

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

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Written Answers to Questions

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They should be sent to:

The Editor of Debates, Room 248, Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX.
Tel: 028 9052 1135 · e-mail: simon.burrowes@niassembly.gov.uk

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

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 14 February 2014

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Listed Buildings on the Maze/Long Kesh Site: Remedial Work

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the listed buildings on the Maze site are intended to be closed from September 2013 for remedial work; (ii) what remedial work is intended and at what cost; and (iii) whether it is agreed that the buildings will not reopen.

(AQW 24938/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the process for development at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQW 25223/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what agreements were in place to progress the proposals to develop the now withdrawn Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQW 25224/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Maze/Long Kesh

Ms P Bradley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the importance of progressing the development of those elements of the Maze/Long Kesh site for which there is broad community support.

(AQO 4595/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Maze/Long Kesh

Mr Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether there is agreement on development of the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQO 4598/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Maze/Long Kesh

Mrs Cameron asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they are ensuring that there is community confidence in any decision to move forward with the peace building development at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQO 4600/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister who they consulted with on plans for the Victims and Survivors Service.

(AQW 27713/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A number of working groups were set up to look at the establishment of the VSS, which included representatives of victims' groups. The working groups covered the following remit:

- individual assessment
- organisational structure
- standards
- service delivery
- management information systems
- communications
- victims groups interaction.

Their findings were used as a base to take forward the policy development for the Service.

A public consultation on the Victims and Survivors Service took place from 16 August to 9 November 2009.

Additionally, a public consultation on the Draft Strategic Approach for Victims and Survivors was published at the beginning of August 2008. The consultation ended on 31 October 2008.

Programme for Government 2011-15: Health and Wellbeing

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the Programme for Government 2011-15 commitment to improve health and wellbeing, (i) when wellbeing will be defined; (ii) what is likely to be included in the definition; and (iii) how wellbeing will be measured.

(AQW 27793/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In 2010, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) commenced a programme of work to measure wellbeing across a series of domains, including the measurement of personal wellbeing.

The domain that relates to Personal Wellbeing contains the following indicators: satisfaction with life overall; happiness yesterday; how worthwhile the things one does are; and anxiety yesterday. In addition, an indicator relating to population mental wellbeing (the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) was recently added to this domain. The Warwick Edinburgh scale is also used by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Mental Wellbeing scale in its annual Health Survey, and it is intended to use this scale as one of the measures that will be monitored under the new Public Health Strategic Framework and Suicide Prevention/Positive Mental Wellbeing strategy.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is working closely with ONS officials to ensure that our interests are incorporated into the ONS wellbeing programme. Following a recent Carnegie UK Trust conference held in Belfast, the Minister of Finance and Personnel asked NISRA officials to publish the Northern Ireland data for the UK measures where they are available. This work is ongoing.

The new cross-cutting Public Health Strategic Framework, to be submitted shortly for Executive approval, will be one of the building blocks for the achievement of a number of PfG commitments including Priority 2 – Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Wellbeing. The Framework will refer to World Health Organisation definitions of health and wellbeing. A cross-cutting set of key indicators to measure progress on the Framework has been developed in collaboration with other departments.

OFMDFM is considering, in conjunction with other departments, approaches to the evaluation of Delivering Social Change, which could include a measurement of wellbeing. This work is in a development phase and it is too early to determine how the measurement of wellbeing will be operationalised or if it would be appropriate to do so.

Maze/Long Kesh Site: Permanent Roads Infrastructure Links

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether a business case has been submitted by MLKDC for permanent roads infrastructure links to the Maze site; if so (ii) when it was submitted; (iii) what is its present status and the likely timeframe; and (iv) how it is impacted by the decision not to proceed with the Peace and Reconciliation Centre.

(AQW 28091/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A roads infrastructure business case was submitted to the Department by the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation in October 2013.

Officials are currently reviewing the business case. At this early stage the approval process timeframe cannot be estimated.

There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Maze/Long Kesh: Progress

Mr B McCrea asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress made on the wider development of the Maze/Longkesh site.

(AQO 5013/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Goods, Facilities and Services Legislation

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 28824/11-15, to detail, and for their assessment of the implications of the various options available.

(AQW 29471/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This is an extremely complex area and, as such, we are considering the content of the proposed legislation.

Our intention is that the legislation will prohibit treatment that amounts to unfair discrimination, without removing any of the protections and privileges currently available to different age groups. To achieve this, we are examining the exceptions that will be needed to ensure that appropriate differential treatment for members of various age groups can continue.

In light of the issues and sensitivities surrounding the proposed legislation, we do not think it would be helpful or prudent, at this time, to disclose details of the matters under consideration.

Ebrington Site, Londonderry

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of expressions of interest received from private investors in relation to the Ebrington site, Derry; and to list the sectors to which these investors belong.

(AQW 29673/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As of 31 December 2013, Ilex had 68 live enquiries from a range of organisations including private sector, community and voluntary sector, and public organisations in relation to establishing operations on Ebrington. From this total of 68 enquiries, Ilex received 41 formal written expressions of interest, of which 28 are from the private sector. These formal expressions of interest from private sector are representative of the following areas:

- Culture and creative media
- Other retail/Service industry/Commercial
- Food/beverage
- Residential

Maze/Long Kesh Site: Red Sky Group

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Red Sky Group has been involved in the security guarding and monitoring of the Maze/Long Kesh site; and if so, to list the dates of this contract.

(AQW 29767/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Red Sky Group provided security guarding services for the Maze/Long Kesh site between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2011.

The Red Sky security contract was subject to open competition and let through the Central Procurement Directorate, DFP

Maze Long/Kesh Development Corporation

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the business case submitted by the Maze Long/Kesh Development Corporation for permanent roads infrastructure links to the site has been approved; and how it is impacted by the abandonment of the Peace and Reconciliation Centre.

(AQW 29803/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Former Ballykelly Army Base

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what were the estimated total costs for (i) security; (ii) utilities; (iii) maintenance; and (iv) other costs in connection with the former Ballykelly Army Base for the year ending 31 December 2013.

(AQW 29959/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The costs in relation to the former Ballykelly Army base from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013 are as follows:-

Security	£260,021
(ii) Utilities	£118,438
(iii) Maintenance	£211,357
(iv) Other costs	£12,689
Total	£602,505

Strategic Investment Board: Bonuses

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail any bonuses or performance related pay paid to members of the Strategic Investment Board since 2008/09.

(AQW 30226/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No bonuses or performance-related pay have been paid to members of the Strategic Investment Board in relation to the financial years since 2008/09.

Development of the Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mr Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the development of the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQW 30239/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Maze/Long Kesh Site: Potential Tenants

Mr Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the potential tenants that have shown an interest in the Maze/Long Kesh site, given the success of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society Show.

(AQW 30240/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current agreement on these issues. We continue to discuss a way forward.

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company: Chief Executive

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the vacancy for the Chief Executive at Ilex Urban Regeneration Company will be filled.

(AQW 30255/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ilex Board is currently running a publicly advertised competition for the Chief Executive post. The closing date for applications was 17 January 2014 and it is expected that the interviews will take place in mid-February. Interim arrangements remain in place for the Chief Executive position.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Victims and Survivors Service is still accepting applications for direct financial assistance through the Individual Needs Programme.

(AQW 30335/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Applications to the Victims and Survivors Service Individual Needs Programme: Scheme 6 – Financial Assistance that were received before 30 June 2013 have been processed. The Scheme, however, remains closed to new applications for the remainder of the financial year. It will re-open in 2014/2015.

Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People Strategy

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the consultation time of five weeks on the Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People strategy.

(AQW 30376/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have made the decision to hold a 10-week consultation.

Ebrington Square, Londonderry: Promotional Activities

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when consideration is being given to displays, lighting and other promotional activities in Ebrington Square, Londonderry, what consultations will be held with local representatives to ensure such activities are broadly acceptable in the local community.

(AQW 30404/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: All events held at Ebrington must comply with the terms and conditions for use of the space, as determined by Ilex.

