Hospitals Emergency Departments; and what formal arrangement are in place to deal with the early closures.

**(AQW 29814/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) held discussions with representatives from Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts, including the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Trust about the early closure of the Lagan and Downe Hospitals Emergency Departments (EDs). Discussions also took place about the contingency arrangements being put in place to deal with the anticipated impact resulting from the changes.

The HSCB has that advised the following contingency arrangements have been put in place:

### South Eastern HSC Trust

#### Downe and Lagan Valley Hospitals

- Direct admissions will be facilitated through GP Out Of Hours on both sites.
- In Lagan Valley, the GP Out of Hours service will be able to make direct contact with the doctor on duty via mobile phone. If required a consultation with the Consultant on-call will be available.
- For direct admissions to the Downe Hospital, the GP Out of Hours doctor will see patients at home or in the Out of Hours centre, which is co-located with the ED, and will hand over patients for admission to the in-house medical team.
- 6 additional beds will be opened in Lagan Valley to facilitate direct admissions and support timely transfers back from other hospitals. This has the potential to be increased to 10 beds if required.
- Existing repatriation protocols for Lagan Valley and Downe are currently being reviewed; no major changes are likely.

#### Ulster Hospital

- 2 additional nurses will be rostered from 12 noon until 12 midnight on Saturdays and Sundays in the ED;
- 10 additional beds have been opened to support winter pressures; and
- elective (planned) admissions were capped at 55 per week (currently 75) from week beginning 6 January 2014. This will be reviewed on an on-going basis.

#### Out of Hours

- Additional shift at Downe and Lagan Valley to be provided.

**Northern Ireland Ambulance Service**

- Additional Crews
- 1x A&E (from 08.00 to 20.00) on Saturday and Sunday in Downpatrick;
- 1x A&E (from 08.00 to 20.00) on Saturday and Sunday in Lisburn;
- 1x Intermediate Care Vehicle (ICV) (from 11.00 to 19.00) on Saturday and Sunday in Comber; and
- 1x ICV (from 11.00 to 19.00) on Saturday and Sunday in Lisburn.

**Additional Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers (HALO)**

- 1x HALO at Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) from 12.00 to 18.00 on Saturday and Sunday;
- 1x HALO at Ulster Hospital from 12.00 to 18.00 on Saturday and Sunday; and
- 1x HALO at Craigavon Area Hospital from 12.00 to 18.00 on Saturday and Sunday.

**Belfast HSC Trust**

- 6 additional inpatient beds;
- 2 additional ED nurses in RVH at weekends to cover 12 hour day time period both Saturday and Sunday;
- 2 additional ED senior doctors in RVH at weekends to cover 12 hour day time period both Saturday and Sunday; and
- enhanced acute medicine, social work, radiology and laboratories.

**Southern HSC Trust****Craigavon Area Hospital**

- 1 additional Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP) and one additional band 5 nurse per ED shift;
- 4 additional inpatient beds.

**Daisy Hill Hospital**

- 1 additional ENP Saturday and Sunday 8am-8pm.

**Northern Trust**

- The Trust will monitor the position and liaise with NIAS but does not anticipate significant change for its area as a result of the changes at Lagan Valley and Downe.

**Accident and Emergency Waiting Times**

**Mr Beggs** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the mechanism for recording Accident and Emergency waiting times differs from the rest of the UK; and why the mechanism used elsewhere has not been adopted to facilitate service comparison.

**(AQW 29816/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I have been advised the mechanism to record emergency care waiting times is broadly similar in each of the four UK jurisdictions with only minor differences in how these are measured, mainly due to the slightly different ways in which the services are provided in each region.

Information on performance against the emergency care waiting times targets in the four UK regions are broadly comparable but when making comparisons across regions cognisance must be taken of the minor differences that exist, for example in Scotland and Wales, community emergency care departments or community casualty departments that are GP or nurse led are included. In England, attendances at "Walk-in Centres" for minor ailments are also included.

## Emergency Department Staff from the Downe and Lagan Valley Hospitals

**Mr Beggs** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why Emergency Department staff from the Downe and Lagan Valley Hospitals are not concentrated into one location at weekends, rather than closing both departments at weekends because of staff shortages.

**(AQW 29817/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust considered a number of options to address the difficulties arising from the shortage of medical staff. The option to open the emergency departments from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and close them at weekends was selected because it minimises locum requirements and is sustainable in the short to medium term. The Trust has indicated that the decision to maintain emergency department services at both hospitals under the current arrangements better serves the needs of all of the South Eastern Trust population.

## Western Health and Social Care Trust: Income

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 29081/11-15, whether, in the event of the targeted income of £320k per annum not being reached, the Western Health and Social Care Trust, or any other agency within his Department, will have to make up any of the shortfall in revenue.

**(AQW 29818/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Western Trust, like any other Trust or Arms Length Body, is required to live within available resources whilst also ensuring that services are delivered in a safe, sustainable and effective way.

Any shortfall in an organisation's savings delivery plans or income projections would be primarily managed by the organisation, through the development of alternative plans and by taking any other steps to ensure financial breakeven is secured. In doing so, it is paramount that front-line services are protected and that patient/client safety is not compromised.

## Large Animal Rescue Training

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the funding which has been apportioned to Large Animal Rescue Training for Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service personnel, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 29840/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The table below details the funding apportioned to Large Animal Rescue Training for NIFRS personnel in each of the last 3 years

Year	Total Cost
2010/11	£46,187
2011/12	£38,320
2012/13	£36,464

## Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service personnel have received Large Animal Rescue Training, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 29844/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The table below details the funding apportioned to Large Animal Rescue Training for NIFRS personnel in each of the last 3 years



Year	Total Cost
2010/11	£46,187
2011/12	£38,320
2012/13	£36,464

### Departmental Staff: Suspension

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of staff in (i) his Department; (ii) the Health and Social Care Board; and (iii) each Health and Social Care Trust, that have been suspended, over each of the last three financial years, including the (a) average length of suspension; (b) number of staff reinstated following suspension; and (c) payments made to suspended staff.

**(AQW 29869/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:**

#### (I) DHSSPS

Financial year	Number Suspended	Average length of Suspension	Number of staff reinstated	Payments made to suspended staff
2012/2013	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
2011/2012	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
2010/2011	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

#### (II) HSC BOARD

Financial year	Number Suspended	Average length of Suspension	Number of staff reinstated	Payments made to suspended staff
2012/2013	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
2011/2012	1	2 months	N/A	£3,261
2010/2011	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

#### (III) EACH HSC TRUST

##### SOUTH EASTERN HSC TRUST

Financial year	Number Suspended	Average length of Suspension*	Number of staff reinstated	Payments made to suspended staff*
2012/2013	35	58 days	30	£56,515
2011/2012	3	89 days	1	£22,041
2010/2011	1	1	1	N/A

\* In the event of a suspension crossing two financial years the days and costs have been distributed within the appropriate financial years. Please note: This will count the employee in each of the financial years.

**Western HSC Trust**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Number Suspended</b>	<b>Average length of suspension*</b>	<b>Number of staff reinstated</b>	<b>Payments made to suspended staff</b>
2012/2013	33	4 months	12	£358,149
2011/2012	9	5 months	2	£84,265
2010/2011	16	10 months	7	£403,217

\*The estimated total length of suspension is noted in months (regardless of whether it spanned 2 financial years)

**BELFAST HSC TRUST**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number Suspended*</b>	<b>Average Length of suspension</b>	<b>Number of staff reinstated</b>	<b>Payments made to suspended staff**</b>
2012/2013	27	5 Months	25	£220,881
2011/2012	23	4 Months	22	£191,196
2010/2011	20	6 Months	20	£220,887

\* Figures are for staff suspended with pay. Figures for staff on unpaid suspension is not held centrally

\*\* estimated

**NORTHERN HSC TRUST**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Number Suspended</b>	<b>Average length of suspension</b>	<b>Number of staff reinstated</b>	<b>Payments made to suspended staff</b>
2012/2013	9	266 days	4	£156,008
2011/2012	7	354 days	3	£131,569
2010/2011	6	462 days	2	£166,412

**SOUTHERN HSC TRUST**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Number Suspended</b>	<b>Average length of suspension</b>	<b>Number of staff reinstated</b>	<b>Payments made to suspended staff*</b>
2012/2013	22	108 days	10	£164,401
2011/2012	17	68 days	6	£63,295
2010/2011	20	79 days	5	£66,569

\* estimated

**NIAS TRUST**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Number Suspended</b>	<b>Average length of suspension</b>	<b>Number of staff reinstated</b>	<b>Payments made to suspended staff</b>
2012/2013	1	232 days	0	£28,036

Financial Year	Number Suspended	Average length of suspension	Number of staff reinstated	Payments made to suspended staff
2011/2012	3	167 days	3	£40,973
2010/2011	10	180 days	9	£234,673

## Review of Interpreting and Translation Services

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 18449/11-15, (i) for an update on the review of Interpreting and Translation Services; (ii) to detail the options which were available for a more cost effective means of delivering translation services; and (iii) to outline his Department's position on each of these options.

**(AQW 29871/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The public consultation in relation to the Review of Future Arrangements for Language Interpreting and Translation Services ended on 13 December 2013. The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has undertaken an analysis of the 44 consultation responses and is scheduled to consider the outcome of this process at its Board meeting on 13 February 2014.

The options considered by the Review included:

- Do nothing;
- Transfer the management of the language interpreting service to another Trust;
- Transfer the management of interpreting and translation services to a regional shared service provided by the Business Services Organisation; and
- Transfer the management of the interpreting and translation services to the Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency or an external third party within the private or voluntary sector.

The review also considered the potential to rebalance the proportion of interpreting activity, such as increasing the proportion of telephone interpreting rather than face to face interpreting.

Given that the above issues are still under consideration by the HSCB, it is not appropriate for the Department to comment further at this stage.

## Hospital Staff: Tomography Machines

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what guidelines are in place for hospital staff when using Tomography machines on patients who have Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators.

**(AQW 29872/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** It is the responsibility of clinicians to advise their patients about their suitability for diagnostic tests according to their individual clinical condition; this includes diagnostic techniques such as computed tomography (CT). Currently there is no UK policy or advice guidance in relation to CT and implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs) however there is no indication of any national guidance alerts relating to cardiac device management during CT.

Operators of this type of specialised machinery are appropriately trained to ensure the safety of patients according to the manufacturer's equipment specifications and professional instruction and recommendations.

## Mid Ulster Hospital: Plans

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his Department's (i) current; and (ii) future plans for the Mid Ulster Hospital.

**(AQW 29892/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The commissioning of hospital services is the responsibility of the Health and Social Care Board. The Northern Health and Social Care Trust Population Plan indicates that the Mid-Ulster Hospital, along with the other community hospitals, has an important role to play in developing more local provision particularly in relation to community/primary care-led services.

### **People Diagnosed with Autism**

**Mr A Maginness** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what resources have been invested to support people diagnosed with autism and their families in North Belfast; and to outline his Department's policies for assisting these families and the charities that support them.  
**(AQW 29894/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** This information is not available specifically for the North Belfast constituency area.

The Belfast HSC Trust has advised that £395k is allocated to provide post-diagnostic interventions by Trust staff within both Children and Adult Autism services. In addition, the Belfast Outcomes Group, mandated by the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership, have also invested approximately £120k to assist the voluntary and community sector in Belfast to support children with autism and their families in 2013.

Autism services are underpinned by a range of DHSSPS policies and strategies. The foremost of these is the cross-departmental Autism Strategy (2013 – 2020) and Action Plan (2013 – 2016) which I launched in the Assembly on 14 January 2014. The Strategy and Action Plan document includes a summary of these policies and planned actions.

### **Autism Strategy 2013-2020 and Action Plan 2013-2016**

**Mr A Maginness** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what additional funding will be provided by his Department to support the Autism Strategy 2013-2020 and Action Plan 2013-2016.

**(AQW 29895/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Health and Social Care Board is investing £500k across 2013-15, to further support Adult ASD-specific service capacity within Health and Social Care Trusts.

Within the Autism Action Plan (2013 – 2016), a key health and social care action is the completion of a regional validation exercise of both the Children and Adult's Autism Care Pathways, by March 2014. When I review these reports – if areas of specific need are identified – I will consider the appropriate action to take for the delivery of effective Autism Services within Health and Social Care.

In addition, my Department has submitted a proposal to have funding approved through the NI Executive's 2014/15 Government Advertising Programme to deliver a public awareness element of a broader campaign to raise awareness and understanding of autism.

### **Royal Victoria Hospital Accident and Emergency Department: Patients**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of patients that attended the Royal Victoria Hospital Accident and Emergency Department, broken down by residents in each local council area, on each day from 4 to 9 January 2014.

**(AQW 29916/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Between 4th and 9th January 2014, there were 1,329 attendances at the Royal Victoria emergency care department, similar to the number who attended during the same period in 2013 (1,328). Information on the number of attendances at the Royal Victoria emergency care department, during each period is detailed in Table 1 (4th – 9th January 2014) and Table 2 (4th – 9th January 2013) for each day by local council area.

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF ATTENDANCES AT THE ROYAL VICTORIA EMERGENCY CARE DEPARTMENT, DURING EACH DAY BY LOCAL COUNCIL AREA (4TH - 9TH JANUARY 2014)**

Local Council Area <sup>1</sup>	04/01/2014	05/01/2014	06/01/2014	07/01/2014	08/01/2014	09/01/2014	Total
Antrim	2	2	1	5	5	3	18
Ards	1	1	1	1	2		6
Armagh		1	1	1		1	4
Ballymena		1	1	1	2		5
Ballymoney		1					1
Banbridge	3	3	2	1	1	1	11
Belfast	133	113	157	150	144	108	805
Carrickfergus	6	6	6	8	7	4	37
Castlereagh	8	12	16	12	18	6	72
Coleraine					1		1
Cookstown				1			1
Craigavon	2	1	3		1		7
Derry				4	1	2	7
Down	6	3	3	4	3	2	21
Dungannon	1	2			2		5
Fermanagh			1	1	1		3
Larne	3	2	3	1		2	11
Lisburn	37	41	46	33	26	27	210

Local Council Area <sup>1</sup>	04/01/2014	05/01/2014	06/01/2014	07/01/2014	08/01/2014	09/01/2014	Total
Magherafelt			1	1	1	3	6
Newry & Mourne			1		1	1	3
Newtownabbey	16	12	12	15	12	11	78
North Down	2	3	3	3	1	3	15
Omagh	1						1
Strabane				1			1
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>1,329</b>

Source: Symphony

<sup>1</sup> Local Council Area has been derived from the patients home postcode.