As part of the event approval process, Ilex engages with the local community regarding forthcoming activities or events and expects the event organisers to also engage directly with local residents groups.

Unite Youth

Mr I McCrea asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the recent Unite Youth event at the Waterfront Hall including the progress made on the scheme design.

(AQO 5494/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The United Youth Design Day represented a tremendous success in terms of stakeholder engagement within the context of the co-design process in developing the United Youth Programme. The event attracted over 250 attendees from a wide range of stakeholders including around 60 young people, who actively participated in the day. It was this active participation on the part of everyone who attended, but particularly the young people, that ensured the success of the event and generated a wealth of insightful and informative feedback.

All of this valuable material will be used to help build the final design of the United Youth Programme. A dedicated United Youth Advisor has now been appointed to facilitate the next stage in the design and we also announced last week a new pilot programme specifically aimed at young people aged 18-24 who are not in employment, education or training who will have the opportunity to participate in the Headstart programme which will inform the design and structure of the United Youth Programme.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Ministerial and Special Adviser Travel: Expenditure

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

(AQW 30185/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The total expenditure in 2013 is as follows:

■ Minister	-	£6,695
■ Special Adviser	-	£3,393

Mid Ulster Constituency: Farms

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the total number; and (ii) the proportion of the Northern Ireland total that this represents of (a) cattle; (b) sheep; (c) pig; and (d) poultry farms in the Mid Ulster constituency.

(AQW 30194/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on farm numbers is collected by DARD as part of the annual June Agricultural and Horticultural Survey. The number of farms with cattle, sheep, pigs, or poultry in Mid Ulster and the north of Ireland is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Number of farms in Mid Ulster constituency with selected enterprises, June 2012

Farms	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry
Mid Ulster	2,501	901	82	106
North of Ireland	20,434	8,782	547	724
Percentage of farms in Mid Ulster	12	10	15	15

Mid Ulster Constituency: Farm Labour Workforce

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an estimate of the overall farm labour headcount in the Mid Ulster constituency; and to detail the proportion this represents of the overall farm labour workforce in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 30195/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on Agricultural labour is collected by DARD as part of the annual June Agricultural and Horticultural Survey. Total farm labour (headcount basis) in the north of Ireland including farmers and spouses was 47,464 in June 2012. Of this an estimated 5,206 people, equivalent to 11 per cent, worked in the Mid Ulster constituency.

Mid Ulster Constituency: Crops

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the total area; and (ii) the proportion of the Northern Ireland total that this represents of (a) cereal; (b) grass; and (c) horticultural crops in the Mid Ulster constituency.

(AQW 30196/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Information on land use is collected by DARD as part of the annual June Agricultural and Horticultural Survey. The total area of cereal, grass and horticultural crops grown in Mid Ulster and the North of Ireland is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Area of cereal, grass, horticultural crops in Mid Ulster (ha), June 2012

	Cereal	Grass	Horticulture ¹
Mid Ulster	2,647	76,056	46
North of Ireland	37,066	779,824	2,907
Percentage grown in Mid Ulster	7	10	2

1 Horticulture includes Fruit, Vegetables and Flowers

Agri-food Strategy Going for Growth

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment will be conducted for the Agri-food Strategy Going for Growth.

(AQW 30229/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Going for Growth is the report of the industry-led Agri-Food Strategy Board. The report provides advice to Ministers on action needed for the sustainable growth of the agri-food sector. The report is very extensive in scope and aspiration and it contains over 100 recommendations, some of which are likely to have environmental implications. Indeed, the report itself recognises the need for growth of the sector to be sustainable and makes a number of recommendations to underpin this, including the identification of sustainable production methods, low carbon business practices and a regional land management strategy.

Relevant Departments and their associated agencies have had an opportunity to assess the report's recommendations and provide their views. The DETI Minister and I have recently brought forward proposals to the Executive on the way forward, which include a plan identifying action needed, responsibilities and timeframes for delivery.

In developing our proposals, we considered the potential implications of the report in terms of sustainable development and conducted a formal, high level environmental screening exercise. We also sought legal advice on meeting the requirements of the European directive 2001/42/EC12 "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment" (SEA Directive). The conclusion, taking account of that advice, is that the Going for Growth report itself does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in advance of Executive agreement on the way forward. However, any specific plans or projects developed as part of the implementation of Going for Growth must ensure that agri-food growth is delivered and sustained within the capacity of our natural environment and the objectives of the relevant EU environmental directives and, where appropriate, include completion of an SEA.

The DETI Minister and I hope to make an announcement on the way forward on Going for Growth in the near future.

Department Headquarters in Ballykelly

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) when a business plan will be published for the transfer of her departmental headquarters to Ballykelly; and (ii) whether she has had discussions with the Minister for Regional Development to establishing a rail halt at the site. **(AQW 30266/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: The business case for the relocation of my departmental headquarters to Ballykelly is currently undergoing the process of internal assurance and is not yet ready for publication.

I met with the Minister of Regional Development on 21 January 2014 to discuss the provision of a rail halt at Ballykelly. I have agreed to meet again with Minister Kennedy to discuss the matter further.

Departmental Fisheries Division

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the relocation of her Department's Fisheries Division. **(AQW 30267/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: As you are aware at last year's Balmoral Show I announced my intention to relocate the headquarters of Fisheries Division to South Down. My officials commissioned DFP Properties Division to identify suitable accommodation in South Down. That work is now complete and only one location across the South Down constituency was identified as potentially suitable. This location is the Downshire Civic Centre, Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road, Downpatrick.

My officials are now considering the viability of relocating Fisheries Division to this locality. DFP Properties Division have entered into negotiations with Down District Council on lease costs and fit out requirements.

Sustainable Development Strategy: Northern Ireland's Inshore Fisheries

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland's Inshore Fisheries. **(AQW 30268/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: During 2013, my Department undertook a full consultation exercise on a proposed "Sustainable Development Strategy" for our Inshore Fisheries.

Officials are currently finalising a Departmental response to the comments received from stakeholders including developing a formal strategy proposal which will be discussed with stakeholders by the end of March. The consultation process has indicated consensus for the creation of an Inshore Fisheries

Management Group to advise DARD on fisheries management practices; economic and environmental sustainability; data collection; and, the increased use of technology.

Proposed Offshore Windfarm: County Down

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the proposed offshore windfarm to be located off the County Down coast.

(AQW 30270/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware of the Wind Resource Zone proposed by Crown Estates off the Co. Down coast and share the concerns of the fishing industry that a large development in this area could have a significant impact on fishing activity.

At this stage First Flight Wind do not have firm proposals before Departments and intend to complete pre-application surveys a little later in 2014.

My officials have been in discussion with First Flight Wind and fisheries interests and I am aware that arrangements are in place to compensate fishermen for any disruption during this survey work and I understand fishermen have recently agreed these arrangements with the developer.

My Department has worked with Seafish and AFBINI to review existing fisheries data and quantify fishing effort and value within the Crown Estates wind resource zone in the Fishramp report, and my officials will continue to refine such information so that I am able to make informed decisions if a firm proposal emerges.

Areas of Natural Constraint

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much of the land presently classified as a Less Favoured Area will not, on present proposals, be included in the new Areas of Natural Constraint.

(AQW 30302/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The latest state of play on the designation of Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) was published on the DARD website in December 2013 and can be accessed at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/grants-and-funding/common-agricultural-policy-reform.htm>.

The EU designation procedure and criteria are relatively prescriptive, but further clarification is required from the EU Commission on their interpretation and application before further work can be carried out (using the most up-to-date data) to create the new designation. Therefore, this is still very much a work in progress and, at this stage, it is not possible to advise how much of the land presently classified as a Less Favoured Area will not be included in the new ANC.

Areas of Natural Constraint

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why so much of the land historically included in the Less Favoured Area designation is being excluded from the new proposed Areas of Natural Constraint designation.