**TABLE 2: NUMBER OF ATTENDANCES AT THE ROYAL VICTORIA EMERGENCY CARE DEPARTMENT, DURING EACH DAY BY LOCAL COUNCIL AREA (4TH - 9TH JANUARY 2013)**

Local Council Area <sup>1</sup>	04/01/2013	05/01/2013	06/01/2013	07/01/2013	08/01/2013	09/01/2013	Total
Antrim	4	2	3	4	4	3	20
Ards	4			1	3	2	10
Armagh				1		1	2
Ballymena	1	1	1	2	1	2	8
Banbridge	3	1	2	1	2	2	11
Belfast	141	110	112	142	138	120	763
Carrickfergus	8	4	5	10	9	4	40

Local Council Area <sup>1</sup>	04/01/2013	05/01/2013	06/01/2013	07/01/2013	08/01/2013	09/01/2013	Total
Castlereagh	16	10	9	17	11	13	76
Coleraine	1				1		2
Cookstown			1	1	2	1	5
Craigavon	2		1	1	3		7
Derry	1			1	1		3
Down	4	3	1	5	3	6	22
Dungannon		1	1	1	3	1	7
Fermanagh					2		2
Larne	1	3	3	5	4	2	18
Lisburn	36	33	35	47	41	35	227
Magherafelt	1	2	2	4	3	1	13
Moyle	1						1
Newry & Mourne	2	1		2	2	1	8
Newtownabbey	17	10	8	11	14	8	68
North Down	5	1		4	1		11
Omagh			1	2		1	4
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>1,328</b>

Source: Symphony

1 Local Council Area has been derived from the patients home postcode.

## Cervical Cancer Prevention

**Ms P Bradley** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he will take to improve cervical cancer prevention for the 22 percent of women who have not been screened, particularly those in the age cohorts of 25-29 and 60-64 who have the lowest uptake.

**(AQW 29924/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Screening for cervical cancer is offered to all eligible women aged 25-49 every three years, and to those aged 50-64 every 5 years.

Approximately 120,000 women are screened each year in Northern Ireland. There has been a steady increase in the proportion of eligible women attending for cervical screening, across all the age cohorts. The coverage, which is the percentage of eligible women who have been screened in the previous 5 years, was 78.04% at end March 2013 compared to 73.45% at end March 2008.

The coverage is slightly lower in the age cohorts of 25-29 and 60-64. Raising awareness of cervical cancer prevention through screening is an important step in addressing this. There are a number of ongoing initiatives.

All women invited for screening by the regional call recall centre receive an information leaflet with their invitation letter to support them in making an informed decision on participation. Individual GP practices have also taken specific steps to improve access to screening for their population based on local need, for example providing walk-in appointments with the practice nurse.

A four-year action plan (2012-2015) to help promote informed choice in cancer screening has been developed by the PHA, and is currently being implemented. It contains a number of actions on promoting cervical screening including among the hard to reach groups.

Opportunities are also taken at a regional level to promote the screening programme through local media releases at key times of the year, such as during Cervical Cancer Awareness Week in January.

## People Diagnosed with Autism

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what resources have been invested in North Down for supporting people diagnosed with autism and their families, in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 29930/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The information requested is not available specifically for the North Down constituency area.

The South Eastern HSC Trust has advised that £650k was allocated for autism assessment, diagnosis and intervention services in 2013/14 across the whole Trust. This does not include support provided to families, children and adults with Autism through other programmes of care within SEHSCT, the Family Support Hubs or through voluntary organisations with whom the Trust has contracts.

The Trust also advise that the breakdown of resource allocation for the previous five years is not readily available.

## Registered Carers in North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many registered carers in North Down are over 60 years old.

**(AQW 29931/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The information requested is not available.



## Cancelled Clinics in North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many clinics in North Down were cancelled in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 29932/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return (QOAR), which is the present methodology for the collection of consultant-led outpatient activity, was introduced by my Department's Hospital Information Branch from the beginning of 2008/09, as a direct result of a comprehensive review of collection of outpatient activity undertaken in 2007/08. Primarily the methodology changed from the reporting of the number of clinics held and cancelled to the reporting of the number of appointments held and cancelled.

The only hospital that falls within North Down constituency is Bangor Hospital. The number of cancelled outpatient appointments at Bangor Hospital in each quarter of the last five years, is shown in the table overleaf. These figures represent the number of outpatient appointments that were cancelled by the patient (CNA) and whom gave advance warning to the hospital and the number of outpatient appointments that were cancelled by the hospital.

When assessing the level of cancelled outpatient appointments, it is more appropriate to consider these in the context of the total number of outpatient attendances, in order to provide a more comparative trend analysis. This involves the calculation of a standardised measure of patient cancelled appointments, which is called a CNA rate and a standardised measure of hospital cancellations, which is called a hospital cancellation rate. These rates are also presented in the table below.

### NUMBER OF OUTPATIENT APPOINTMENTS CANCELLED BY THE PATIENT AND BY THE HOSPITAL FROM 2008/09 – 2012/13

Financial Year	No. Of Patient Cancelled Outpatient Appointments	Could Not Attend (CNA) rate	No. Of Hospital Cancelled Appointments	Hospital Cancellation rate
2008-2009	1807	11.1	3158	17.9
2009-2010	1738	10.8	2649	15.6
2010-2011	1664	11.0	3243	19.5
2011-2012	1464	11.3	1752	13.2
2012-2013	1176	9.2	1071	8.4

**Source:** Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return (QOAR) Part 1

- The CNA rate is calculated as follows: (Number of could not attend appointments/(Number of outpatient attendances + Number of could not attend appointments))\*100
- The Hospital Cancellation rate is calculated as follows: (Number of hospital cancelled appointments/(Number of outpatient attendances + Number of hospital cancelled appointments))\*100

Details of cancellations by specialty, if required, are available online in the Northern Ireland Hospital Statistics: Outpatient Activity Statistics 2012/13, available at:

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/ni\\_hospital\\_statistics\\_-\\_outpatient\\_activity\\_2012-13.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/ni_hospital_statistics_-_outpatient_activity_2012-13.pdf)

## Ambulance Response Times

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average ambulance response time in (i) Bangor; (ii) Holywood; and (iii) Donaghadee.

**(AQW 29933/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** My Department's current performance indicator for ambulance response times is that 72.5% of all Category A (life-threatening) calls are responded to within eight minutes, with no less than 67.5% in any Local Commissioning Group (LCG).

**PERFORMANCE AGAINST THIS INDICATOR IS DETAILED IN THE TABLE BELOW FOR EACH MONTH SINCE APRIL 2013.**

<b>LCG</b>	<b>Apr 2013</b>	<b>May 2013</b>	<b>Jun 2013</b>	<b>July 2013</b>	<b>Aug 2013</b>	<b>Sept 2013</b>	<b>Oct 2013</b>	<b>Nov 2013</b>	<b>Dec 2013</b>
Belfast LCG	75.7%	83.0%	85.0%	83.9%	83.4%	85.9%	84.9%	83.3%	76.9%
Northern LCG	58.0%	58.8%	61.5%	56.6%	62.1%	62.6%	65.0%	61.4%	59.3%
South Eastern LCG	57.2%	66.3%	68.4%	64.1%	65.1%	61.4%	68.2%	62.4%	59.6%
Southern LCG	60.3%	62.6%	63.3%	65.7%	64.4%	63.9%	65.7%	65.7%	60.1%
Western LCG	64.0%	66.8%	66.4%	65.9%	66.1%	72.1%	71.5%	69.0%	62.9%
Northern Ireland	63.8%	68.7%	69.8%	68.4%	69.3%	70.8%	72.1%	69.6%	64.7%

### High Dependency Cots

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many High Dependency cots are available each Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) whether all of the cots are currently available; (iii) whether there has been a reduction in number of cots within in the last two years; and (iv) if so, for what reason.

**(AQW 29935/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The number of High Dependency cots which were either occupied or available for use at each Health and Social Care Trust at midnight on 17th January 2014, is given in the table below.

<b>HSC Trust</b>	<b>Cots Occupied</b>	<b>Additional Cots available for use</b>
Belfast	5	2
Northern	2	0
South Eastern	4	0
Southern	1.25*	3
Western	4	2

**Source:** Health and Social Care Trusts

\* At midnight on 17th January 2014, Southern HSC Trust had one occupied high dependency cot. In addition to this a level 2 high dependency cot which is designated as a high dependency cot 25% of the time was also occupied. This has been represented in the table above as 1.25 occupied cots.

All Health and Social Care Trusts reported that there has been no reduction in the number of cots within the last two years.

## Defibrillators

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what training his Department provides to teachers on the use of defibrillators.

**(AQW 29972/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has no statutory responsibility to offer training to individuals or organisations that purchase their own defibrillators.

When individuals or organisations purchase a defibrillator ideally they should be advised about training and maintenance of the machine by the supplier. This is an area that has been considered as part of the regional resuscitation strategy for Northern Ireland which is currently out for consultation until the 14 February 2014.

## Ministerial Meetings on Health Issues

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the ministerial meetings on health issues which have taken place under the auspices of (i) the British Irish Council; and (ii) the North South Ministerial Council.

**(AQW 29988/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Since 2007, under the auspices of the British-Irish Council, Ministerial meetings on Misuse of Drugs were held on 20 November 2008 in London, 24 February 2010 in Douglas and 29 June 2012 in St Helier.

In the same time period, under the auspices of the North –South Ministerial Council, Ministerial meetings in the Health and Food Safety sector were held on the 28 November 2007 in Dublin, 28 May 2008 in Belfast, 10 June 2009 in Dublin, 25 November 2009 in Belfast, 2 June 2010 in Armagh, 10 November 2010 in Newry, and 20 July 2011, 2 February 2012, 18 July 2012, 21 November 2012 and 18 October 2013, all in Armagh.

## Prosthetic Knees

**Mr A Maginness** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the makes and models of prosthetic knees available to Health Service patients.

**(AQW 29989/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The makes and models of prosthetic knees available are shown on the attached list. In addition, a final prosthesis prescription is based solely on the right, best fit and best outcome for the patient, commensurate with their assessed clinical need.

Makes and models of prosthetic knees available via the Regional Prosthetic Service, Musgrave Park Hospital

- Endolite Stabilised knee with Pneumatic swing phase control and manual knee lock
- Endolite Stabilised knee with Pneumatic swing phase control
- Medi NOP4 knee
- Medi NKFM1 knee
- OrthoEurope 2SA104 knee
- OrthoEurope 2UK101 Ultimate knee
- OrthoEurope 2SR500 Sensor knee
- Ossur RKN10006 Rheo Knee
- Ossur Total knee 2100
- Ossur Total knee 2000
- Ossur Total knee 1900

- Otto Bock 3R33 knee
- Otto Bock 3R106 knee
- Otto Bock 3R60 EBS knee
- Otto Bock 3C98-2 knee
- Otto Bock 3R17 knee
- Otto Bock 3R36 knee
- Otto Bock 3WR95 Aqualine knee
- Otto Bock 3R80 knee
- Otto Bock 3R92 knee

### Legal Highs

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the range of possible health consequences of legal highs.

**(AQW 29990/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Substances referred to as “legal highs” have a psychoactive effect but are not currently covered by the UK-wide Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. However, the term “legal highs” can be misleading, and we therefore refer to them as New Psychoactive Substances.

Many of these substances are new and often have no safety or toxicity data. This makes it very difficult to make an assessment of the active chemical in any New Psychoactive Substance and to give an accurate picture of potential side-effects and dangers. Indeed, there are many different types of New Psychoactive Substances – some act like stimulants, others as depressants. In addition, ingredients and effects can change from batch to batch – and when tested some of these substances have been found to contain illegal drugs.

However, I have no doubt there is a potential for very serious and potentially tragic consequences for anyone taking any substance that has not been prescribed for them. Users have no way of knowing exactly what they are taking and health risks are likely to range from being out of control and/or passing out, through to increased risk of cardiac arrest and overheating, potentially up to overdose and death. In addition, these substances can decrease inhibitions, act as a depressant and increase the risk of suicide, self-harm, and poor mental health.

### Legal Highs

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many legal high related incidents have been recorded at hospitals in each Health and Social Care Trust over the last five years.

**(AQW 29991/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Information on the number of legal high related incidents recorded at hospitals is not available.

### Legal Highs

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he is aware of any research which shows a link between the usage of legal highs and illegal drug use.

**(AQW 29992/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** My Department has not undertaken or commissioned any research on the links between the usage of so-called “legal highs” and illicit drug use. The term “legal highs” falsely implies that these substances are safe, and are legal for human consumption. They are not necessarily safer than illegal drugs – in some situations their affects can be more devastating. We therefore refer to them as New Psychoactive Substances.

Given that this is an emerging issue, and the sensitive/illegal nature of drug consumption, it is difficult to find out detailed information about these substances and their users. However, I am concerned that the availability of these substances, and particularly in “head shops” on our high streets, may help normalise drug misuse within our society. Indeed, these substances may be a “gateway” to the further misuse of drugs.

I recently raised this issue with the Home Secretary, setting out my concerns about the accessibility of New Psychoactive Substances and seeking a more robust and consistent approach to addressing this issue across the UK. In response to this, the Home Office has now announced a review of how the UK’s legislative response can be enhanced beyond the existing measures of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. I am pleased that the review will be informed by a range of evidence, including the various international approaches I highlighted to the Home Secretary, including those adopted by the Republic of Ireland, the USA and New Zealand. It is anticipated that this review will be completed by Spring 2014.

I believe it is essential that we take a consistent approach across the UK for any efforts to be effective and I welcome the fact that NI will be part of this review.

### People on the Organ Donor List

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of people on the organ donor list are (i) adults; and (ii) children.

**(AQW 30018/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The information requested has been supplied by NHS Blood and Transplant, which is the organ donation organisation for the UK and is responsible for matching and allocating donated organs. A key part of this work involves managing the registrations of people on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

The information is shown in the following table –

#### NORTHERN IRELAND REGISTRANTS ON THE NHS ORGAN DONOR REGISTER BY AGE (AS AT 22/1/2014)

	Age at 22/1/2014
Child (<18)	8508 (1.48%)
Adult	565958 (98.52%)
Total	574466

### Rates of Dementia Diagnosis

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what are the rates of dementia diagnosis in each Health and Social Care Trust.

**(AQW 30041/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Under the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF) of the General Medical Services contract, the total number of GP-registered patients diagnosed with dementia is recorded.

The raw prevalence of dementia in each Health and Social Care Trust is shown in table 1 below. The number of patients on the dementia 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: RAW PREVALENCE OF DEMENTIA PER 1,000 REGISTERED PATIENTS, 2013.**

<b>HSC Trust</b>	<b>Raw prevalence of dementia per 1,000 registered patients</b>
Belfast	6.82
South Eastern	7.99
Northern	6.05
Southern	5.64
Western	5.89
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>6.43</b>

Register sizes are taken from the Payment Calculation and Analysis System (PCAS) as at National Prevalence Day, 31 March 2013. The prevalence is calculated based on the number of patients on the dementia register as a proportion of the full GP registered list for Northern Ireland as at January 2013.

### **Initiatives to Reduce Avoidable Trips to Hospital**

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many initiatives to reduce avoidable trips to hospital are currently operational in each Health and Social Care Trust.  
**(AQW 30084/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** In addition to the nationwide “Choose Well Campaign”, the Local Commissioning Groups in the five HSC Trusts have put in place, or are in the process of establishing, a wide range of initiatives to reduce avoidable trips to hospitals. These include, for example, initiatives to allow GPs to access consultants directly by telephone or email for advice in relation to certain specialties; patient education programmes to help manage long-term conditions; streamlined referral pathways and a greater range of services available in community settings.

The NI Ambulance Service is also putting in place a series of protocols on a phased basis which will allow paramedics to assess and treat patients at the scene and avoid transport to hospital.

In addition, GPs are incentivised to participate in external peer reviews of secondary care outpatient referrals, emergency admissions and A & E attendances. The reviews will include, if appropriate, proposals for improvement to access arrangements in the practice in order to reduce avoidable outpatient referrals, emergency admissions and attendances.

### **Accessibility to Cancer Drugs**

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a patient’s address has an impact on their accessibility to cancer drugs.  
**(AQW 30089/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Northern Ireland patients have equal access to cancer and any other drugs that are clinically suitable, irrespective of their address.

### **Teriflunomide**

**Mr Rogers** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the anticipated start and completion dates for the review of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence’s decision to make teriflunomide available on prescription to people with relapse remitting multiple sclerosis.  
**(AQW 30113/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** My Department’s review of NICE Technology Appraisal TA303 on teriflunomide for treating relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis commenced on 6 December 2013 on receipt of a near-final version of the guidance. Additional material was provided when the guidance was published on 22

January 2014 and the review is expected to be completed by 18 February 2014, 4 weeks after publication. As soon as the local review is complete, the endorsement decision will be published on the Department's website.

### **Children with Complex Medical Needs**

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a hospital admittance of a child with complex medical needs automatically triggers a review of their care package. **(AQW 30141/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The DHSSPS guidance, Developing Services to Children and Young People with Complex Physical Healthcare Needs (2009), sets out an integrated care pathway for the treatment of children and young people with complex healthcare needs, including a planning model which considers the changing needs of these children and their families. Any change in the child's circumstances which may impact upon their care should be assessed and addressed.

Therefore, while admittance of a child to hospital may not automatically trigger a review of their care package, when the child is being discharged, an assessment should be made of any possible change in the child's healthcare needs which would impact on the level of care required at home.

### **Bexsero Meningococcal B Vaccine**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the approval of the Bexsero meningococcal B vaccine for its potential use in Northern Ireland. **(AQW 30150/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** In Northern Ireland as in the rest of the UK, vaccination policy is informed by the work of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). JCVI is 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.

JCVI had invited comments on their interim statement regarding the Men B vaccine published in July 2013. They have since issued an update in October in which they advised that they received a number of detailed comments which were considered by JCVI and its meningococcal sub-committee. The submissions received included references to new and recently published evidence and further analyses are necessary to respond fully. The required analyses are being commissioned and will be completed as quickly as possible. I will consider the JCVI recommendation once I have received it.

### **Cancer Drugs: Funding**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the assistance his Department gives to patients seeking funding for cancer drugs. **(AQO 5386/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** During 2012/13 more than £40 million was spent on cancer drugs and treatments in Northern Ireland with additional expenditure on the costs associated with cancer care, for example palliative and primary care costs.

The decision about suitable treatments for cancer patients is the responsibility of the patient's clinician. The Health and Social Care Board has responsibility for commissioning specialist drugs, including cancer drugs, in line with guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

For patients who require treatment that falls outside the normal range of services commissioned by the Board their clinician may apply for an individual funding request.

## Legal Highs

**Mr Hilditch** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made to tackle legal highs.

**(AQO 5387/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Substances referred to as “legal highs” have a psychoactive effect but are not currently covered by the UK-wide Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. However, I prefer not to use the term “legal highs” as it can be misleading, and we therefore refer to them as “New Psychoactive Substances”.

I recently raised this issue with the Home Secretary, setting out my concerns about the accessibility of New Psychoactive Substances and seeking a more robust and consistent approach to addressing this issue across the UK.

In response to this, and other concerns raised, the Home Office has now announced a review of how the UK’s legislative response can be enhanced beyond the existing measures of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. I am pleased that the review will be informed by a range of evidence, including the various international approaches I highlighted to the Home Secretary, including the Republic of Ireland, the USA and New Zealand. It is anticipated that this review will be completed by Spring 2014.

I believe it is essential that we take a consistent approach across the UK for any efforts to be effective and I welcome the fact that NI will be part of this review.

## Healthcare Staff: Language Skills

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what actions are being taken to ensure that healthcare professionals have appropriate language skills for communicating with patients.

**(AQO 5388/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** It is a fundamental obligation of all HSC organisations that employ or contract with healthcare professionals to assure themselves of their fitness for the post at appointment. This includes their ability to communicate effectively with patients. I consider that current recruitment and appointment processes fulfil these requirements.

It is important however that we continue to enhance existing processes. For example, my officials are currently working with Health colleagues in England to introduce amendments to the Medical Act which will strengthen the powers of the General Medical Council and enable them to carry out proportionate checks on doctors from the EU where there is concern around their English language capability.

I remain strongly committed also to ensuring that those patients, clients and service users who do not have English as a first or competent second language are able to access health and social care services here in Northern Ireland. A key feature in this is the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service which has over 400 face to face interpreters in a range of 35 ethnic minority languages helping to facilitate effective and meaningful communication between HSC professionals and those service users not proficient in English.

## Autism: Support

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what actions are being taken to support people with autism.

**(AQO 5390/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Autism Strategy (2013 - 2020) and Action Plan (2013 - 2016), which I launched in the Assembly on 14 January 2014, outlines the Executive’s commitment to improving services and support for people with autism and their families, throughout their lives.

Key actions for my Department and the HSC include:



- autism awareness – training for relevant frontline staff and raising awareness via a public campaign;
- enhancing health and wellbeing for people with autism and their families;
- building on existing early intervention and family support services for children, as outlined in the Six Steps of Autism Care Pathway;
- regional validation review of autism care pathways; and
- developing adult ASD-specific service capacity in HSC Trusts.

## **Mortuaries**

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the opening and closing times of mortuaries during the week, at weekends and Bank Holidays.

**(AQO 5391/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The opening times for the mortuary at the Ulster Hospital are 8.30-16.30 Monday to Friday and 8.30-12.30 at weekends and Public Holidays.

The mortuary at Altnagelvin Hospital is open from 9.00-16.30 every day while the mortuary at the South West Acute hospital opens from 9.00- 17.00 each day.

The mortuary at Causeway Hospital is open 24 hours a day, all year round. The opening times of the mortuary at Antrim Hospital are 9.00-17.00 Monday to Friday (release of bodies' service available until 20.00) and 8.00-13.00 at the weekends and Public Holidays.

The Craigavon Area Hospital mortuary opening times are 9.00-19.00 Monday to Friday, and 9.00-18.30 at weekends and Public Holidays, while opening times at Daisy Hill Hospital are 12.00-18.30 Monday to Friday, and 9.00-18.30 at weekends and Public Holidays.

The Belfast Trust mortuary is open Monday to Friday 9.00-17.00 and Saturday 9.00-12.30.

Outside the above opening times an on-call service is provided for each of the mortuaries.

## **Downe Hospital: A&E Closure**

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of how the weekend closure of the Downe Hospital Accident and Emergency department will impact on the waiting times at the Ulster Hospital.

**(AQO 5392/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I am advised that, to date, there is no evidence that the temporary changes to the opening hours of the Downe Hospital's emergency department is having a significant impact on attendances at the Ulster Hospital. The situation will continue to be monitored by the Health and Social Care Board and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

## **Organ Donation**

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his position on the introduction of a soft opt-out system of organ donation.

**(AQO 5393/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I am giving careful consideration to the findings in the Public Health Agency's report on public attitudes towards organ donation, including the possible introduction of a soft opt-out system, and will make a statement on my Department's policy position in the near future.

## Royal Victoria Hospital: Accident and Emergency Crisis

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the actions taken following the recent crisis at the Emergency Department of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

**(AQO 5394/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The major incident at the Royal Victoria Hospital declared by the Belfast Trust was not a crisis. It was a planned response to a higher than normal rate of patients attending the Emergency Department who required admission. The Emergency Department returned to normal service within a matter of hours. The Belfast Trust has an ongoing programme of reform to improve the emergency service at the hospital.

## Western Health and Social Care Trust: Income

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 29081/11-15, whether, in the event of the targeted income of £320k per annum not being reached, the Western Health and Social Care Trust, or any other agency within his Department, will have to make up any of the shortfall in revenue to a private company or operator.

**(AQW 30300/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Neither the Western Trust nor the Department is required to make up any shortfall in the targeted income of £320k per annum to a private company or operator.

## Department of Justice

### Legal Aid Costs

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total Legal Aid costs incurred in the case of Patrick John McDaid following his conviction and subsequent appeal, broken down by (i) legal firm/solicitor, (ii) junior counsel and (iii) senior counsel.

**(AQW 29743/11-15)**

**Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice):** A Legal Aid Certificate was granted for representation by solicitor only for proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

The total fees:	£1,074.00
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A Legal Aid Certificate was granted for representation by a solicitor, senior and junior counsel for proceedings in the Crown Court.

The total fees:	Solicitor	£9,007.85
	Senior counsel	£4,464.00
	Junior counsel	£3,412.80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£16,884.65</b>
	<b>Grand total</b>	<b>£17,958.65</b>

Fees have not been paid on foot of Mr McDaid's subsequent appeal.

### Prosecution and Defence: Costs

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice to provide the total costs in the prosecution and defence of Marian McGlinchey following her recent admissions and sentencing, including a breakdown of the costs

associated with (i) Legal Aid broken down by (a) legal firm/solicitor; (b) junior counsel; and (c) senior counsel, including all additional expenses claimed; (ii) prosecution costs; and (iii) any additional costs incurred since the case entered the court system.

**(AQW 29750/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Legal Aid was granted on 22 July 2011 for proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for representations by solicitor and junior counsel in relation to charges of "providing money/property for use in terrorism".

The total fees were:

Solicitor	£9,137.71
Junior Counsel	£1,050.00

Following committal to the Crown Court in respect of this charge, a certificate was granted for representation for solicitor, senior counsel and junior counsel at the Crown Court. The defendant was convicted and all fees remain outstanding for all representatives with the exception of the senior counsel who was initially instructed but who was unable to continue representing the defendant.

Total fees:	First senior counsel	£720.00
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- 2 Legal Aid was granted on 27 September 2012 for Magistrates' Court proceedings for representation by a solicitor and junior Counsel in relation to charges of "aid/abet addressing a meeting sec 12(3) of the Terrorism Act". A claim has been received from the junior counsel who withdrew from the case.

Total fees	£601.01
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No other fees have as yet been paid.

Following committal on the aid/abet charge, a Crown Court certificate for representation by solicitor, senior Counsel and junior Counsel was granted. To date no claim from any of the legal representatives involved in these Crown Court Proceedings have been received.

The PPSNI have provided the following prosecution costs covering two prosecutions:

Senior Counsel	£21,546.00
Junior Counsel	£10,773.60
Senior Counsel	£22,732.00
Junior Counsel	£12,652.00

**Dungannon Magistrates Court: Case**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice whether the charges in case number 13/122971 at Dungannon Magistrates Court were committed whilst on bail for other matters, and if so, to detail (i) when was bail was granted; (ii) the court; and (iii) the terms set.

**(AQW 29787/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** This case is currently scheduled for hearing and I am unable to provide a substantive answer to this question at this stage of the proceedings.

## Legal Aid: Expert Witnesses

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 28698/11-15, what process is used to determine the amount paid to an expert witness through Legal Aid for evidence provided in legal proceedings.

**(AQW 29820/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The amounts paid to expert witnesses for evidence provided in legal proceedings on behalf of a legally assisted person are determined on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances of each case.

Fees are determined by reference to the General Authorities, documents which specify the fees charged below which a member of the legal profession may engage an expert without seeking prior approval from the Commission.

Where necessary, ie if the amount exceeds the limits in the General Authority or the expert type is not listed in the General Authority, the Commission will seek full reasons why the engagement of the expert is required and, in such cases will routinely request that the solicitor provide three quotations to ensure that no other comparable expert is available at the standard rates.

The Commission has published guidance in respect of the engagement of expert witnesses in criminal proceedings.

If a request for authority to engage an expert witness in civil proceedings is considered by the Commission to be unusual either in terms of the nature of the request or the amount it will be considered as an "unusually large expense" under the provision of Regulation 15(7) of the Legal Aid (General) Regulations (NI) 1965, and the request will be considered by an internal Panel within the Commission.

The General Authorities and guidance documents are available on the Commission's website at [www.nilsc.org.uk](http://www.nilsc.org.uk).

## Police Officers Retired as a Result of an Injury

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Justice whether he is aware, or has sought any details from the Chief Constable, of how many police officers who have retired as a result of an injury on duty hold the designation permanent with no further reviews.

**(AQW 29867/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** I have not sought any information from the Chief Constable regarding the numbers of police officers who have retired as a result of an injury on duty. My Department, as I advised in my answer to AQW/23798/11-15, does not have any role in the review of Injury on Duty Awards.

Under Regulation 35(1) of the PSNI and PSNI Reserve (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2006 the Policing Board is legally obliged to arrange periodical reviews of the degree of disablement of an Injury on Duty award.

## Interpretation of Victim's Evidence

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the trial in case number 13/056715 that was aborted at Craigavon Crown Court on 14 January 2014 due to inaccurate interpretation of the victim's evidence, whether an investigation will be carried out into how a non-registered interpreter was able to be involved in a case to this level before the lack of registration was discovered; and to detail the terms of reference for the investigation.

**(AQW 29883/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** An investigation into the matter has been commenced by the DOJ Contract Manager. The investigation is being conducted under the terms of the contract with the current service provider, and is ongoing.

## Consultancy Fees

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister of Justice to detail how much money has been spent by his Department on consultancy fees in each of the last two years, including a breakdown of each consultancy firm used.

**(AQW 29908/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Expenditure by the Department of Justice, including its Agencies but not its arm's length bodies, on consultancy fees in each of the last two financial years is shown in the table below. The names of consultancy firms have been withheld in line with DOJ policy.

2011/12	£418,927
2012/13	£108,575

## Craigavon Crown Court: Case Number 13/056715

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the trial in case number 13/056715 that was aborted at Craigavon Crown Court on 14 January 2014, to detail all costs to date of the case, including (i) Legal Aid; (ii) prosecution; (iii) translation/ interpretation services; and (iv) jury expenses.

**(AQW 29940/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The table below details the estimated cost of case number 13/056715 from the start of the proceedings in the Magistrates' Court on 26 August 2011 to 14 January 2014 based on information available as at 22 January 2014.

Cost Type	Estimated Cost (£)
(i) Legal Aid <sup>1</sup>	8,695
(ii) Prosecution <sup>2</sup>	6,840
(iii) Prosecution Interpreter costs <sup>3</sup>	300
(iv) Court Interpretation costs <sup>4</sup>	8,083
(v) Jury expenses <sup>5</sup>	785
(vi) Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	3,890
(vii) PSNI costs	1,703
(viii) Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	595
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,891</b>

- 1 The legal aid cost relates to a co-defendant. Costs in respect of the main defendants have not yet been received.
- 2 The total cost to the PPS is not yet available. An estimate of costs for counsel has been provided.
- 3 Estimate for prosecution interpreter cost.
- 4 Expenses for interpreters received to date.
- 5 Expenses for jurors received to date.