(AQW 30303/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The methodology defined by Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 and EU Commission guidance for designation of Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) is fairly prescriptive. The designation is a two stage process, the first stage being the application of biophysical criteria to eligible agricultural land and the second a fine tuning exercise to remove those administrative units where it can be demonstrated that the constraint has been overcome. Based on the mapping undertaken to date, it is this second stage (i.e. fine tuning) which reduces the area historically included in the LFA designation to the greatest extent. This is explained in detail in a progress paper published on the DARD website, which can be accessed at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/grants-and-funding/common-agricultural-policy-reform.htm>.

My officials are seeking clarification on a number of issues from the EU Commission, particularly in relation to the application of this second stage of the mapping process, before further mapping simulations are undertaken. Therefore, this is still a work in progress.

Areas of Natural Constraint: Criteria

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether applying standards of output as a criteria for inclusion in the new Areas of Natural Constraint over large areas is resulting in significant areas of low output being excluded because they have been batched with areas of high output, and vice versa, resulting in inequity.

(AQW 30305/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department published a progress report on the designation of Areas of Natural Constraint on the DARD website in December 2013. This can be accessed at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/grants-and-funding/common-agricultural-policy-reform.htm>. The report included simulation maps illustrating the impact of applying Standard Output as a fine tuning methodology at electoral ward level as defined in the EU Commission guidance.

Work exploring the use of fine tuning is continuing and my officials are currently seeking clarification from the EU Commission on a number of issues related to the application of the fine tuning methodology. The overall ANC designation process, as defined in Regulation (EU) No. 1305/2013, requires compliance “at the level of a clearly delineated local unit which covers a single clear contiguous geographical area with a definable economic and administrative identity”. This requirement derives from a similar World Trade Organisation obligation. That, therefore, requires designation at the electoral ward or townland level.

Mapping to date has not uncovered evidence of significant areas of low output being excluded because they have been batched with areas of high output. As the mapping process continues to develop, my officials will ensure that the EU requirements are followed. The final map must be approved by the EU Commission.

Rural Development Programme Expenditure

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Rural Development Programme expenditure, under Axis 3, is on target for spend.

(AQW 30321/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rural Development Programme expenditure under Axis 3 is on target. Indeed I am pleased to say that the Programme is now consistently achieving its agreed quarterly expenditure targets, and is funding many excellent projects in rural communities.

Rural Broadband

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 25684/11-15 and AQW 28982/11-15, for an update on the process.

(AQW 30341/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I understand from the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment Minister that the evaluation of the bid received in relation to this project has taken longer than expected and has involved seeking a number of clarifications. As this process is still ongoing I am unable to provide details as this may prejudice the procurement process. However, I am confident that these will be completed shortly.

Agri-Food Loan Scheme

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what role her Department has played with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in the Agri-Food Loan Scheme launched in October 2013.

(AQW 30379/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Agri-Food Strategy Board's report Going for Growth makes over 100 recommendations covering a wide range of themes, including access to finance for the sector.

All departments and agencies have had an opportunity to assess the report recommendations and several will play a role in delivering on the agreed way forward. Where possible and appropriate, the DETI Minister and I have identified early actions to address agreed recommendations within our respective remits. The purpose of the Agri-Food Loan Scheme is to provide access to banking finance for producers engaged in integrated supply chains to increase supply of primary produce for processors. The Scheme will help agri-food businesses seize the immediate opportunities presented by retailers' increased demand for locally sourced meat. Given the nature of the Scheme, DETI and DFP were best placed to take it forward and I understand that the scheme was not able to open this year but will be open in the near future.

Part-Time Farmers

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to help and support the rising number of part-time farmers.

(AQW 30380/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: All help and support that my Department offers is open to any farmer whether full-time or part-time.

My Department provides access to farming grants for all eligible farmers whether they are full or part-time. For example the Single Farm Payment scheme, Agri-environment schemes and farmer related schemes under the Rural Development Programme.

On-line application processes, which I strongly urge all farmers to make use of, are ideal for part-time farmers as they can apply at any time that suits them during the relevant application period.

Since November 2012 CAFRE has provided 586 training programmes and other events with 18861 participants. These events are usually in the evening and on occasion at weekends which suits the needs of both full and part-time farmers. The events have covered for example weather related Fodder Management issues, soil management and business related courses.

Some of the Measures under the Rural Development Programme do not record if farmers are part time for example: Focus Farms have had 16,500 visitors and a significant percentage will be Part Time farmers. Equally the Farm Modernisation scheme has provided over £12m investment to 4,663 farms to date and again Part Time farmers will have benefited.

Under the Farm Family Options – Mentoring programme to date there have been 2586 applications and 1123 are Part Time (43%). This programme provides Mentors on a 1:1 basis to assist farmers and family members to consider their options and develop appropriate plans to develop the business. Businesses mentored can then avail of £250 financial support for Succession advice. The main concerns of farm families are adequate income, other sources of income, succession and training opportunities.

Under the Farm Family Options - Collective Skills programme there are three current training themes covering IT Skills, BVD and Farm Safety Awareness. A total of 7370 individuals have attended with 2780 (38%) being Part Time farmers.

In an early round of Skills training, of the 1172 trainees, 267 (22.8%) were Part Time. They received £117,441 of grant aid.

Single Farm Payment Scheme: Cost of Administration

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the cost to her Department for administering the Single Farm Payment scheme, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 30399/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The cost to my Department of administering the Single Farm Payment scheme for each of the last three financial years is detailed in the table below:

Year	Cost
2010/11	£2.010m
2011/12	£2.304m
2012/13	£2.630m

These costs do not include costs of integrated controls such as inspections or services such as policy support. These are delivered on an integrated basis across a number of EU Area-Based schemes and not solely for the Single Farm Payment scheme.

North Down Coast and Ards Peninsula: Coastal Defences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assessment is being carried out on the coastal defences on the North Down coast and Ards Peninsula following the recent tidal surges.
(AQW 30433/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Along the North Down coast and Ards Peninsula, Rivers Agency is responsible for flood defences at Holywood, Newtownards and Greyabbey. These defences were severely tested during the recent tidal surges and Rivers Agency's assessment is that they performed well. Inspections of the defences are underway, and should they identify the need for works, these will be given appropriate priority.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 17658/11-15 and AQW 17656/11-15, to detail up to date figures.
(AQW 30449/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In AQW 17658/11-15 (December 2012), you asked me to detail, in relation to the Central Investigation Service, (i) the total value of incidents of fraud investigated; (ii) the total value of fraud cases prosecuted; and (iii) the amount of money recouped, in each of the last five years.

In response to parts (i) and (ii) of your question, I have provided, at Annex A, an updated summary of the value of DARD incidents of fraud investigated and the value of fraud cases prosecuted over the last 5 years.

In response to part (iii), the Central Investigation Service (CIS) is not responsible for the recoupment of money but makes recommendations to the relevant business area within the Department, on the basis of investigation outcomes, to consider imposing/applying scheme penalties, withholding grant funding or initiating the "clawback" of grant funding. In relation to the fraud prosecuted cases in this period, CIS recommendations resulted in £125k being withheld and "clawback" of £57k initiated.

In AQW 17656/11-15 (December 2012), you asked me to outline the running costs of CIS for each of the last five years.

I can confirm that the running costs to DARD of the Central Investigation Service for each of the last 5 financial years 2009/10-2013/14, incorporating a projection for the current year, are as follows:

- 2009/10 £148,000
- 2010/11 £122,000

- 2011/12 £154,000
- 2012/13 £137,000
- 2013/14 £127,000 (projected)

Annex A

Year	Total Estimated Value of Incidents of Fraud Investigated	Total Value of Fraud Cases Prosecuted
2013/2014	£136k	£25,993
2012/2013	£272k	£7,842
2011/2012	£174k	£4,113
2010/2011	£214k	nil
2009/2010	£490k	£28,365

Single Farm Payment: Farmers in South Down

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers in South Down had not received their Single Farm Payment by 31 January 2014.

(AQW 30488/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has delivered a record payment performance in 2013 with 90% of Single Farm Payment claims finalised in December 2013. 89 farmers in the South Down constituency had not received their Single Farm Payment by 31 January 2014.

Rural Crime and Agricultural Crime

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what actions her Department are taking to tackle (i) rural crime; and (ii) agri-crime.

(AQW 30502/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am very aware of the concerns that levels of farm related crime are causing amongst the farming community and my Department continues to work closely with the Department of Justice and the PSNI to tackle rural crime, including agri-crime.

I have met the Minister of Justice on a number of occasions to highlight rural crime issues and at our most recent meeting in October 2013 we discussed the sharing of information between Departments and the PSNI Rural Crime Unit. I also agreed that a representative from my Department would be appointed to sit on the Rural Crime Unit Steering Group.

My Department's Veterinary Service Enforcement Branch (VSEB) and the PSNI have been involved in a number of successful operations to recover stolen livestock and continue to jointly investigate livestock smuggling incidents with the Gardai and the Department in the South.

VSEB has also recently carried out joint investigation visits with the PSNI to a number of premises in Fermanagh, Eglinton, Armagh and Newtownabbey in relation to stolen livestock. This resulted in one case to the recovery of ten stolen sheep and conviction of the perpetrator. Five stolen cattle were recently discovered at an abattoir and one person has been charged following a joint VSEB / PSNI investigation. Other, similar operations are being planned.

A rural crime event took place in Dungannon Farmers Market on 3rd February 2014 at which a number of farmers brought their cattle to be freeze branded. It is hoped that this will lead to other farmers following suit.

Following a request from the chair of Newry and Mourne Policing and Community Safety Partnership, the Head of VSEB attended a meeting on 9th December 2013. This meeting was well attended and the VSEB official gave a presentation and answered questions from audience.

Joint PSNI and DARD vehicle checks are also continuing out across the north. The objectives of these operations are to raise awareness in relation to rural crime and to train police officers in reading ear tag and checking cattle movement documentation. Similar joint operations are taking place in the south.

Although responsibility for combating rural crime falls primarily to the Department of Justice and the PSNI, my Department, through its CAFRE advisers, support the PSNI and the farming organisations in raising awareness of measures which farmers can take to reduce incidences of rural crime. CAFRE College facilities can be used by the PSNI for workshops, seminars and meetings aimed at raising awareness of crime prevention measures among the farming community. Students on CAFRE programmes also learn about appropriate responses to rural crime through input from visiting speakers, information leaflets and participation of the College Farms in PSNI-led programmes such as Farm Watch.

My officials will also be liaising further with the PSNI about how DARD Direct Offices can be used to disseminate information to rural dwellers.

Single Farm Payment: Farmers in Mid Ulster

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers in Mid Ulster had not received their Single Farm Payment by 31 January 2014.

(AQW 30525/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has delivered a record payment performance in 2013 with 90% of Single Farm Payment claims finalised in December 2013. 339 farm businesses in the Mid Ulster constituency had not received their Single Farm Payment by 31 January 2014.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the effectiveness of her Department's response to Bovine Tuberculosis.

(AQW 30544/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In the past 14 months TB herd incidence has fallen from 7.46% to 6.44% at 31 December 2013. While there has been a 12.7% reduction in the number of new herd breakdowns during 2013 when compared with 2012, there has been an even greater 24.1% reduction in the number of animals removed as reactors in the same period. During 2013 there were 1,479 new herd breakdowns and 8,271 animals removed as reactors, which is significantly less than 1,695 new herd breakdowns and 10,897 reactors in 2012.

This reduction demonstrates the effectiveness of my Department's response to TB. However I am not complacent and it is my aim to achieve a sustained and progressive reduction towards the ultimate eradication of TB in cattle here.

Research Challenge Fund

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the Research Challenge Fund, to detail for each of the last four financial years the (i) budget allocated at the start of each year; (ii) budget allocated to each project; (iii) number of applicants; and (iv) number of successful projects.

(AQW 30565/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Research Challenge Fund (RCF) aims to stimulate competitiveness, innovation and sustainability in the agri-food industry. To achieve this DARD provides funding of up to 50% of the cost (to a maximum value of £250k) of collaborative research and development projects between groups of SMEs and public sector research organisations. Successful projects have the potential to further the sustainability and competitiveness of the north's agri-food and rural enterprises.

The RCF opened for the first time in 2010 and there have been subsequent calls for projects in 2012, 2013 and the current call which closes on 20th February 2014.

In 2010 the DARD budget for the scheme was £1m. Eight applications were received of which four were successful. The value of DARD funding ranged from £41,320 to £208,544 and totalled £454,862.

In 2012 the DARD budget for the scheme was also £1m. Nine applications were received of which seven were successful. The value of DARD funding ranged from £63,840 to £235,982 and totalled £871,491.

In 2013 the DARD budget for the scheme was also £1m. Six applications were received of which four were successful, although one successful applicant then decided not to proceed. The value of DARD funding for the three projects was £547,362.

There is currently a call out for applications which closes on 20th February 2014. This year the DARD budget is £750,000.

Flood Wall in Beragh, County Tyrone

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the development of the flood wall in Beragh, County Tyrone.

(AQW 30615/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Beragh Flood Alleviation Scheme is currently out to tender and Rivers Agency expect to award the construction contract in March 2014, with completion anticipated by Spring 2015.

Single Farm Payments: Remote Sensing Inspection

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of Single Farm Payments which were subject to a Remote Sensing Inspection (i) that have been fully assessed and a payment made; (ii) that have been assessed and are awaiting payment; and (iii) are still awaiting to be assessed.

(AQW 30658/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) 1,139 farm businesses were subject to an inspection carried out via Control with Remote Sensing. 230 cases have been fully processed and are currently in the payment process.
- (ii) The remaining 909 cases have been assessed and are being processed. Payments will continue to be issued on an ongoing basis as individual inspection results are fully processed.
- (iii) All of the 1,139 businesses have been assessed.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Departmental Spend in Ballymoney, Ballymena and Moyle Council Areas

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much her Department has spent in the (i) Ballymoney; (ii) Ballymena; and (iii) Moyle council areas since May 2011.

(AQW 30115/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): My Department has spent the following in the Ballymoney, Ballymena and Moyle council areas since May 2011.

Ballymoney	Ballymena	Moyle
£899,702	£2,671,811	£494,700

Winter Olympics 2014: Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding provided to sports competing in the Winter Olympics, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30463/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: During the last five years up to March 2013, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided funding totalling £292,891 to sports competing in the Winter Olympics to include ice skating, skiing and ice hockey. The details are broken down as follows: -

Year	Amount
2008/09	£36,320
2009/10	£68,396
2010/11	£81,654
2011/12	£59,009
2012/13	£47,512
Total	£292,891

In addition, Sport NI will invest a further £51,079 in the 2013/14 financial year.

Winter Olympics 2014: Support for Local Athletes

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the support being provided to local athletes included in the Winter Olympics 2014.

(AQW 30465/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: During the last five years up to March 2013, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided funding totalling £290,825 to local athletes preparing for the Winter Olympics 2014.

The details as follows are broken down by Sports Costs (paid to Governing Body) and Living Costs (paid to the individual athlete):

Sport	Sports Costs Investment	Living Costs Investment
Ice Skating	£80,518	£68,976
Skiing	£93,238	£48,093
Total	£173,756	£117,069

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure on how many occasions since May 2007 has her Department refused to accept the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding.

(AQW 30487/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: On no occasion since May 2007 has DCAL refused to accept the recommendations in an Ombudsman's findings.

Trawling: Monitoring and Regulation

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) who has permission to trawl in loughs; and (ii) what responsibility her Department has for monitoring and regulating trawling.

(AQW 30560/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Trawling is not permitted on any Loughs in the DCAL jurisdiction.

My Department has permitted the trawling of bait nets on Lough Neagh under Section 14 of the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, as part of a programme of scientific research undertaken by AFBI in conjunction with the local fishermen.

DCAL has enforcement responsibility to ensure compliance with the Fisheries Act and subsequent Regulations.