## Judicial Reviews Currently in the Court System

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many Judicial Reviews are currently listed in the court system.

**(AQW 29941/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The table below details the number of Judicial Reviews listed for hearing as at 17 January 2014.

	<b>Number</b>
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	34
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review under appeal	4
Applications for Judicial Review	65
Judicial Reviews under appeal	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>

**Source:** Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

### **Searches for Drugs in Prisons**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of searches for drugs that have taken place in each prison in the last two years; and on how many of those searches have illegal drugs been found.

**(AQW 29955/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) conducts searching on prisoners, their visitors and staff as well as area searches. The purpose of searching is to uncover any illicit articles and prevent any breaches of security. In addition NIPS gathers intelligence on the use of drugs within prison which leads to searching resources being directed as appropriate. In this context it is not possible to detail the number of searches which were solely and specifically for drugs.

The total number of finds of illicit drugs for each of the last two years is set out in the table. These figures include prescription medication which was not legitimately held.

	<b>Maghaberry</b>	<b>Magilligan</b>	<b>Hydebank</b>
2012	234	104	115
2013	521	123	254
<b>Total</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>369</b>

### **Rural Crime: Discussions**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the recent discussions he has held with the Chief Constable regarding increases in rural crime and the steps required to combat it.

**(AQW 29956/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** I hold regular meeting with the Chief Constable during which we discuss a range of issues including rural crime. You will be aware that reducing the opportunities to commit crime and make rural communities safer is a key strand of the Community Safety Strategy, "Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities".

A Business and Rural Crime Action Plan is in place and is being delivered by my Department, working in partnership with PSNI and a range of other key statutory and business sector partners. A key outcome of that work has been the establishment of the Rural Crime Unit, an initiative supported by my Department, Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and NFU Mutual.

The Rural Crime Unit was formed in a direct response to concerns regarding rural crime and to assist in identifying how best to target resources to reduce crime incidents. The Unit provides a dedicated resource to identify trends and patterns in rural crime to assist District Commanders in making operational decisions and to target their resources and initiatives accordingly.

The information provided by the Unit has also allowed partners from the Rural Crime Unit Steering Group to support crime prevention initiatives aimed at encouraging farmers to take steps to help protect their property. This work was recently evidenced by the announcement of a funding package to encourage farmers in theft hotspots to fit security devices to their machinery.

At a local level, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) have also developed Action Plans to address local community concerns, which include the development of tailored solutions to address rural crime where appropriate. Actions being delivered include Farm Watch schemes, trailer marking, 4 Tier Security Schemes, CCTV schemes and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

### **Imprisonment for Failure to Pay Fines**

**Ms McGahan** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of people that have been imprisoned for failure to pay fines in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

**(AQW 29995/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The number of people who have been imprisoned for failure to pay fines with addresses in Fermanagh and South Tyrone for the last three years is set out in the table below.

<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
51	76	8

### **Prevalence of the Use of Legal Highs**

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Justice what discussions he has had with the PSNI to determine the prevalence of the use of legal highs.

**(AQW 29996/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Department of Justice officials have regular discussions with the PSNI and a range of other partner organisations regarding the prevalence of new psychoactive substances, inappropriately known as legal highs. Official surveys on illicit drug prevalence now include questions on such substances in order to gain a greater understanding of the extent of use.

The Department of Justice, DHSSPS, the PSNI, and the Public Health Agency have developed and introduced an informal early warning system – known as the “Drug and Alcohol Monitoring and Information System” (DAMIS) – which seeks to identify new substances or drug trends at an early stage, and provide information and advice to key stakeholders.

### **Criminalisation of the Sale and Distribution of Legal Highs**

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the criminalisation of the sale and distribution of legal highs.

**(AQW 29997/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The term “legal highs” can be misleading, and we therefore refer to them as New Psychoactive Substances. While these substances have psychoactive effects they are not currently covered by the UK-wide Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The legislation associated with the misuse of drugs in Northern Ireland is a reserved matter for Westminster.

In December 2013, in response to the growing concern regarding the adequacy of existing legislation to respond to the challenge presented by new psychoactive substances, the Home Office announced that it would lead a review looking at how the legislative response can be enhanced to maximise its impact and improve the enforcement response. It is anticipated that this review, together with recommendations will be completed by Spring 2014.

It is vitally important that there is a consistent and uniform response to this issue and as the outcome of this review is awaited, my Department continues to engage with key stakeholders to respond to this issue.

Most recently, you may be aware that Environmental Health Officers from Belfast City Council, supported by the PSNI, have pro-actively utilised the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 in responding locally to this issue and I understand that a Court case is currently being progressed.

### **Animal Welfare Offences**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the current sentencing guidelines in cases of animal welfare offences.

**(AQW 30024/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Lord Chief Justice, in his Programme of Action on sentencing, is enhancing the structures by which the Judiciary ensure consistent and appropriate sentences. Under this Programme, sentencing guidelines for a number of animal welfare offences heard in the Magistrates Courts have been developed. These are published on the Judicial Studies Board website ([www.jsbni.com/Publications/sentencing-guides-magistrates-court](http://www.jsbni.com/Publications/sentencing-guides-magistrates-court)).

### **Ticket Touting: Legislation**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Justice whether legislation exists to prevent ticket touting.

**(AQW 30074/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Ticket touting legislation only exists or previously existed in Northern Ireland by way of legislation from other parts of the United Kingdom law, and only in respect of certain national and international sporting events. Ticket touting is currently illegal in respect of the upcoming Commonwealth Games under section 17 of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games Act 2008. It was also previously illegal under section 31 of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games Act 2006 though that ceased to have effect once the Games finished.

### **Post of Chief Constable**

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Justice to outline why he chose to amend the criteria for the post of Chief Constable.

**(AQW 30320/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** In May 2013 the Policing Board wrote to the Department identifying a number of issues relating to the current criteria which they wanted the Minister of Justice to consider.

Following the request from the Policing Board, and given that reforms in these areas had been made in England and Wales in recent years, I initiated consultation at the Police Advisory Board – which includes the Policing Board, the PSNI and Staff Association. I also sought views on the matter from the Justice Committee and the Equality Commission.

The focus of responses largely centred on the criterion relating to the mandatory requirement for 2 years service outside of the current force. It was also suggested that there may be some equality issues in preventing some senior officers from applying for a post they may otherwise be eminently suitable for on the basis that they have not served elsewhere for two years. The Equality Commission suggested that this requirement may be indirectly discriminatory against women, those with dependents, and those with a disability unless it could be objectively justified as an essential requirement for the post.

A draft of my Determination has been issued to Police Advisory Board members for any further representations which I will then consider.

### **Prisons: Women's Facility**

**Ms Boyle** asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the plans for a purpose built women's prison.

**(AQO 5401/11-15)**



**Mr Ford:** As I informed the Assembly on 21 October 2013, I remain committed to having a separate prison for women. However, that will not happen in the near future. My intention is to develop a new, separate facility for women offenders combining both custodial provision for those women requiring secure custody and facilities for those women for whom a community based approach is more appropriate.

NIPS Officials are currently progressing a business case for a purpose built facility for women that will be subject to Department of Finance and Personnel scrutiny. However, the current planning assumption is that the development of a new women's facility will fall into the next Budget period. Therefore funding will be determined as part of the Executive's next Budget process.

I am pleased to advise that NIPS officials are in the process of finalising a business case for the development of a step-down facility for women on the Hydebank Wood site for women prisoners nearing the end of their sentence and getting ready to return into the community. I am also pleased to inform the House that work on the upgrade of Ash House infill commenced recently, to provide a range of additional educational, training and support services for female prisoners with a planned completion date of summer this year.

### **Flag Protests: Costs**

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister of Justice how much the flag protests and civil unrest have cost his Department to date.

**(AQO 5402/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The flag protests and civil unrest have placed, and continue to place, a financial, and indeed a more general, burden or cost on many different sectors.

The estimated cost to PSNI incurred in policing flag protests and related civil unrest from 3 December 2012 to 31 March 2013 is £21.9m (this includes opportunity costs, in other words duty time, of £9.7m). There is also the ongoing cost to police the protest at Twaddell which until 31 December 2013 stands at £5.45m (this includes opportunity costs of £1.6m). These costs impact significantly on the PSNI's ability to undertake other work on behalf of the community.

In terms of the cost to my Department, there are a number of costs which have been incurred in processing and detaining individuals through the court and prison system. These include court time, remand costs and the additional costs associated with those individuals sent to prison. However identifying these costs could only be achieved at a disproportionate cost to the public purse. Other costs would include the cost to the legal aid budget. Given that nearly 400 people have been charged in connection with the protests and associated disorder the cost will be significant.

Compensation Services has advised that they have paid in the region of £250,000, to date, in terms of criminal damage claims associated with the flags protests. This sum is expected to increase as further claims are resolved.

There are also wider costs to local businesses, especially in Belfast, where uncertainty around protests have impacted heavily, particularly in the run up to Christmas 2012. Images of the flags protests and associated disorder were seen across the United Kingdom and Ireland and further afield. The reputational damage that such scenes can cause, the related impact to the economy should not be underestimated.

But the greatest cost of all is arguably to our community. As I have said before, everyone has the right to protest peacefully but there can be no excuse for the scenes of violence we have witnessed. The vast majority of the community are committed to democracy and the rule of law and it is essential that we continue to work together to tackle underlying issues and build a truly shared society for all.

## Legal Aid

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of Justice to outline the savings that have arisen from the reduction in criminal legal aid fees since its introduction in 2011.

**(AQO 5403/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Since devolution, my Department has implemented a comprehensive programme of criminal legal aid reform. Changes to Crown Court fees introduced in June 2011 will deliver £18.3m in annual savings, while changes to legal aid funding for representation in the Crown Court introduced in 2012 will deliver a further £1.5m in annual savings.

Due to the length of time required for old cases to work through the system, these savings will not be fully realised until 2015-16.

## Death Driving

**Mr Sheehan** asked the Minister of Justice what actions arose from the multi-agency discussions following the recent incidents of 'death driving' by young people in West Belfast.

**(AQO 5405/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** A number of Criminal Justice Agencies, including the PSNI, the Probation Board and the Youth Justice Agency, met with community organisations and local representatives on 6 January 2014 and again on 20 January to discuss the disturbing events that occurred on the Falls Road on New Years Eve.

I welcome the involvement and commitment of all those who took part in these multi-agency discussions and would assure the member that my Department remains committed to tackling car crime across Northern Ireland.

In terms of outcomes, the Agencies represented are committed to work in partnership with the local community as they implement a range of operational measures focused on prevention and detection.

For example I can advise that the Department of Justice is a partner in an inter-agency project, led by Belfast City Council that aims to build relationships and reach out to disengaged youth in the Lower Falls Area who may be engaged in car crime and anti-social behaviour. The Department has contributed £25,000 to the project.

## Rural Crime: Sentencing

**Mr Irwin** asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the upsurge in livestock and agricultural machinery theft, particularly in the Newry and Armagh constituency, whether he has any plans to review the sentencing guidelines for people convicted of these crimes.

**(AQO 5406/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The legislation governing these crimes (Theft (Northern Ireland) Act 1969) already provides significant deterrent penalties. Anyone convicted of theft is liable, on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment of up to 10 years. Indeed, certain specified offences can attract a public protection sentence under which an offender is liable to imprisonment for an indeterminate or extended period, with future release determined by the Parole Commissioners.

Sentencing within this legislative framework is a matter for the judiciary and it is important that the independence of the judiciary is maintained. In making these decisions, judges take into account the law, sentencing guidelines, and all the relevant circumstances in each case. I realise that sometimes the sentence handed down in an individual case can fall short of victim and public expectations. That is why I have been working with the Lord Chief Justice on issues of transparency and consistency of sentencing.

Under his Programme of Action, the Lord Chief Justice established a Sentencing Group to enhance the guidance available to the judiciary, through oversight of the development and publication of sentencing guidelines. Guidelines for theft and burglary offences heard in the Magistrates Courts have been

developed and are published on the internet, as are the various guideline judgments for theft and burglary offences heard in the Crown Court.

## Legal Aid

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Justice for an update on his proposals to reform legal aid.  
**(AQO 5407/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The strategic objectives for my proposals to reform legal aid are:

- To improve access to justice;
- To bring legal aid expenditure within budget; and
- To improve governance and accountability for expenditure of public money.

The current proposals for reform of legal aid are about ensuring that the people who need help receive levels of advice and representation that are appropriate, but this needs to be affordable.

Since launching my Departmental Action Plan in July 2012, I have completed significant reforms in relation to Criminal Legal Aid which are yielding significant savings in the region of £20million per year. A further reform to Crown Court Fees has been subject to consultation and may yield further saving of up to £5.6million. In addition my Department has undertaken consultations of proposals for reforms to publicly funded legal Representation in the Civil and Family Courts, changes to Financial Eligibility for Civil and Criminal Legal Aid and proposals to introduce standard fees in the Civil Courts. It is envisaged that these reforms may save up to a further £18million per year. All of these projects will contribute to my strategic objective of bringing legal aid expenditure within budget.

In line with the recommendation in the Access to Justice Review, I have also consulted on the status of the Legal Services Commission. I will shortly introduce legislation to the Assembly to close the Commission and to transfer its functions to an Agency of the Department of Justice.

## Prisons: Annual Reports

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29154/11-15, why the Annual Reports of the Independent Monitoring Boards for Maghaberry, Magilligan and Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre were only published electronically.  
**(AQO 5408/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Annual Reports of the Independent Monitoring Boards (IMB) have been published only in electronic form since 2010. Hard copies are available on request from the IMB Secretariat.

## Domestic Violence

**Mr Dunne** asked the Minister of Justice what steps can be taken to increase public awareness of the campaign against domestic violence.  
**(AQO 5409/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** My Department is fully committed to raising awareness of domestic violence and recently endorsed the PSNI Crimestoppers campaign – “Behind Closed Doors.” The focus of this campaign was to encourage family, friends and neighbours to report in confidence incidents of domestic violence and abuse known to them.

Domestic violence is an unacceptable crime and members should be aware that the Health Minister and I launched a consultation exercise on a new joint domestic and sexual violence and abuse strategy on 15 January. That consultation exercise will run until 11 April and I look forward to receiving the views of the community and especially any comments that victims or their families may wish to make.

The “Prevention and Early Intervention” strand of the draft strategy clearly identifies the need to raise awareness and promote zero tolerance to such violence.

## Department for Regional Development

### Top Twenty Bus and/or Rail Stations

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the top twenty bus and/or rail stations in order of the number of passengers using them.