Department of Education

Educational Psychology Services: Days Lost

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 29776/11-15, to list the number of days lost due to illness, maternity leave or retirement by Educational Psychology services in each Education and Library Board in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30286/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Education and Library Boards have provided the following information in response to the question asked. You should note that Educational Psychology services include Educational Psychologists, Psychology Assistants and Administrative Support staff.

Days Lost Due to Illness

	April 2010 - March 2011	April 2011 - March 2012	April 2012 - March 2013
BELB	365	311	659
WELB	206	212	392
NEELB	524	586	404
SEELB	281	712	563
SELB	237	478	561

Days Lost Due to Maternity Leave

	April 2010 - March 2011	April 2011 - March 2012	April 2012 - March 2013
BELB	355	195	780
WELB	505	415	225
NEELB	190	130	475
SEELB	273	546	910
SELB	1842	1038	889

Days Lost Due to Retirement

	April 2010 - March 2011	April 2011 - March 2012	April 2012 - March 2013
BELB	0	0	0
WELB	0	150	494
NEELB	92	120	155
SEELB	0	0	0
SELB	0	214	215

Vacancy Control Measures: Vacant Posts

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the vacancy control measures employed by the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools and the Education and Library Boards, to detail (i) the number of vacant posts; (ii) the length of time the posts have been vacant; and (iii) how many of these posts were filled on a temporary basis, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 30309/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Education and Library Boards have provided the following information in response to the question asked.

(i) Number of vacant posts (as at 29/1/14)

CCMS	9
BELB	55
WELB	135
NEELB	68
SEELB	214
SELB	87

(ii) Length of time posts have been vacant

The CCMS and the Education and Library Boards have indicated that vacant posts have been subject to vacancy control policy for various lengths of time dependent upon when the original post-holder vacated the post.

(iii) Number of posts filled on a temporary basis (as at 29/1/14)

CCMS	5
BELB	55
WELB	135
NEELB	68
SEELB	208
SELB	87

These posts have been filled subject to the Vacancy Control conditions.

Looked After Children: Suspended and Expelled

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of looked after children who were (i) suspended; and (ii) expelled from school in each Education and Library Board, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 30340/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Data is not currently held on the number of looked after children who have been suspended or expelled. We are investigating if this can be obtained without incurring disproportionate costs and I will write to you again once this is known.

Professional Qualification for Headship

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, during the last school year, how many successful applicants for School Principal posts in each employing authority held a Professional Qualification for Headship, broken down by sector.

(AQW 30344/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Professional Qualification for Headship, Northern Ireland, PQH(NI) is a programme intended to provide training prior to appointment to a post as a school principal and has been in operation since 2000. However, it is not a mandatory qualification. The first PQH(NI) graduates were in 2001. The tables below sets out the information requested.

Number of Principals with a PQH qualification by school type appointed as Principal in 2012/13 academic year

	2012/13
Nursery & Primary	21
Post Primary	19
Special	*

Number of Principals with a PQH qualification by school management type appointed as Principal in 2012/13 academic year

	2012/13
Controlled	24
Maintained	12
Voluntary Grammar	*
Grant Maintained Integrated	*
Special	*

Source: Regional Training Unit

- 1 Controlled includes Controlled and Controlled Integrated.
- 2 Maintained includes Catholic Maintained and other Maintained.
- 3 Figures are based on RTU's newly appointed Heads group for 2012/13 (primary and post- primary) which includes all new first time heads. (Does not include existing heads who may have changed schools for a new headship).
- 4 Figures exclude Acting Principals.
- 5 Figures relate only to those who held PQH on appointment.
- 6 * Relates to fewer than 5 cases - it is not possible to provide the information in respect of Voluntary Grammar, Grant Maintained Integrated and Special schools as the small numbers involved would require a high level of suppression to prevent identification of individual schools, in line with the confidentiality principle of the Statistics Authority's Code of Practice on Official Statistics.

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education on how many occasions his Department has not accepted the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding, since May 2007.

(AQW 30421/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In my tenure, I have not accepted the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding on one occasion.

Board of the South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to re-constitute the Board of the South Eastern Education and Library Board with political representation.

(AQW 30436/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I currently have no plans to re-constitute the Board of the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB). This is in anticipation of the establishment of ESA. If ESA is not established I will develop plans in that context.

Child Care Places

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Education how many children in (i) Randalstown; (ii) Antrim; (iii) Templepatrick; (iv) Crumlin; and (v) Ballyclare were unsuccessful in gaining child care places in (a) 2011; (b) 2012; and (c) 2013.

(AQW 30456/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not provide childcare. Its Pre-School Education Programme provides funded pre-school education places to children in the year immediately before they start compulsory education.

In 2011, 2012 and 2013 all children in Randalstown, Antrim, Templepatrick, Crumlin and Ballyclare, whose parents engaged fully with the admissions process were placed. The Pre-School Education Advisory Group in the North Eastern Education and Library board will continue to ensure that sufficient provision is available in that area to meet demand.

East Londonderry Constituency Schools: Significant Minor Works

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education to detail the total expenditure on significant minor works to each (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary school in the East Londonderry constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30467/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following tables give details of the total expenditure on all minor works to each primary and post primary school in the East Derry constituency in each of the last three years:

(i) Primary

School Reference	School Name	£ Year 2010/11	£ Year 2011/12	£ Year 2012/13	£ Overall Total by School
2012087	Bellarena Primary	124.00	0.00	0.00	124.00
2012298	Ballykelly Primary	980.00	34,548.00	13,060.00	48,588.00
2016029	Drumachose Primary	35,638.00	6,766.00	123,100.00	165,504.00
2016372	Cumber Claudy Primary	13,793.00	22,235.00	99,906.00	135,934.00
2016426	Limavady Central Primary	23,845.00	60,114.00	164,086.00	248,045.00

School Reference	School Name	£ Year 2010/11	£ Year 2011/12	£ Year 2012/13	£ Overall Total by School
2016656	Drumrane Primary	4,398.00	0.00	1047.00	5,445.00
2016700	Gaelscoil Neachitain	0.00	0.00	3,388.00	3,388.00
2032263	St Canice's Primary, Feeny.	33,485.50	0.00	1,972.85	35,458.35
2032265	St Anthony's Primary	0.00	0.00	2,603.76	2,603.76
2032286	St Matthew's Primary	0.00	2,926.46	21,555.00	24,481.46
2032294	St Mary's Primary, Claudy.	15,592.00	1,692.00	0.00	17,284.00
2033706	Faughanvale Primary	12,110.20	27,259.00	12,848.00	52,217.20
2033708	St Aidan's Primary	1,233.75	0.00	0.00	1,233.75
2036045	St Canice's Primary, Dungiven	6,714.00	75,576.00	7,323.58	89,613.58
2036082	St Colmcille's Primary	32,464.14	970.80	0.00	33,434.94
2036085	St Peter & St Pauls' Primary	38,225.76	0.00	5,379.68	43,605.44
2036149	St Finlough's Primary	702.00	4,502.00	0.00	5,204.00
2036187	St John's Primary, Dernaflaw	44,168.00	11,732.00	5,582.16	61,482.16
2036458	St Mary's Primary, Gortnaghey	0.00	9,120.00	6,418.00	15,538.00
2066665	Roe Valley Integrated Primary	93,971.00	109,041.50	12,391.00	215,403.50
3010847	Portrush Primary	3,602.00	0.00	0.00	3,602.00
3010892	Ballytober Primary	77.00	3,656.00	213,013.00	216,746.00
3012049	Carnalridge Primary	9,178.00	0.00	235.00	9,413.00
3012225	Damhead Primary	0.00	30,488.00	235.00	30,723.00
3012229	Hezlett Primary	73,443.00	30,540.00	143.00	104,126.00
3012237	Killowen Primary	199,820.00	12,838.00	226,161.00	438,819.00
3012250	Portstewart Primary	60.00	4,132.00	52,820.00	57,012.00
3012264	Millburn Primary	0.00	30,343.00	15,364.00	45,707.00
3012284	D H Christie Memorial Primary	703.00	42,340.00	43,505.00	86,548.00
*3013700	Macosquin Primary	-5,067.00	10,130.00	158,152.00	163,215.00
3016052	Harpurs Hill Primary	269,971.00	45,888.00	2,378.00	318,237.00
3016119	Garvagh Primary	0.00	869.00	27,394.00	28,263.00
3016252	Ballysally Primary	0.00	1,662.00	90,196.00	91,858.00
3016264	Irish Society's Primary	0.00	30,479.00	235.00	30,714.00

School Reference	School Name	£ Year 2010/11	£ Year 2011/12	£ Year 2012/13	£ Overall Total by School
3032104	Ballyhackett Primary	7,514.00	15,000.00	728.00	23,242.00
3032202	St Columba's Primary, Garvagh	0.00	4,354.00	1.20	4,355.20
3032231	St Colum's Primary	0.00	30,557.00	235.00	30,792.00
3032285	St Patrick's & St Joseph's Primary School	121,645.00	743.00	0.00	122,388.00
3032297	St Malachy's Primary	1,237.00	32,475.00	235.00	33,947.00
3033709	St John's Primary, Coleraine	1,655.00	39,976.00	4,980.35	46,611.35
3036147	St Columba's Primary, Kilrea	79,323.00	7,184.47	12,257.00	98,764.47
Total		1,120,605.35	740,137.23	1,328,928.58	3,189,671.16

*minus figure relates to accrual adjustment.

Post Primary

School Reference	School Name	£ Year 2010/11	£ Year 2011/12	£ Year 2012/13	£ Overall Total by School
2210302	Limavady High School	26,421.00	30,232.00	24,181.00	80,834.00
2230077	St Mary's High School	43,300.00	483,858.00	12,673.00	539,831.00
2230122	St Patrick's & St Brigid's High School	141,714.71	48,315.28	0.00	190,029.99
2230144	St Patrick's College	305,601.00	10,396.08	1,591.18	317,588.26
2410048	Limavady Grammar	38,969.00	35,120.00	395,098.00	469,187.00
*3210013	Garvagh High School	60.00	3,798.00	0.00	3,858.00
3210300	Coleraine College	36,863.00	1,352.00	0.00	38,215.00
3230110	St Joseph's College	9,321.00	748.00	105,894.00	115,963.00
3230151	St Paul's College	78,393.31	741.24	0.00	79,134.55
3410033	Coleraine High School	761.00	142,861.00	102,041.00	245,663.00
3420032	Coleraine Academical Institution	0.00	127,661.00	0.00	127,661.00
3420034	Loreto College	24,848.50	117,852.00	21,807.09	164,507.59
3420068	Dominican College	3,231.00	5,427.55	0.00	8,658.55
Total		709,483.52	1,008,362.15	663,285.27	2,381,130.94
Overall Totals		1,830,088.87	1,748,499.38	1,992,213.85	5,570,802.10

*school closed in 2013/14

Children Being Home Educated

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the average number of children in each Education and Library Board area being home educated in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30468/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below sets out the number of children which each Education and Library Board (ELB) know have been home educated in each of the last 5 years:

Year	BELB	SELB	NEELB	WELB	SEELB	Totals	Average
2008/2009	5	12	48	63	53	181	36.2
2009/2010	6	12	57	43	62	180	36
2010/2011	5	18	52	43	66	184	36.8
2011/2012	8	25	60	48	68	209	41.8
2012/2013	10	27	56	45	63	201	40.2

Parents are not required to notify their Education and Library board that they intend to educate their child at home unless the child has previously attended school or has a statement of special educational needs. The total figures therefore may be higher.

Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan and Bheann Madigan, Belfast

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 22718/11-15 and AQW 30077/11-15, to explain the apparent discrepancies in information regarding the expenditure at Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan and Bheann Madigan, Belfast.

(AQW 30498/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: After comparison of the information provided to you in AQW 22718/11-15 and AQW 30077/11-15, a number of differences were noted between expenditure information reported up to 31 March 2013. I can confirm that these discrepancies were due to an administrative oversight and I wish to extend my apologies and that of my officials for this error.

Please find revised table to confirm finances expended against the projects up to 31 December 2013.

School Scheme	Type of School	All Expenditure up to 31/03/13 £000's	2013/14 Expenditure up to 31/12/13 £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	849*	155	1004
St Colman's Abbey Primary School, Newry				
St Joseph's Convent PS, Newry	Primary	163*	376	539
Dromore Central Primary School	Primary	324	309	633
Eglinton Primary School	Primary	160	90	250
Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan	Primary	219*	121	340
Ebrington Controlled PS, Derry	Primary	164	27	191
Foyle College, Derry	Post-Primary	15073	332	15405
St Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan	Primary	160	55	215

School Scheme	Type of School	All Expenditure up to 31/03/13 £000's	2013/14 Expenditure up to 31/12/13 £000's	Total Spend to Date £000's
Victoria Park Primary School, Belfast	Primary	720	0	720
Enniskillen Model Primary School	Primary	142	10	152
St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge	Primary	90*	124	214
Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast	Primary	52	74	126
Belmont House Special School, Derry	Special	10	1	11
Rossmar Special School, Limavady	Special	10*	6	16
Castletower Ballymena	Special	10	13	23
Arvalee School & Resource Centre, Omagh	Special	0	341	341
St Gerards Education Resource Centre	Special	2	2781	2783
		20,793	4884	25,677

* denotes corrected figures

You will also note that expenditure for Foyle College in this current financial year has been updated since the last response to include an additional reported late payment expended prior to 31 Dec 2013.

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

Triennial Review of Salaries

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 30009/11-15, when the last triennial review of salaries was completed.

(AQW 30499/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Senior Management Pay Review Panel (SMPRP) provides the Department with annual recommendations regarding the salaries of Chief Executive Officers and Second Tier Officers in the Education and Library Boards (ELBs).

The specific term "triennial review" may stem from recommendations that the SMPRP made to the Department in May 2002 regarding provisions for the then new ELB Senior Management Performance-related Pay Scheme which included the need for:

- Annual revalorisation of the maximum and minimum of the ranges; and
- Market review of ranges every three years.

The annual independent recommendations of the SMPRP regarding the minimum and maximum of the salary ranges is based on a number of factors outlined previously in the response to AQW 28966/11-15, which includes an ongoing wider market review.

Applications for Temporary Variations to Admission and Enrolment Numbers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many applications for Temporary Variations to admission and enrolment numbers have been received in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) sector; and (ii) phase; and how many were approved.

(AQW 30500/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In my response to AQW 15270/11-15, I explained that before mid 2012/13 school year, the Department of Education did not electronically record statistics on the total numbers of schools requesting temporary increases to their admissions numbers, and of these, which requests were approved. This means that some of the data requested is unavailable and could only be extracted by a manual exercise at disproportionate cost.

The only year for which the data is available in the format you have requested, is the 2013/14 school year, and the figures (as at 10 February 2014) are as follows:

Primary Schools

Management Type (Sector)	TV Requests	No of Places Approved	No of Places Not Approved
Controlled	95	99	109
Catholic Maintained	191	328	165
Other Maintained	14	43	3
Controlled Integrated	11	32	16
Grant Maintained Integrated	24	67	4
	335	569	297

Post-Primary Schools

Management Type (Sector)	TV Requests	No of Places Approved	No of Places Not Approved
Controlled Secondary	8	4	15
Catholic Maintained Secondary	28	39	52
Controlled Grammar	5	2	8
Voluntary Grammar	8	3	22
Grant Maintained Integrated Secondary	9	6	17
	58	54	114

Strategy for 14-19 Year Olds

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what is the timescale for the development of a policy for 14-19 year olds.

(AQW 30503/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I work closely with Minister Farry on the range of issues that affect the education and training of young people in the 14-19 age group and will continue to do so. Likewise, my officials, from the most senior level, will also continue to work with their colleagues in DEL on the cross-cutting issues for this age group. The working partnership between my Department and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) remains robust at a strategic and policy level.

The priority remains on putting pupils first, and in that context we will work towards the articulation of our policy in respect of 14-19 year-olds over the coming months.