**(AQW 29406/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):** Translink officials have advised me that the top twenty bus and/or rail stations in order of the number of passengers using them are as per the table below:

Station	Passenger Flows 2012/13	NIR / Ulsterbus
Europa / Great Victoria Street Bus & Rail Station *	8,416,333	Ulsterbus & NIR
Bangor Bus & Rail Station *	2,997,637	Ulsterbus & NIR
Belfast Central	2,277,588	NIR
Ballymena Bus & Rail Station *	1,831,818	Ulsterbus & NIR
Coleraine Bus & Rail Station *	1,792,222	Ulsterbus & NIR
Londonderry Bus Station	1,559,500	Ulsterbus
Lisburn Buscentre	1,405,100	Ulsterbus
Newry Buscentre	1,367,000	Ulsterbus
Lisburn Railway Station	1,341,296	NIR
Omagh Bus Station	1,163,900	Ulsterbus
Portadown Railway Station	988,270	NIR
Botanic Railway Station	924,515	NIR
Lurgan Railway Station	901,388	NIR
Carrickfergus Railway Station	750,743	NIR
Enniskillen Bus Station	741,200	Ulsterbus
Downpatrick Buscentre	649,100	Ulsterbus
Laganside Buscentre	607,700	Ulsterbus
Dungannon Bus Station	549,750	Ulsterbus
Antrim Bus & Rail Station *	531,583	Ulsterbus & NIR
Newcastle Bus Station	506,700	Ulsterbus

Note: The figures for bus and rail stations represent flows rather than passenger journeys. Bus and rail stations located on the same site are added together.

It is important to say that comparing bus and rail station flows is very difficult because of the bus stop network used by large numbers of people.

## Cost of Street Lighting

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 29426/11-15, to detail the cost of electricity used for street lighting in each district, in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 29534/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department pays for street lighting electricity for all of Northern Ireland through a single monthly invoice. It is not possible to accurately apportion expenditure by Council district, however, the table below provides details of expenditure on street lighting electricity across Northern Ireland, in each of the last five years:

2008 - 09 £'000	2009 - 10 £'000	2010 - 11 £'000	2011 - 12 £'000	2012 - 13 £'000
11,107	8,083	9,536	10,199	10,323

## Residents' Parking Schemes

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide an update on the introduction of legislation regarding Residents' Parking Schemes.

**(AQW 29679/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department is currently developing a number of residents' parking schemes.

Within the Greater Belfast area, Roads Service officials are giving priority to schemes in the Lower Malone and Rugby Road/College Park Avenue areas of Belfast, both of which are well advanced in terms of design and consultation. Formal consultation on the proposals is scheduled to take place in Spring 2014.

Informal consultation is also currently underway to determine if residents' parking proposals for the Donegall Pass and Sandy Row areas have broad local support.

Officials are also drafting the necessary subordinate legislation for the provision of residents' parking schemes in Massereene Street and Clarke Court in Antrim, as well as for the Bogside area of Londonderry, with the aim of introducing these schemes in 2014.

## Greencastle Pier Road, Kilkeel

**Mr Wells** asked the Minister for Regional Development what action is being taken to repair the damage caused by recent storms to the Greencastle Pier Road, Kilkeel.

**(AQW 29681/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** A 30 metre section of the Greencastle Pier Road was damaged during the recent storms and my Department hopes to complete these repairs within the coming weeks, subject to a positive outcome to consultation with officials from the Loughs Agency.

## Residents' Parking Schemes: Derry City Council Area

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 29139/11-15, to detail the areas considered suitable for the introduction of residents' parking schemes in the Derry City Council area.

**(AQW 29730/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** In October 2007, surveys were undertaken in seven Derry City Council areas: Northland 1, Northland 2, Clarendon Area, Rossville Street Area, City Centre South, Waterside 1 and Waterside 2, to determine their suitability for residents' parking schemes. The extent of non-resident parking was considered sufficient to justify the implementation of residents' parking schemes in four of the areas: Rossville Street, City Centre South, Clarendon and Northland 2.

Should the Member require further information, he should contact Mr Sean Mullan (Tel: 028 71321648), Roads Service Section Office, 1 Crescent Road, Londonderry, BT47 2NQ.

### **Baranailt Road, Claudy: Mains Water**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development how many homes at Baranailt Road, Claudy have had mains water tested for impurities in 2013, and of these, how many tests showed excessive amounts of (i) iron; and (ii) magnesium.

**(AQW 29731/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that during 2013 it collected and analysed 34 water samples from nine properties in the Baranailt Road area of Claudy. Of these samples, 23 had iron levels that exceeded the regulatory standard and none had magnesium exceedances.

In order to improve the quality of the water supply in the Baranailt Road area, NIW has appointed a contractor to replace the section of the distribution main serving the affected properties. Work commenced on 18 January 2014 and is expected to be completed within a month. In the interim, the customers will be supplied through a stringer pipe which should produce an immediate improvement in water quality.

### **Specified Public Service Taxi Ranks**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether all Specified Public Service Taxi Ranks are open for the purposes of collecting and leaving fares by all licensed taxi operators.

**(AQW 29732/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Not all taxi ranks are open to all licensed taxi operators for the purpose of collecting and leaving fares. Taxi ranks are provided as a service whereby an intending passenger makes their way to the nearest taxi rank and takes the next available taxi.

As you may be aware, there are different types of taxi which are licensed to operate in different ways, and not all taxis are permitted to pick up fares at taxi ranks. Private hire taxis, for example, under the terms of their licence, need either to be pre-booked or accessed from a dedicated taxi depot, whereas public hire taxis are permitted to pick up fares at taxi ranks.

The Department of the Environment has responsibility for taxi licensing.

### **Specified Public Service Taxi Ranks**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail all the Specified Public Service Taxi Ranks in (i) Londonderry; (ii) Limavady; and (iii) Strabane.

**(AQW 29733/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Whilst there are no Specified Public Service Taxi Ranks in Limavady, details of the locations of those in Londonderry and Strabane are set out in the table below:

<b>Town/City</b>	<b>Location of taxi ranks</b>
Londonderry	William Street Foyle Street Market Street Sackville Street
Strabane	Abercorn Square Main Street

## Specified Public Service Taxi Ranks

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he is considering any legislative or administrative changes to the number or use of Specified Public Service Taxi Ranks in the next twelve months.

**(AQW 29734/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The Member will be aware that the Department of the Environment is currently carrying out a review of taxi licensing legislation including taxi accessibility and charging issues. Early discussions between officials in my Department's Roads Service and licensing officials have highlighted that the new arrangements may stipulate that only accessible taxis will be permitted to use on-street taxi ranks.

Regarding changes to the numbers of taxi ranks, officials in my Department's Roads Service are currently progressing proposals with a view to providing two additional public hire taxi ranks in Belfast; one in Botanic Avenue, close to the railway station, that will provide five spaces and another in High Street, close to the Hi Park Shopping Centre, that will provide three spaces. There is a legislative process to be completed before these ranks are confirmed, which is open to challenge from individuals/groups opposed to the creation of additional taxi ranks.

Officials are presently discussing a range of taxi-related matters with representatives of the public hire taxi industry, including a request for a change to the taxi rank in Donegall Square North, Belfast. Agreement on a potential revised layout has not yet been reached.

You may be aware that a taxi-bus service operates along some specified routes within Belfast. Officials are also considering a request for locations for taxi-bus services to operate from in both Bridge Street and North Street.

There are also plans to amend the existing taxi ranks at Merchants Quay, Newry and Main Street, Newcastle. The former is being removed as it has been under utilised over the last 10 years. In respect of the latter, it is proposed to reduce the three existing taxi rank spaces to two and replace the other with a new accessibility bay for Blue Badge holders. These matters are currently with Departmental Solicitor's Office for consideration and are likely to be formally advertised within the next 12 months.

## Water Mains Extension on the Ballygorian Road, Hilltown

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister for Regional Development pursuant, to AQW 23965/11-15, to detail (i) the reasons for delaying the commencement date for the water mains extension on the Ballygorian Road, Hilltown; and (ii) the timescale for when work will commence and conclude.

**(AQW 29737/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that commencement of the project to extend the water mains on Ballygorian Road was delayed as a result of Roads Service placing restrictions on the proposed road closure. Roads Service has a 6 week closure on the B8 Newry Road, Hilltown for resurfacing works. The scheme commenced on 13 January and is scheduled to be completed by Mid-February. The diversion route for the NIW scheme would conflict with the diversion route for the B8 resurfacing scheme, therefore it was not possible to facilitate both schemes at the same time.

NIW's project is now scheduled to commence in Mid-February and take approximately 4 weeks to complete.

## Moira Train Station

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to upgrade Moira Train Station, given the investment in other train stations such as Antrim, Bangor and Coleraine.

**(AQW 29751/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Moira Station is listed as a heritage building which means that there are limitations to improvement in relation to the general configuration of the premises.

Translink will shortly be starting the construction of a footbridge across the station to join the platforms. Works should be completed in the summer of 2014.

Translink is also exploring the potential for Park and Ride capacity. These investigations are at feasibility study stage and it is likely that any project arising from the study could be completed within 3 years assuming land, planning permission and funding can be obtained.

Translink is actively considering the possibility of a further shelter on the platform. A feasibility study will be undertaken.

It should be noted that in recent years there has been significant investment to make improvements to the station. Park & Ride facilities have been increased and platforms were extended to accommodate the introduction of the new Class 3000 trains. The station was also included in the network-wide work to comply with Disability Discrimination legislation and to complement the introduction of new trains as part of Translink's New Rail Vision which provided improved station facilities and accessibility features for passengers.

### **40mph Speed Limit at Kirkistown Primary School**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the progress on the review of the 40mph speed limit at Kirkistown Primary School and the play park in Cloughey village, Strangford. **(AQW 29764/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** A review of the speed limits within Cloughey Village, following consideration of all the relevant factors in conjunction with the PSNI, indicates the current 40mph speed limit remains appropriate.

However, I can confirm that the existing flashing school warning signs are to be upgraded on both approaches to the school and this work should be completed before the end of March 2014. These measures will further enhance the school's presence and heighten driver awareness.

### **Tamnaghmore Road, Toome: Water Pipe**

**Mr Clarke** asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the Tamnaghmore Road, Toome, to detail (i) the number of times the water pipe has been replaced in the last three years including the cost; and (ii) whether he plans to replace the current pipe; and if so, when. **(AQW 29777/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) the water main on Tamnaghmore Road, Toome has been repaired on four occasions during the past three years at a cost of approximately £1,000. (ii) NIW has no immediate plans to replace this water main but it will be considered for inclusion in the PC15 programme which covers the period April 2015 to March 2021.

### **Public Hire Vehicles**

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister for Regional Development what flexibility his officials have to allow public hire vehicles to establish ad-hoc ranks during peak times or at major events. **(AQW 29786/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department is required to make a legislative order to establish any mandatory and enforceable rank for public hire vehicles. As the legislation does not provide for temporary or ad-hoc ranks, there is no flexibility to allow the establishment of such ranks for public hire vehicles.

However, my Department has on occasion allowed the temporary relocation of existing ranks to facilitate road-works, and indeed other building works, or for events, although this can only take place with the



co-operation of the PSNI. As these ranks are only advisory and cannot be legally enforced, other vehicles may park in them, which can generate complaints, especially from private hire taxi operators.

### **Roads Service Car Parks: Fires**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 28295/11-15, what action he will take to ensure that no further fires are lit in Roads Service car parks.

**(AQW 29823/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** As I stated in my previous response, I do not support or condone the unauthorised use of my Department's land or property for anything other than its intended use. If permission had been sought to use the car park for this purpose, it would have been refused.

As with other unauthorised activities which it encounters, my Department must fully consider the possible consequences of taking action. For example, in the case of the removal of flags or posters this is generally done in conjunction with the PSNI after consultation and negotiation with local community representatives. My Department is not generally perceived to be best placed to lead on such consultations, but provides appropriate support and technical assistance when requested. I consider a similar approach is warranted in this situation, however, I have asked my officials to write to the organisers of this event to advise them of their legal responsibilities in this regard.

### **Cat's Eyes on Dangerous Stretches of Road**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration has been given to installing cat's eyes on dangerous stretches of road and corners where there may not be the traffic volumes to meet the policy, but road safety could be improved at that section of the road.

**(AQW 29824/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Roads Service policy allows for the installation of reflective road studs in exceptional circumstances, in support of centre and lane markings on any road prone to fog or mist, or where poor alignment exists regardless of traffic volumes.

During the development of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020, it was recognised that improved driver information would make a positive contribution to road safety, especially at night time on rural roads. A number of action measures were developed to help address this issue. One of these measures was to improve edge and junction visibility on rural roads, through use of a combination of reflective bollards and studs, using advances in reflective technology products.

Work is underway to implement this and other associated action measures at selected sites.

### **E-Car Parking Bays**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of e-car parking bays which his Department has yet to paint green, in order to prevent them being used as parking spaces by other drivers, including the timescale for when this work will be completed.

**(AQW 29830/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The ecar Project Team is surveying the parking bays at each of the charge points to note the exact location, the condition of surface, and any additional whitelining or signage that may be required.

Once the survey has been completed the bays will be painted as soon as possible with work to be completed by 31 March 2014. My Department has not painted any of the bays to date.

Agreement from property owners will be required for charge points located on private property.

## Grit on Minor Roads

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the provisions in place should residents wish to grit the minor roads in their own locality.

**(AQW 29831/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Whilst the Roads Service winter service policy targets the majority of the available resources on the busier main through routes, it also provides for the provision of salt bins or grit piles for use by the public, on a self-help basis, on other routes that do not qualify for inclusion in the salting schedule. As a result, residents have access to grit should they wish to treat the minor roads in their own locality.

Approximately 4,800 salt bins and almost 50,000 grit piles are currently provided on Northern Ireland's minor roads with replenishment carried out on an ongoing basis during cold spells.

## Door-2-Door Transport Service

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department reproced the Door-2-Door Transport Service following his decision to put in place an interim service managed by Disability Action from 1 April 2013.

**(AQW 29835/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Currently my Department is undertaking an evaluation of the transport policies and schemes initiated by the Department to promote social inclusion. The outcome of the evaluation will assist my Department to develop proposals to meet the transport needs of elderly and disabled people across Northern Ireland. At this time it is planned to maintain an interim scheme (The Disability Action Transport Scheme) with Disability Action.

## Door-2-Door Transport Service

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the current days and times the Door-2-Door Transport Service is available.

**(AQW 29836/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The Door-2-Door scheme ended on 31 March 2013.

The interim Disability Action Transport Scheme, operated by Disability Action since 01 April 2013 is available from 7.30am until 11.30pm daily Monday to Saturday and from 8.00am until 8.00pm on Sunday. On Public Holidays the service will run as follows:

<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>No Service</b>
17th March	9.00am - 5.00pm Service
Easter Monday	9.00am - 5.00pm Service
Easter Tuesday	9.00am - 5.00pm Service
May Day (1st Monday in May)	9.00am - 5.00pm Service
May Bank Holiday (last Monday in May)	9.00am - 5.00pm Service
12th July	No Service
13th July	No Service
August Bank Holiday (last Monday in August)	9.00am - 5.00pm Service
Christmas Day	No Service
Boxing Day	No Service

## Door-2-Door Transport Service

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the hourly wage of drivers employed by the Door-2-Door Transport Service.