School Crossing Patrol Guards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to list the schools that employ their own school crossing patrol guards.

(AQW 30532/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am informed by the Education and Library Boards that they do not hold the information requested.

While the South Eastern Education and Library Board does not hold such information they advised that they were aware of two schools, Sullivan Upper, Holywood and St Mary's High, Downpatrick, that employ their own school crossing patrol guards.

Delivering Social Change Programme: New Teacher Posts

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education, of the 230 new teachers posts which were announced as part of the Delivering Social Change programme, how many are currently filled.

(AQW 30552/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As at 4 February 2014, of the 233.3 FTE posts funded by OFMdfM, 210 FTE posts have been filled (81.5 FTE posts in the primary sector and 128.5 FTE posts in the post-primary sector).

In June 2013 I agreed to fund an expansion of the project providing for an additional 36.9 FTE posts. Of these, 27.7 FTE posts have been filled (18.2 FTE posts in the primary sector and 9.5 FTE posts in the post-primary sector).

In addition there are 2.4 FTE school-funded appointments which have been filled (0.9 in the primary sector and 1.5 in the post primary sector).

The recruitment process for the outstanding posts is currently underway.

Primary Integrating/Enriching Education Project

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education, given that the evaluation of the Primary Integrating/Enriching Education Project has been completed, what plans he has to move this project forward as a model for sharing education.

(AQW 30553/11-15)

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, which was funded by the International Fund for Ireland and the Atlantic Philanthropies, 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 (SiEP).

The PIEE project, which was to be self-sustaining, 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.

With the closure of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme in December 2013, schools which were supported by this Programme were encouraged to apply for Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) funding for costs that they could not self sustain. It is understood that schools in the PIEE project did not apply for this funding and in the North-Eastern Education and Library Board area the CRED Enhancement Scheme was under-subscribed in the current financial year.

Education Sector: Vacancy Control Policy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how long the vacancy control policy has operated within the education sector; and how many staff have been impacted by this policy.

(AQW 30570/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Policy on the Control of Vacancies was published on 19 October 2006 to support the Public Service Commission's Second Guiding Principle on 'Managing Vacancies Effectively'. The policy applied to all non-school based staff within the Education Sector RPA Affected groups at that time, when it was envisaged that the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) would be established in April 2008.

Since this time the policy has been reviewed several times to ensure it remains relevant and current. On 1 October 2007, an Appendix was published setting out the posts excluded from Vacancy Control. A number of further exemptions have been made since, following representation from employing authorities regarding various specific posts that are business critical, non-affected by ESA and traditionally difficult to fill.

Following an extensive review in 2011, in order to address employment issues arising from the implementation of the policy for longer than originally anticipated, employing authorities were advised on 15 September 2011 that they should review vacant "at risk" posts, filled on a temporary basis prior to 31 July 2011, to determine posts which could be filled on a permanent basis. Consideration of posts for permanence remains subject to a number of conditions including an ongoing need for the post and availability of funding.

On 5 March 2013, the Department advised that employers could extend fixed term contracts and temporary acting up appointments to a revised date of 31 March 2014. This letter also advised that vacancy control no longer applied to staff in the Council for Curriculum, Examination and Assessment (CCEA) following the decision to prioritise the establishment of ESA with CCEA remaining as a separate body.

Just last month, the cut-off dates were again reviewed in light of the ongoing delays in progressing the Education Bill to establish ESA. Temporary contracts and acting-ups can now be extended until 31 March 2015 and posts filled on a temporary basis up to 31 July 2013 can now be considered for permanence. Throughout the implementation of Vacancy Control, CEO and 2nd tier posts have remained subject to the full rigours of the policy, as they are the first line of "at risk" posts.

All staff in the Education sector RPA Affected organisations have been impacted by this policy.

I have recently committed to undertake a further review of the vacancy control policy.

Education and Library Board: Prosecutions

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many prosecutions in relation to school attendance were undertaken by each Education and Library Board, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30572/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that the number of prosecutions in relation to school attendance undertaken in the last five academic years is as set out in the table below:-

ELB	Number of Prosecutions				
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Belfast	*	23	*	*	*
Western	11	25	45	26	33
North-Eastern	*	0	6	10	68
South-Eastern	8	0	7	9	*

ELB	Number of Prosecutions				
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Southern	18	45	37	37	67

*denotes fewer than 5 cases, figure suppressed to avoid possible identification of individuals.

Attendance Levels in School Sectors

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the attendance levels in each school sector in each of the last five years, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 30574/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the table below. The most recent data available is for the school year 2011/12. Updated figures for 2012/13 will be available at the end of February.

Attendance rate by management type and Education and Library Board, 2007/08 - 2011/12

Management Type	ELB	Percentage of half days attended				
		07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Controlled	BELB	91.8	92.1	92.2	92.2	92.7
	WELB	94.3	94.3	94.0	94.2	94.7
	NEELB	93.7	94.0	93.8	94.0	94.3
	SEELB	93.3	93.5	93.4	93.7	94.1
	SELB	93.9	94.1	94.0	94.3	94.7
	Total	93.5	93.7	93.6	93.8	94.2
Catholic Maintained	BELB	92.2	92.4	92.4	92.6	93.1
	WELB	93.1	93.2	93.0	93.3	93.7
	NEELB	94.4	94.7	94.5	94.6	94.8
	SEELB	93.5	93.8	93.6	93.7	94.1
	SELB	93.3	93.4	93.3	93.6	94.0
	Total	93.3	93.4	93.3	93.5	93.9
Voluntary	BELB	95.3	95.2	95.1	95.5	95.6
	WELB	95.0	94.5	94.5	94.5	95.1
	NEELB	95.4	95.3	95.4	95.8	95.9
	SEELB	96.0	95.9	95.8	96.4	96.6
	SELB	95.2	95.3	95.2	95.3	95.6
	Total	95.4	95.2	95.2	95.5	95.7

Management Type	ELB	Percentage of half days attended				
		07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Other Maintained	BELB	93.6	93.7	93.6	94.2	94.3
	WELB	94.4	95.5	93.8	94.4	94.5
	NEELB	94.6	94.4	93.9	93.9	95.0
	SEELB	93.0	93.7	93.2	93.9	93.2
	SELB	95.3	95.3	94.8	95.3	95.4
	Total	94.1	94.3	93.8	94.4	94.5
Controlled Integrated	BELB	94.6	93.0	93.4	93.3	94.7
	WELB	94.2	93.2	92.8	93.3	96.1
	NEELB	92.2	91.9	91.5	92.7	92.8
	SEELB	91.7	92.1	92.0	92.5	93.0
	SELB	90.7	91.0	90.6	91.4	91.3
	Total	91.8	92.0	91.8	92.5	93.0
Grant Maintained Integrated	BELB	90.7	90.5	89.9	91.0	90.9
	WELB	92.0	92.2	92.0	92.5	92.9
	NEELB	93.1	93.3	93.1	93.2	93.3
	SEELB	93.6	93.2	92.7	93.6	93.7
	SELB	92.4	92.7	92.7	92.9	93.5
	Total	92.5	92.5	92.3	92.8	93.0
Total	BELB	92.8	93.0	93.0	93.2	93.6
	WELB	93.6	93.6	93.4	93.6	94.1
	NEELB	94.0	94.3	94.1	94.3	94.5
	SEELB	93.6	93.8	93.6	93.9	94.3
	SELB	93.7	93.8	93.7	94.0	94.4
	Total	93.6	93.7	93.6	93.8	94.2

Source: School Census

Pension Provision for Teachers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage reduction, per year, in pension provision for teachers retiring early.

(AQW 30584/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The factors used to determine the reduction in pension payable to teachers retiring early is detailed in the tables below. These factors are reviewed from time to time as appropriate.