**(AQW 29837/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The Door-2-Door scheme ended on 31 March 2013.

An interim scheme, the Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS) is being provided by Disability Action. The issue of wages or hourly rates is an operational matter for Disability Action who believe the actual rates of pay is commercially sensitive information.

Disability Action has however advised me that the drivers who transferred from Moneymore Coaches (in administration), previously Chambers Coach Hire Limited did so under TUPE arrangements and that the rate of pay they now receive is greater than what they received previously.

## Door-2-Door Transport Service

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the hourly wage of drivers employed by the Door-2-Door Transport Service, when it was operated by Moneymore Coaches.

**(AQW 29838/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** This information is not available as it is not held by my Department.

The issue of wages and hourly rates was an operational matter for Moneymore Coaches (in administration) previously Chambers Coach Hire Limited. The Door-2-Door scheme ended on 31 March 2013 and I understand that the administration was formally closed in October 2013.

## Door-2-Door Transport Service

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the days and times the Door-2-Door Transport Service was available when operated by Moneymore Coaches.

**(AQW 29839/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The days and times for the Door-2-Door Transport scheme when it was operated by Moneymore Coaches (in administration) were:

Monday to Sunday, 7.30am to 11.30pm

The service did not operate on New Year's Day, 12th and 13th July, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. A reduced service (9am to 5pm) operated on other Bank and Public Holidays, Christmas Eve and the days between Boxing Day and New Year's Day

## Belfast Public Hire Taxi Ranks

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the current annual budget for Belfast Public Hire Taxi Ranks.

**(AQW 29854/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department does not have a separate budget set aside and does not monitor expenditure specifically in relation to Belfast Public Hire Taxi Ranks. Any works considered necessary are catered for within the normal traffic management or maintenance allocations.

## Departmental Cycling Unit

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the proposed frequency of meetings of the departmental cycling unit.

**(AQW 29855/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The Cycling Unit is a work group within my Department which is developing an ongoing programme of work as it aims to ensure that cycling provision is a key element in both transport strategy and delivery. Staff within the Cycling Unit meet internally on a daily and ongoing basis and have met with various other stakeholders since the creation of the Unit in November 2013.

The Cycling Unit looks forward to meeting with the Committee for Regional Development and the All Party Group on Cycling in due course.

### **Departmental Cycling Unit**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development who will be responsible for organising meetings of the departmental cycling unit.

**(AQW 29856/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The Cycling Unit is a work group within my Department which is developing an ongoing programme of work as it aims to ensure that cycling provision is a key element in both transport strategy and delivery. Staff within the Cycling Unit meet internally on a daily and ongoing basis. In addition, the Cycling Unit will both organise meetings with other bodies and attend meetings organised by them. The Unit has arranged to meet with the Committee for Regional Development and looks forward to meeting with the All Party Group on cycling at its invitation.

The Cycling Unit has also had meetings with Belfast City Council staff, Government Departments, Sustrans and various other stakeholders and groups interested in cycling and walking as a means of sustainable transport.

### **Moira Train Station**

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are plans to repair or upgrade the pavements surrounding the Moira Train Station.

**(AQW 29861/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I can confirm Translink is exploring the potential for Park and Ride capacity at the station. These investigations are at feasibility study stage and it is likely any project arising from the study could be completed within 3 years assuming land, planning permission and funding can be obtained. Subject to the outcome of Translink's study, my Department's Roads Service will review the current footway provision in this area to ensure appropriate facilities are provided.

Translink has provided overspill parking at the nearby 'Tannery' to offer customers safe and secure parking.

### **Moira Train Station: Car Park**

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any plans to increase the size of the car park at Moira Train Station to meet the demand placed on the facility by daily commuters.

**(AQW 29862/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink is investigating a number of sites around Moira station to provide additional Park and Ride capacity. These investigations are at early feasibility study stage and it is likely that any project arising from the study would be completed within 3 years assuming land, planning permission and funding can be obtained.

Translink has provided overspill parking at the nearby 'Tannery' to offer customers safe and secure parking.

### **Moira Train Station: Parking**

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether consideration has been given to health and safety issues in relation to commuters parking their vehicles on the roadside adjacent to Moira Train Station.

**(AQW 29863/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I can advise the Member that, whilst officials in my Department are aware that some drivers park their cars partially on the footpath at this location, as they do at many other locations, no specific safety issue has been highlighted.

I can confirm Translink is exploring the potential for Park and Ride capacity at the station. These investigations are at feasibility study stage and it is likely any project arising from the study could be completed within 3 years assuming land, planning permission and funding can be obtained.

Translink has provided overspill parking at the nearby 'Tannery' to offer customers safe and secure parking.

### **Newry to Bangor Train Service: Overcrowding**

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister for Regional Development how he plans to deal with the severe overcrowding on the Newry to Bangor train service during peak hours.

**(AQW 29864/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink has advised that during peak hours Monday-Friday NI Railways operates 6 trains per hour in both directions between Lisburn-Great Victoria Street and Bangor. Highest passenger loadings are experienced between Lisburn and Belfast between 08:00-08:30 hours and 17:00-17:30 hours. During these times two mornings and one evening train is operated as a 6-carriage unit.

There have been isolated occasions when, as a result of engineering issues, there is a shortage of available trains. In these occasional circumstances a 6-carriage unit is replaced with a 3-carriage unit.

### **Newry to Bangor Train Service**

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has considered adding additional carriages to the Newry to Bangor train service during peak hours to help meet the demand of daily commuters.

**(AQW 29865/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** For normal timetabled services the standard 3-carriage unit is sufficient. For exceptionally heavily loaded services e.g. 07:40 and 08:00 Portadown to Belfast services, NI Railways join two 3-carriage units together to form a 6-carriage train.

All of NI Railways new trains are now in service. They have proved very popular and passenger numbers continue to grow across the network. NI Railways believes it has sufficient trains to meet current demand.

### **Road Conditions: Frost and Black Ice**

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the 12 and 13 January 2014, to detail (i) the methods that were used to ascertain if there would be frost; (ii) the time that resources were deployed to deal with the frost and black ice; (iii) the roads that were gritted, including whether this included the regular road network; and (iv) the number of accidents reported as a result of the road conditions.

**(AQW 29876/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I am responding on the basis the Member's question relates to roads within the Upper Bann constituency, which is covered by Roads Service's Southern Division.

My Department utilises specialised Met Office winter service forecast services that advise officials of the likelihood of winter hazards across Northern Ireland. Under these arrangements, the Met Office uses information from weather stations, which are located at 21 strategic locations across Northern Ireland, along with its own Meteorological data to provide specialised winter service forecasts, which are then transmitted to Roads Service Duty Engineers' computers. This data is then assessed along with local information from scouting reports, in certain circumstances, to ascertain the likelihood of ice forming. Officials responsible for the delivery of winter service, monitor Met Office forecasts on a 24 hour basis and respond to the predicted weather forecasts and updates that are received.

On 12/13 January decisions regarding what gritting actions were required for the network were made based on the weather forecast and actual conditions being experienced on the network. Monitoring of actual conditions was carried out using data from remote monitoring stations and from driven inspections by scouts.

During the evening of 12 January and morning of 13 January 2014, Roads Service Southern Division did not salt the roads on the salted network. However, I can confirm that on the morning of 13 January 2014, following reports of frost and ice affecting parts of the roads network, Roads Service carried out selective salting to target roads where difficult driving conditions had been reported. Treatment commenced between 07:00 and 08:30 from various depots across the Division in response to the reports received. Details of the routes treated are set out in the table below.

LIST OF ROADS IN SOUTHERN DIVISION WHERE RESPONSIVE GRITTING WAS CARRIED OUT ON MORNING OF MONDAY 13 JANUARY 2014

Depot	Location
Craigavon	Carn Road and Carn roundabout. Dungannon Road from the Birches roundabout into Portadown stopping at the Garvaghy Rd roundabout. Gilford Road, Portadown into Gilford, including the Mullahead roundabout and Moyallon Road. Plantation road from Gilford into Lurgan including Gilford Road, Flush Place roundabout and through the Flush Place junction in direction of Lurgan town stopping the grit just beyond the junction. Church Place, Lurgan (around the church). Goodyear roundabout, Ballynamoney Road and Kilvergan Road, Lurgan.
Armagh	A51 Hamiltonsbawn Road starting from Armagh Depot to the Roundabout at the Armagh Road/Portadown Road junction in Tandragee. This route includes the following roads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A51 Hamiltonsbawn Road between Armagh and Hamiltonsbawn;</li> <li>■ A51 Marlacoo Road between Hamiltonsbawn and Marlacoo; and</li> <li>■ A51 Armagh Road between Marlacoo and Tandragee.</li> </ul> Between the Armagh Depot and the Newry Road Roundabout in Armagh then onto A28 between Armagh and Newry at the 5 Ways Roundabout. This route includes the following roads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A28 Newry Road between Armagh and Markethill; and</li> <li>■ A28 Gosford Road/ Armagh Road between Markethill and Newry.</li> </ul>

Depot	Location
Corbet	A50 Banbridge to Scarva to Poyntzpass to Newry to Rathfriland. Knockgorm to Diamond to Dromara to Ballinahinch to Dromara. A50 to Banbridge to Broken Bridge Road to Milltown Road to Banbridge Town Centre to Old A1 to Outlet to Lurgan Road. A50 to Leitrim to Castlewellan to Moneyslane to Rathfriland to Dromara. B3 Loughbrickland to Poyntzpass to Scarva to Loughbrickland to Banbridge. B10 Banbridge to Rathfriland to Loughbrickland.
Newry	A25 from Newry to Kilcoo via Rathfriland returning B8 Hilltown. A25 Newry to Newtownhamilton Road. B78 Markethill Road. C213 & C214 through Whitecross.
Castlenavan	Comber Road Killyleagh between Killyleagh and Comber. Carrickmannon Road from Ballygowan to Raffery.

With regard to your request for information on the number of accidents reported as a result of road conditions, my Department does not hold this information. This information is held by the PSNI, who may be able to assist you with this query.

### Weather Conditions for Gritting Purposes

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Regional Development what technology is used to ascertain weather conditions for gritting purposes.

**(AQW 29877/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department uses the services of the Met Office to ascertain the weather conditions to inform decision-making in relation to gritting actions. Specialised Met Office winter service forecasts are utilised to inform Roads Service officials of the likelihood of winter hazards across Northern Ireland. Under these arrangements, the Met Office uses information from weather stations located at 21 strategic locations across Northern Ireland, along with its own meteorological data, to provide specialised winter service forecasts which are then transmitted to the Roads Service Duty Engineers' computers.

Roads Service officials take informed decisions based on Met Office forecasting and with the help of latest technology, including ice sensors linked to its weather stations, and thermal mapping of all roads on the salted network.

### Park and Ride Scheme at Ballymena Train Station

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to increase the capacity of the Park and Ride Scheme at Ballymena Train Station.

**(AQW 29886/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Following a Strategic Review of Park & Ride, my Department established a Park & Ride Programme Board which is responsible for prioritising the implementation of Park & Ride and Park & Share projects in line with the Department's strategy.

The Programme Board produced a 'Park & Ride Strategic Delivery Programme 2013-15'. This Programme plans to create at least an additional 1,000 Park & Ride and Park & Share spaces across Northern Ireland. To date over 600 additional spaces have been provided under the Programme. Ballymena Train Station is included in the Programme.

I have liaised with Translink officials who have advised me they are actively assessing how best to provide additional Park & Ride spaces at Ballymena. They need first of all to acquire land required for the project. They are also keen to link the provision of Park and Ride with plans to develop a new bus and rail station at Ballymena. Both projects are within the Translink Corporate Plan for 2014/2015 which assumes the necessary approvals and funding will be secured.

### **Public Hire Taxi Ranks in Belfast**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's plans to (i) increase; and (ii) modernise the number of Public Hire Taxi Ranks in Belfast.

**(AQW 29896/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I would refer the Member to my response to his related question, AQW 29900/11-15.

### **Public Hire Taxi Rank in Donegal Square North**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact of modernising the Public Hire Taxi Rank in Donegal Square North, Belfast, including the eradication of the current overranking.

**(AQW 29897/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Officials in my Department's Roads Service have some concerns over proposals put forward by representatives of the taxi industry for taxi ranks in this area and, to date, agreement on a potential revised layout has not yet been reached. I need to be satisfied that any proposed change can be made without compromising the safety of all road-users, including users of other forms of public transport as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

The matter of over-ranking is perhaps one for the taxi industry to address, as it is just not possible to provide the number of taxi ranks in Donegal Square North that would be needed to accommodate every public hire taxi in Belfast. Officials have only very recently been asked to consider the provision of a feeder rank close to the existing rank in Donegal Square North. Whilst officials have not as yet had time to explore this request, changes could have an impact on existing kerb-side usage, as well as on adjacent businesses and premises.

I would also refer the Member to my response to his related questions, AQW 29899/11-15 and AQW 29900/11-15.

### **Public Hire Taxi Ranks in Belfast**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how much his Department has spent on Public Hire Taxi Ranks in Belfast, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 29898/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service does not categorise or monitor expenditure specifically in relation to Belfast Public Hire Taxi Ranks.

I would also refer the Member to my response to his related question, AQW 29854/11-15.

### **Public Hire Taxi Rank in Donegal Square North**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to modernise the Public Hire Taxi Rank in Donegal Square North, Belfast.

**(AQW 29899/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Officials have some concerns about the proposal put forward by representatives of the taxi industry for taxi ranks in this area and, to date, agreement on a potential revised layout has not yet been reached.

I would also refer the Member to my response to his related question, AQW 29900/11-15.



## Public Hire Taxi Ranks in Belfast

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on departmental proposals to build new and modernise existing taxi ranks in Belfast, as proposed in 2009-10.

**(AQW 29900/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department is presently taking forward proposals to provide two additional public hire taxi ranks in Belfast, one in Botanic Avenue, close to the railway station, that will provide five spaces, and another in High Street, close to the Hi Park Shopping Centre, that will provide three spaces.

These proposed ranks will be subject to a legislative process and will be open to challenge from those opposed to the creation of additional taxi ranks.

I understand that, whilst the proposed rank in High Street has had the support of some representatives of the public hire taxi industry, it does not find favour with other taxi representatives who have proposed alternative facilities in High Street and Bridge Street. Officials will be seeking clarification from the various parties in the coming weeks before deciding on how best to proceed.

Officials are presently discussing a range of taxi-related matters with representatives of the public hire taxi industry, including a request to alter the taxi rank in Donegall Square North and to provide a new feeder rank nearby. Officials have some concerns about the proposals and agreement on a potential revised layout has not yet been reached.

## Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister for Regional Development, following the publication of a report from the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages on 15 January 2014 and the findings that there have been delays and obstructions over the provision of bilingual street signs and tourist information, whether his Department will carry out a full investigation to address the report's findings.

**(AQW 29914/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The Department for Regional Development has no responsibility for the erection of street name plates including bilingual street name plates. City, Borough and District Councils are empowered by Section 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 to allocate postal numbers to houses and buildings in their districts, and to name any new road or street.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has lead responsibility for co-ordinating responses to the Fourth Evaluation Report from the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. My Departmental officials will therefore assist DCAL to address any relevant issues, as required.

## Passengers using Larne Harbour

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the falling number of passengers using Larne Harbour, what action he will take to ensure that the train timetable from Larne Harbour coincides with ferry departure and arrival times to help promote more sustainable and better integrated transport.

**(AQW 29917/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** NI Railways operate regular hourly train services between Belfast and Larne, with the majority of trains connecting to/from Larne Harbour. This means every ferry arrival/departure reasonably connects with a train.

The current ferry service operates between Larne Harbour and Cairnryan but there is no direct onward rail connection in Scotland. As a result NI Railways now sell very few boat-rail connections to Great Britain. Nevertheless with an hourly rail service operating all day, all departing/arriving ferries will have a reasonable rail connection within Northern Ireland.

## Delivering Social Change: Audio Visual Announcements on Buses

**Mr Lyttle** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the status the bid for Delivering Social Change funding to install Audio Visual Announcements on buses that would promote equal access to public transport for blind and partially sighted users.

**(AQW 29948/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Following completion of a successful pilot involving the provision of audio visual information systems on a number of Metro buses and at designated bus stops, the Department has continued to explore potential funding for the provision of audio visual systems on the bus network. An application to the OFMdFM Delivering Social Change Signature Project was made in June 2013. The Department is still awaiting the outcome of this application and OFMdFM is unable to confirm when a final decision on the bid will be made.

## Fences on Agriculture Land: Borders for By-Passes

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the required height for a fence on agriculture land that is being used as a border for a new by-pass, including the EU regulations that legislate for this.

**(AQW 29950/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Requirements associated with the provision of roadside fencing are set out within the Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works, which is jointly owned by the Highways Agency in England and the overseeing organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Volume one of the manual, Specification for Highway Works, sets out the various standards associated with the design and material specification for a range of fence types.

Overall heights can range from just over one metre for a wooden post and rail fence, to over two metres for a tensioned post and wire fence that is intended to stop deer passing. The type of fence specified depends on a number of factors, including the environment and the purpose the fence is meant to serve.

## 20mph Zones

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 29155/11-15, to detail the street names and constituencies where these schemes are operating.

**(AQW 29968/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Details of the street names and locations of the 20 mph zones implemented during 2011/12 and 2012/13 are shown in the table below:

### 20MPH ZONES IMPLEMENTED IN 2011/12 AND 2012/13

Year	Location
2011/2012	Drumannon Area, Omagh
	Lawnbrook Area, Omagh
	Drumcree Area, Cookstown
	Highfield Area, Magherafelt
	Derramore Avenue, Magherafelt
	Parkmore Area, Magherafelt
	Ashbrook, Strabane;
	Ferndale, Strabane

Year	Location
2012/2013	Castlefin Park, Castledearg
	Churchtown Park, Castledearg
	Crockett Park, Castledearg
	Hawthorn Park, Castledearg
	Hillview, Castledearg
	Young Crescent, Castledearg
	Millbrook Gardens, Castledearg
	Currans Brae, Moy
	Carrowshee Park, Lisnaskea
	Cleenish Park, Enniskillen
2012/2013	Melmount Gardens, Strabane
	Gallows Hill Area, Omagh
	Johnston Park, Omagh
	Kensington, Shandon & Cherryvalley Area, Belfast

In addition one 20 mph zone is proposed for implementation during 2013/14, at the Langley Road Estate, Ballynahinch.

### **Mullaghboy Road, Bellaghy: Gritting Schedule**

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the Mullaghboy Road, Bellaghy will be included in the gritting schedule, given the volume of traffic on the road, including traffic related to number of large businesses as well as school buses, and the safety concerns felt by local residents. **(AQW 30051/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I am pleased to confirm that the southern end of Mullaghboy Road, from the centre of Bellaghy to its junction with the Tamlaghduff Road, has been added to the salting schedule this season following an assessment of traffic volumes in the spring of 2013. Beyond that junction, however, traffic volumes are not sufficient to meet the criteria to warrant inclusion in the salting schedule, although there are suitable alternative treated routes available for through traffic.

### **Parking Permits: Holywood and Bangor**

**Mr Dunne** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed residents' parking permit scheme in Holywood and Bangor. **(AQO 5415/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department has received a number of requests for Residents' Parking Schemes in various parts of Northern Ireland.

Specifically in relation to Holywood, officials are currently carrying out an initial assessment of the eligibility of residential streets within the town centre for a Residents' Parking Scheme. Consultants have been engaged and are currently undertaking surveys in a number of streets in the town centre. A summary report will issue at the end of February 2014.

You may be aware the centre of Bangor has been identified as an area of parking restraint and my Department intends to progress Residents' Parking Schemes in some residential areas in due course.

However, I regret, I am currently not in a position to indicate a timescale, as this will depend, to some degree, on the successful implementation of the initial schemes being taken forward in Belfast.

### **NIW: Leadership**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures are in place to sustain the stability of the leadership of Northern Ireland Water.

**(AQO 5416/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I am satisfied that the Interim Chief Executive continues to provide effective leadership within Northern Ireland Water with the support of the Executive Team and the Board. My Department monitors closely the performance of Northern Ireland Water on a continuing basis.

A competition to fill the Chief Executive position on a permanent basis has just been launched. The interviews should be completed by the end of March.

### **Moneymore Bypass**

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration has been given to a bypass for Moneymore.

**(AQO 5417/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I am aware that Moneymore is the remaining settlement on the Omagh to M2 east-west trunk route that has yet to feature on any programme for the provision of a bypass. However, in the context of potential future major capital works road projects, I am also aware there are many settlements along the A29 north/south Link Corridor, where traffic congestion is more significant, for example, in Dungannon and Armagh.

At this time, a bypass for Moneymore has not been identified in the Strategic Road Improvement Programme being taken forward under the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, as agreed by the Executive.

Roads Service's current Strategic Road Improvement programme is likely to take in excess of 10 years to deliver, subject to funding and the successful completion of the necessary statutory procedures. The next Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland review may provide an opportunity for Roads Service to look at the prioritisation of new schemes. At that time, a bypass for Moneymore may be considered along with other existing and proposed schemes elsewhere in Northern Ireland.

As you are aware, the Executive in June 2013, approved the allocation of £40 million for the construction of the Magherafelt Bypass and I welcome your support for the Magherafelt Bypass scheme, ahead of other potential schemes in Northern Ireland.

### **Belfast Transport Hub**

**Ms McCorley** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposals for a Belfast Transport hub.

**(AQO 5418/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The Belfast Transport hub programme is expected to involve four elements: creating a state of the art multi-modal transport interchange; improvements to bus storage and maintenance facilities; centralization of Translink offices and commercial and regeneration options in the area.

A procurement exercise to appoint an integrated design team to begin work on the Master Plan is currently being undertaken by Translink for the whole site and to then take forward the preferred design solution. Tenders are due for return at the end of January 2014.

Translink has identified an extensive list of stakeholders for the project and is in the process of undertaking initial briefings. Translink is also preparing a Strategic Business Case for the whole

programme and working with Strategic Investment Board to identify the most beneficial way to finance the programme.

It is currently projected that site works may begin later in 2016, subject to funding and approvals, with a construction programme running into several years depending on the extent of the agreed redevelopment and the number of works phases required to undertake construction around an operational public facility.

The project has great potential in addressing the growing Public Transport demand, creating opportunities for land development and for creating a gateway to Belfast and Northern Ireland with potential tourism, business and job benefits. It is a great opportunity for community regeneration in the area.

## **TEN-T Funding**

**Ms McGahan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what projects his Department has identified as suitable for funding following the TEN-T Multi-Annual Call in December 2013.

**(AQO 5419/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The conditionality of calls is determined by the European Commission; and it follows that each and every call has its own unique characteristics. The challenge facing not only my Department, but every Executive Department is to identify, shape and submit applications for European funding in ways that react those conditionalities and are most likely to lead to successful bids for funds from within a highly competitive arena.

I am sure that my colleagues on the Committee for Regional Development who attended the call information day in Brussels will attest to the levels of interest and degree of competition that was clearly evident at the event.

Since I took the decision to establish a dedicated European Unit in my Department last July, over 15 million pounds of competitive European funds has been awarded for the upgrade to the A8. This success clearly proves that my Department is at the forefront of the Executive's collective efforts to avail of competitive funds and that my Department has the capability to operate effectively on the European stage.

The December call for proposals relates very specifically to studies that lead to the preparation of project portfolios to be implemented in the future. It does not address works.

Given this, I have instructed my officials to prepare an application for funding for a study to identify the means by which a programme of work to develop the Great Victoria Street rail and bus station can be most effectively implemented to create 'The Belfast Hub'. Such a study would be the first step towards the establishment of a fully integrated cross-border mainline train and bus facility which would provide amenities for pedestrians, cyclists, taxis and private car users alike as well as a seamless connection to the Rapid Transit System.

The study will be instrumental in identifying and evaluating options that will deliver sustainable transport outcomes that address accessibility from both passenger and network perspectives, alleviate existing congestion issues and strengthen connections to core networks and corridors.

The closing date for applications is the 11th March, and the formal announcement on financing decisions is likely to be in the Autumn.

## **Bus and Rail Passengers**

**Mr Cree** asked the Minister for Regional Development how the number of bus and rail passengers in 2013 compares to 2012.

**(AQO 5420/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I understand that in the 2013 calendar year there were over 67 million passengers journeys on bus, a small increase on the 2012 calendar year. On rail there were almost 13 million passenger journeys in 2013, an increase of over 1.5 million on the previous year.

Thus in total there were 80 million passenger journeys on Translink in the 2013 calendar year.

This confirms a positive trend on both bus and rail for that period.

## Rural Roads

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures Roads Service are taking to improve the condition of rural roads so as to reduce road traffic incidents.

**(AQO 5421/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** In order to comply with my Department's duty of care under Article 8 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, which places it under a duty to maintain all public roads in reasonable condition, Roads Service has put in place a set of Maintenance Standards for Safety and an inspection programme to ensure roads have a satisfactory level of skidding resistance, which reduces the risk of uncontrolled skids and improves braking efficiency. These standards are based on best practice, research, and consultation with both the public and other professional bodies and industry, and are designed to ensure a consistent service level and a safe highway, while offering value for money.

The procedures currently in operation establish frequencies for road inspections and specify response times for the repair of defects. Inspection frequencies vary according to the type of road with carriageways carrying low volumes of traffic inspected every 4 months. Response times specified for the repair of defects are dependent upon the severity of the defect and range from one calendar day, to routine inclusion in the next work programme for that particular route.

In addition, 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, which can be treated by engineering measures. 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.

My Department has invested, through a targeted collision remedial programme, approximately £3.5million since I came to office in May 2011, which has made a valuable contribution towards significantly reducing the number of fatal and serious collisions.

In addition over £20 million has now been allocated to roads maintenance as part of the January monitoring round. This additional funding will target structural maintenance on the local road network to help address the significant backlog and reduce the actual resurfacing cycles. It will also provide new drainage, some reconstruction and the resurfacing of around 160 kilometres of road.

This is a welcome boost for the public and the construction industry. Carrying out road improvements sustains hundreds of jobs every year and ensures the travelling public enjoy safer and more enjoyable journeys.

## Carrickfergus Waste Water Treatment Works

**Mr Dickson** asked the Minister for Regional Development what further investment is planned for the Carrickfergus Waste Water Treatment Works.

**(AQO 5422/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that a project is currently underway at Carrickfergus Wastewater Treatment Works which will deliver approximately £900k investment in base maintenance in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years. For the subsequent planning period covering 2015 to 2021, NIW has identified a further £2,400k of base maintenance work.

Base maintenance is capital investment and represents like for like replacement of assets rather than increasing works capacity or improving the works to meet changes to environmental standards. Carrickfergus Wastewater Treatment Works is performing satisfactorily and upgrades to increase capacity or improve compliance performance are not currently envisaged.

The base maintenance investment is in addition to the routine planned maintenance which is undertaken by NIW staff directly.

### **Unadopted Developments**

**Mr Boylan** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on his Department's progress on unadopted developments.

**(AQO 5423/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department continues to make good progress on the adoption of roads and sewers in housing developments. Where possible, this has been achieved by working with developers or other responsible parties to have the new streets completed. When required, my Department has also used enforcement measures and called in guarantee bonds to fund works to bring roads and sewers infrastructure up to adoption standard.

In the twelve months up to 1 September 2013, my Department adopted over 64 kilometres of housing development roads into the public road network. The majority were completed by developers, but enforcement was also used in a number of instances where completion through the normal processes was not possible.

In the same period, officials issued 74 Article 11 enforcement notices, under the Private Streets Order, and 84 developments had their streets completed as a result of successful enforcement actions.

Good progress has also been made in tackling developments, categorised as backlog sites. In the year from 1 April 2012 until 31 March 2013, 297 backlog sites have been completed and adopted.

In summary, significant progress has been made in the adoption of new housing development roads and sewers and I remain committed to making further progress to help resolve the problem of unfinished development roads.

### **Winter Weather: Funding**

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has sought any additional funding in light of the recent adverse weather conditions.

**(AQO 5424/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My officials are currently assessing the damage caused by the recent tidal surge, which affected not only the Ards Peninsula, but other parts of our coastline and adjoining roads.

It could be some time before the full impact is known, necessary repairs completed and the full cost realised. However, I can confirm that remedial works have already begun at some locations and additional preparatory work is underway in advance of the commencement of works at other locations.

As officials are still assessing the extent of the damage caused, specific bids for further funding may be required and will hopefully be considered sympathetically at a later date, if repairs cannot be funded from within existing budgets.

One of the most badly affected locations was Whitechurch Road, Ballywalter, where one lane of the carriageway collapsed from the impact of the tidal surge.

I am pleased to report that work to reinstate the carriageway and provide coastal protection to that section of road is progressing well and has been helped by favourable tides. I am hopeful this work can be completed and the road re-opened to through-traffic sooner than the anticipated 3 month timeframe. However, this will be dependent upon favourable weather conditions and no unforeseen difficulties

being encountered. I will be in a better position to advise on this after next week, when work on the beach area should be complete.

I am also pleased my Department received an additional £20 million for roads maintenance as part of the January monitoring round. This additional funding will target structural maintenance on the local road network to help address the significant backlog, and reduce the timeframe for resurfacing works. It will also provide new drainage, some reconstruction and the resurfacing of around 160 kilometres of road.

This is a welcome boost for the public and the construction industry. Carrying out road improvements sustains hundreds of jobs every year and ensures the travelling public enjoy safer and more comfortable journeys.

## Department for Social Development

### Housing in East Antrim

**Mr Dickson** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are waiting to be allocated housing in East Antrim, broken down by estate.

**(AQW 29758/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development):** The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by estate. However, the table below details the number of applicants on the waiting list at 1 January 2014 for the Housing Executive District Office areas that cover the East Antrim constituency by Common Landlord Area.

Applicants first preference registered on the Waiting List as at 1 January 2014 by NIHE District Office/ Common Landlord Areas

<b>Newtownabbey<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Applicants</b>
Abbeyglan	13
Abbeyville	32
Bawnmore/Old Mill	67
Bleach Green	16
Glenville	45
Hightown	18
Longlands	50
Rathcoole	432
Rathfern	25
Rushpark	151
<b>Newtownabbey<sup>1</sup> Total</b>	<b>849</b>

<b>Larne</b>	<b>Applicants</b>
Ballycarry	9
Clough/Croft/Beachland	49
Ferris Park	15



<b>Larne</b>	<b>Applicants</b>
Glenarm, Glenview, Parkview/Munie	11
Glynn	14
Islandmagee	6
Linn Road	114
Magheramourne	1
Millbrook	7
Old Glenarm Road/Seacourt	27
Sallagh Park	13
Riverdale	14
Larne Town	151
<b>Larne Total</b>	<b>431</b>

<b>Newtownabbey<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Applicants</b>
Ballyclare	229
Ballyduff	122
Ballynure	7
Doagh/ Kelburn Park	21
Glenvarna/ Glengormley	127
Hyde Park/ Parkmount	13
Jennings Drive /Monkstown	1
Monkstown	123
New Mossley	139
Oakview/Roughfort	3
Old Mossley	29
Queens Park /Avenue	75
<b>Newtownabbey<sup>2</sup> Total</b>	<b>889</b>

<b>Carrickfergus</b>	<b>Applicants</b>
Carrickfergus Central	62
Castlemara	21
Davy Street	2
Drumhoy/ Salia/ Ederney	17
Dunloskin Central	10
Eden	80
Glenfield	11

<b>Carrickfergus</b>	<b>Applicants</b>
Greenisland	108
Scotch Quarter/ Green Edge/ McKeens	10
Sunnylands	205
Taylor's Ave	10
Victoria	87
Whitehead	85
Windmill	96
Woodburn Lower	132
Woodburn Upper	11
<b>Carrickfergus Total</b>	<b>947</b>

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.

### **Disability Living Allowance: Medical Exam**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Social Development to publish the guidance used by examining medical practitioners to determine eligibility through medical examination for people applying for Disability Living Allowance; and when this guidance was last updated.

**(AQW 29779/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The guidance used by Examining Medical Practitioners is owned by the Department for Work and Pensions. The Department for Work and Pensions have not published the guidance. Currently there are no plans to publish the guidance. My Department could not publish the guidance without the approval of the Department for Work and Pensions. The guidance was last updated in February 2013.

Examining Medical Practitioners do not determine eligibility to Disability Living Allowance. It is Decision-Makers in the Social Security Agency who determine entitlement to Disability Living Allowance, based on all available evidence including, where appropriate, information gathered through an Examining Medical Practitioner report.

### **Disability Living Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance: Medical Exams**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Social Development whether all Atos Healthcare staff carry out medical examinations of both Disability Living Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance, or are different staff used specifically for each type of benefit examination.

**(AQW 29780/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Atos Healthcare allocates their medical resource based on operational requirements. Each healthcare professional may perform different medical assessments across various social security benefit areas. Medical assessments in relation to Disability Living Allowance are currently carried out by doctors only. Medical assessments in relation to Employment and Support Allowance are completed by either a nurse or a doctor. Some medical conditions, mostly central neuropathy conditions, can only be assessed by a doctor.

## Armed Forces Liaison Forum

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to establish an Armed Forces Liaison Forum within his Department.

**(AQW 29903/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** I understand that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has established an Armed Forces Liaison Forum to provide a single point of contact with Defence Medical Services and veterans' organisations. This reflects the size and complexity of the organisations providing health and social care services in Northern Ireland as well as the wide range of such services being provided to service and ex-service personnel. Given the more modest scale of Housing Executive and Social Security Agency involvement with service and ex-service personnel, I have no plans to at this point to establish an Armed Forces Liaison Forum within my Department. I will however, keep this situation under review.

## Pay as You Go Oil Scheme

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on any progress on a pay as you go oil scheme.

**(AQW 29904/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** My Department undertook a pilot with Kingspan Renewables and Carillion Energy Services for a Pay as You Go for Oil system. The pilot commenced in February 2012 and the participants included Housing Executive tenants, householders who had been assisted through the Warm Homes Scheme and private referrals. The homes were in Dungannon, Coalisland, Newcastle and Camlough. The technology was installed in 17 low income households with the aim of testing the technology and the process. Carillion and the Housing Executive both completed separate evaluations of the pilot. The convenience of using the Pay as You Go for Oil system was highlighted as a major benefit. However, the results of the pilot survey were disappointing regarding the proportion of participants benefiting from lower oil costs. Whilst Departmental economists have serious concerns about the feasibility of the Pay as You Go Oil scheme from a cost/benefit perspective, I have asked officials to continue engagement with Kingspan and Carillion as they develop their proposal for a Pay as You Go oil system

## Northern Ireland Affairs Committee: Evidence

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Social Development, further to his evidence provided to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on 24 April 2013 and in light of the academic research commissioned by his Department, to detail (i) what steps are anticipated to assist ex-service personnel in meeting their housing needs; and (ii) how this compares with provision elsewhere in the UK.

**(AQW 29905/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The team commissioned by my Department to undertake independent academic research on social housing allocations took a range of stakeholders' views and presented these in their reports, before reaching their independent conclusions on that issue.

In terms of (i) the steps anticipated to assist ex-service personnel in meeting their housing needs, I have not yet taken a view on the academic team's proposals for change. However, following my evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, my officials wrote to the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in October 2013, setting out the Department's expectations as to how the Housing Executive currently deals with applications from members and former members of the Armed Forces. This communication set out the Department's view that the NIHE should give applications from former members of the Armed Forces fair and sympathetic consideration in accordance with the rules of the Housing Selection Scheme, including that:

- Former members of the Armed Forces should have the same priority for housing as others with a similar level of housing need.

- The NIHE should not impose residential qualifications which put applicants who have to vacate military-provided housing at a disadvantage compared with other applicants.
  - Persons returning after a number of years to the area in which they lived before joining the Armed Forces should be treated no less sympathetically than any other applicant.
  - The Housing Selection Scheme requirement for applicants to have a ‘substantial connection’ with Northern Ireland and that, to establish such a connection, any period of residence here must have been by the applicant’s own choice, must not be interpreted in a way that excludes persons who have been based in Northern Ireland as members of the Armed Forces from applying under the Scheme.
- (ii) Provision elsewhere in the UK varies across the jurisdictions. For example, in Scotland, residence in a local authority area because of service in the Armed Forces does not constitute a local connection for housing purposes. However, guidance issued by the devolved administration in Scotland asks housing authorities to give sympathetic consideration to applications from persons being discharged from the Armed Forces even if they have not established a local connection, as well as to applications from “former wives” of members of the Armed Forces who are required to vacate service accommodation.

In England, The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 require that local housing authorities do not use “local connection” as a criterion in deciding whether certain descriptions of persons connected to the Armed Forces are qualified to be allocated housing accommodation. The Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 require local housing authorities to frame their allocation schemes in such a way that certain descriptions of persons connected to the Armed Forces have additional preference for housing.

### Housing Executive: Recruitment

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) number; and (ii) percentage of people described as (a) Protestant; (b) Roman Catholic; and (c) Non determined, who were recruited to the Housing Executive in each year since 2008.

**(AQW 29922/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The table below details the religious composition of staff recruited to the Housing Executive since 2008.

Year	Total Recruited	Protestant		Roman Catholic		Non Determined	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2008	127	52	40.9	51	40.2	24	18.9
2009	178	60	33.7	95	53.4	23	12.9
2010	98	47	48	40	40.8	11	11.2
2011	114	57	50	37	32.5	20	17.5
2012	69	22	31.9	34	49.3	13	18.8
2013 *	52	16	30.8	26	50	10	19.2

\* During 2013 – 220 individuals were transferred to the NIHE under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (known as TUPE). An exercise to determine the community backgrounds of these individuals is currently underway as part of the annual monitoring process.

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.

## Response Maintenance Contracts: Gateway Review

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Social Development whether the independent Gateway Review into the management of response maintenance contracts has been completed; and if so, with what result. **(AQW 29927/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that the independent Gateway Review is scheduled to take place on 1- 3 April 2014 and any recommendations from the review will be available two or three weeks thereafter.

## Requests for Terminations of Contracts

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many requests for terminations of contracts have been made by contractors in respect of Northern Ireland Housing Executive response maintenance contracts which permit Low Performance Damages; (ii) how many requests were granted; and (iii) to list those granted, including the reason for acceptance. **(AQW 29928/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to (i) three contractors sought termination of their Response Maintenance contracts; (ii) only one of these requests was granted by the Housing Executive; and (iii) the reason for granting termination of the West Belfast Contract was due to the financial position and stability of the contractor (Mel Davison Construction). Several months later the contractor was placed into administration.

## Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Performance Damages

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the current response maintenance contracts, for his assessment of the proportionality that is being applied within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to the application of Low Performance Damages. **(AQW 29929/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that against the overall expenditure in response maintenance contracts where Low Performance Damages (LPD) can be applied the LPD taken to date represents 0.36% of the spend. The assessment of the LPD is as per the terms of the contract and the level is relatively low compared against the expenditure.

## Damp in Housing Executive Properties

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister for Social Development what measures his Department intends to take to treat damp in Housing Executive properties which are programmed for kitchen replacement schemes, in order to prevent damage to new kitchen units. **(AQW 29938/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that where they encounter dampness in their properties which are programmed for kitchen replacement schemes, they generally treat them by either dry lining the walls or utilising the services of specialists by way of an injected Damp Proof Course.

## Double Glazing Windows in Social Housing

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister for Social Development what work will take place in (i) 2013/14; and (ii) 2014/15 on the replacement of double glazing windows in social housing. **(AQW 29952/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that due to the delay in appointing the double glazing and planned schemes contractors there will be no new double glazing installation or replacement schemes started in 2013/14. The double glazing contract has now been awarded and, subject to works starting on site early in the new financial year, the Housing Executive plan to address some 11,000 dwellings in line with the Programme for Government target for double glazing in social

housing by March 2015. The Housing Executive's double glazing programme in 2014/15 will be focused on upgrading single glazed and partially double glazed properties up to full double glazing. There may also be a small element of replacement of existing double glazing in External Cyclical Maintenance schemes depending on condition.

### Updating of Computers: Spend

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister for Social Development how much the Housing Executive is spending on updating its computers.

**(AQW 29967/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that a review which was carried out under its "Technology Refresh Strategy" concluded that a major upgrade of their desktop environment (hardware and software) was required and consequently this was included in their 2013/14 IT Work Programme and their IT budget plan.

The total cost for the upgrade is £2.044m which equates to approximately £680 per desktop. This cost includes hardware, support/maintenance over the five years, software, training, secure data destruction of the legacy hardware and delivery to a local charity.

### Double Glazing in Housing Executive Properties: Contracts Awarded

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister for Social Development to list the contracts awarded in the current financial year for the installation of double glazing in Housing Executive properties.

**(AQW 29970/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that the Double Glazing Framework and the subsequent secondary competitions have now completed and that the following contractors have been successful in the following lots:

Lot 1	Belfast	PK Murphy Construction Ltd.
Lot 2	South	Bann Ltd
Lot 3	North	Dixon Contracts Ltd.

### Disability Living Allowance

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 29596/11-15, how many cases in each category were decided at appeal after an initial refusal or reduction.

**(AQW 30085/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested. The data used in the response to AQW 29596/1-15 related to the outcome of Disability Living Allowance new claims and renewals at the initial decision stage. Any subsequent activity on a claimant's Disability Living Allowance case, such as a more advantageous reconsideration or appeal outcome, is captured separately. The IT system, used to administer Disability Living Allowance, is not configured to associate any subsequent changes in entitlement with the initial outcome decision information at an individual case level.

### Fort George Site in Derry

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the development plans for the Fort George site, excluding the North West Regional Science Park.

**(AQW 30117/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The agreed regeneration plan for Londonderry – "The One Plan" – states that "the vision for the long term future of Fort George with its close proximity to the Knowledge Corridor is a

prestige technology and / or knowledge intensive park. This may include a mix of office, education, research activities together with residential and leisure use”.

My Department’s immediate priority is to secure Outline Planning Permission for the Development Framework which will deliver the vision for the site as set out in the One Plan. An anticipated timeframe of 10-15 years to fully develop the site is identified in the Development Framework.

Once Outline Planning Permission is in place the next steps will be to:

- remediate the contamination on the site;
- undertake infrastructure works to improve access to the site and service the developable plots; and
- secure third party interest in developing the plots.

The remediation works are expected to be complete by late 2015 enabling infrastructure works and marketing of the site to then begin. The further development phases planned for the site are:

- a mixed use development on the Riverfront at the Pennyburn Inlet;
- multi storey car park;
- a mixed use development at the Southern portion of the site;
- a mixed use development on the Strand Road frontage; and
- a mixed use development adjacent to the Hibernia building where the Project Kelvin Telehouse is located.

## Charitable Status

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the procedure that a commercial enterprise must follow to gain charitable status.

**(AQW 30221/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Any organisation wishing to obtain charitable status in Northern Ireland is required to register with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. It is for the Commission to determine whether that organisation is or is not a charity.

To register as a charity, an organisation must be established for charitable purposes only and be subject to the law of Northern Ireland. The charitable purposes must be exclusively charitable; an organisation cannot have some purposes that are charitable and some that are not. A charitable purpose must fall within the descriptions of purposes in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and be for the public benefit. Charities may undertake trading or commercial activities but these must contribute directly to the furtherance of their charitable purposes.

## People on Benefits: Christmas Bonus

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many of those eligible people have still to receive the £10 Christmas bonus with their benefits for December 2013; (ii) how many have received the payment; and (iii) to detail the reasons for the delay of these payments.

**(AQW 30243/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Social Security Agency uses IT systems from the Department for Work and Pensions to administer benefits in Northern Ireland. In virtually all cases where the claimant is eligible to the £10 Christmas Bonus, it is paid automatically through these systems in December each year. Procedures are also in place to identify and pay eligible claimants whose cases are maintained clerically. A very small number of claimants who qualify because they receive Employment Support Allowance (Contribution Based) may not have received their payment automatically this year. DWP are still investigating the cause of this. All other Christmas Bonus payments were paid as normal and at the end of December 2013, 482,700 people in Northern Ireland had received the payment.

If a claimant thinks they should qualify for the payment but has not received it, they can contact the Northern Ireland Pension Centre or the relevant local Social Security/Jobs and Benefits office.

## Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

### **Streaming of Live Broadcasts of Assembly Proceedings to iPhones and iPads**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Assembly Commission to detail any plans it has to stream live broadcasts of Assembly Proceedings to iPhones and iPads.

**(AQW 29874/11-15)**

**Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** A business case has been developed to procure a new internet video streaming service that will address the issue of smartphone and tablet compatibility so that the Assembly's video and/or audio streams can be made accessible on a wider range of devices and platforms (including iPhones and iPads). The new service will also increase the number of available feeds from two to three simultaneous live streams capable of carrying video and/or audio.

It is planned that the new service will be in place for the 2014/2015 session. Members will be advised via All Party Notice once the new service is available.



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