Glossary

ER: Early Retirement

NPA: Normal Pension Age

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Early retirement factor tables

Table ER1

Northern Ireland Teachers' Pensions Scheme: Actuarial Factors

Benefits payable to the member on early retirement (with actuarial reduction)

NPA 60 members, Main Scheme Pension and Lump Sum

Age	Completed Months											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
55	0.794	0.797	0.800	0.803	0.806	0.809	0.812	0.815	0.818	0.821	0.824	0.827
56	0.830	0.834	0.837	0.840	0.843	0.847	0.850	0.853	0.856	0.860	0.863	0.866
57	0.869	0.873	0.876	0.880	0.883	0.887	0.890	0.894	0.897	0.900	0.904	0.907
58	0.911	0.915	0.918	0.922	0.926	0.929	0.933	0.937	0.940	0.944	0.948	0.951
59	0.955	0.959	0.963	0.967	0.971	0.975	0.979	0.982	0.986	0.990	0.994	0.998

Notes:

- 1) These factors are to be used for calculating the actuarial reduction on early retirement for NPA 60 main scheme benefits
- 2) Benefits to be awarded are obtained by multiplying the accrued benefits by the relevant factor
- 3) Reduced benefits are to be calculated before any lump sum commutation option is exercised

Table ER4

Northern Ireland Teachers' Pensions Scheme: Actuarial Factors

Benefits payable to the member on early retirement (with actuarial reduction)

NPA 65 members, Main Scheme Pension

Age	Completed Months											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
55	0.613	0.616	0.618	0.620	0.623	0.625	0.627	0.630	0.632	0.635	0.637	0.639
56	0.642	0.644	0.647	0.649	0.652	0.654	0.657	0.660	0.662	0.665	0.667	0.670
57	0.672	0.675	0.678	0.680	0.683	0.686	0.688	0.691	0.694	0.696	0.699	0.702
58	0.705	0.707	0.710	0.713	0.716	0.719	0.722	0.725	0.728	0.730	0.733	0.736
59	0.739	0.742	0.745	0.748	0.751	0.754	0.757	0.760	0.764	0.767	0.770	0.773
60	0.776	0.779	0.782	0.786	0.789	0.792	0.795	0.799	0.802	0.805	0.809	0.812
61	0.815	0.819	0.822	0.826	0.829	0.833	0.836	0.840	0.843	0.847	0.850	0.854
62	0.857	0.861	0.865	0.868	0.872	0.876	0.880	0.883	0.887	0.891	0.895	0.898
63	0.902	0.906	0.910	0.914	0.918	0.922	0.926	0.930	0.934	0.938	0.942	0.946
64	0.950	0.955	0.959	0.963	0.968	0.972	0.976	0.981	0.985	0.989	0.994	0.998

Notes:

- 1) These factors are to be used for calculating the actuarial reduction on early retirement for NPA 65 main scheme benefits
- 2) Benefits to be awarded are obtained by multiplying the accrued benefits by the relevant factor
- 3) Reduced benefits are to be calculated before any lump sum commutation option is exercised

Appointment of Representatives: Pension Scheme Advisory Boards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what liaison will take place with the Department for Employment and Learning on the appointment of representatives to pension scheme advisory boards which represent teachers and further and higher education lecturers.

(AQW 30585/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department liaises with the Department for Employment and Learning on a number of cross-cutting issues and will continue to do so. My Department will consult with all relevant stakeholders about the process for the appointment of representatives to the NI Teachers Pension Scheme Advisory Board in the coming months.

Educational Psychologists: Waiting Time

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19594/11-15, how many children in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area have had to wait longer than the six month target to see an educational psychologist, since the target was introduced in June 2013.

(AQW 30623/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South-Eastern Education and Library Board have advised that they achieved their target that by 30th June 2013, no school-age child would have been waiting more than six school months for an appointment with an Educational Psychologist. Of the school-age children receiving a Stage 3 assessment between 1st July 2013 and 31st December 2013, four had been waiting for longer than six school months.

Free School Meals Entitlement

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 29934/11-15, for a breakdown of free school meals entitlement, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 30637/11-15)

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 overleaf.

Free school meal entitlement by parliamentary constituency of school location - 2012/13

Constituency	Primary		Post-primary		Total	
	Pupils entitled to FSM	%	Pupils entitled to FSM	%	Pupils entitled to FSM	%
Belfast East	2,198	30.7	742	11.2	2,940	21.3
Belfast North	4,907	46.6	2,805	28.6	7,712	37.9
Belfast South	2,192	23.2	1,169	12.1	3,361	17.6
Belfast West	5,266	59.4	3,195	38.0	8,461	49.0
East Antrim	1,617	22.4	896	14.0	2,513	18.5
East Derry	2,517	29.3	1,354	18.2	3,871	24.1

Constituency	Primary		Post-primary		Total	
	Pupils entitled to FSM	%	Pupils entitled to FSM	%	Pupils entitled to FSM	%
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	2,474	25.9	1,621	16.2	4,095	20.9
Foyle	4,767	44.0	2,913	29.9	7,680	37.3
Lagan Valley	1,733	20.0	738	12.8	2,471	17.1
Mid Ulster	2,688	25.9	1,585	18.3	4,273	22.4
Newry and Armagh	3,573	29.7	2,081	20.1	5,654	25.3
North Antrim	2,279	23.9	1,358	14.4	3,637	19.2
North Down	1,523	21.4	630	11.3	2,153	17.0
South Antrim	1,678	18.5	496	11.6	2,174	16.3
South Down	2,744	26.0	1,569	17.2	4,313	21.9
Strangford	1,717	22.6	1,055	15.3	2,772	19.1
Upper Bann	3,289	27.7	1,629	16.9	4,918	22.9
West Tyrone	3,013	33.4	1,865	23.6	4,878	28.8
Total	50,175	29.9	27,701	19.0	77,876	24.8

Source: NI school census

Notes:

1. Figures include primary and post-primary schools only, consistent with AQW 29934/11-15.
2. Figures for primary include reception and year 1-7 classes, as well as nursery units (whether free school meal or JSA).

Appointment of Representatives: Pension Scheme Advisory Boards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education who will be responsible for the appointment of representatives to the Scheme Advisory Board for teachers' pensions.

(AQW 30638/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department will consult with all relevant stakeholders about the process for the appointment of representatives to the NI Teachers Pension Scheme Advisory Board in the coming months.

Development of School Sport

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education, following the announcement that primary schools in England will receive £8,000 annually, and an additional £5 per pupil to develop school sport, whether he will consider the extension of this scheme to Northern Ireland.

(AQW 30668/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I do not have plans to extend the scheme to schools in the north of Ireland nor has my Department received additional funding to do so.

In the north of Ireland Physical Education (PE) is a compulsory element of the revised curriculum for all pupils from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4 and schools are encouraged to provide at least 2 hours of PE per week.

Delivery of all aspects of the curriculum is a matter for schools and the Department therefore delegates as much funding as possible to schools as they are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils. The decision on what specific sports or games are offered to pupils and the funding they wish to allocate to chosen sports or games is therefore a matter for each school.

The Department is aware of the importance of physical activity to the health and well-being of our pupils and we have therefore been providing additional support for sport in our primary schools through funding for the Curriculum Sports Programme.

This programme which was established in 2007/08 is aimed at pupils in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It is delivered jointly by coaches from the Irish Football Association (IFA) and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) on behalf of the Department. The Department provides £1.5m each year, split equally between the IFA and GAA, and during 2012/13 the programme was delivered by 61 coaches in 571 primary schools, reaching over 39,000 pupils. The programme is not sport specific, rather the focus is on developing the generic physical literacy skills of pupils through participation in enjoyable physical activities. The programme also has the added benefit of supporting teachers in developing their skills and confidence in teaching PE.

Autism: Statement of Special Educational Needs

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 17977/11-15, to provide an up to date breakdown of how many (i) pre-school; (ii) primary school; and (iii) post-primary school children, living in the Strabane district, have a statement of special educational needs for autism.

(AQW 30690/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information available relates to pupils that have a statement and also have autism, data relating to pupils that have a statement, specifically, for autism is unavailable. The most up-to-date validated figures relating to special educational needs relate to the 2012/13 school year and these are detailed in the table overleaf.

Pupils resident in the Strabane district council area who are recorded as having Autism and also have a statement of special educational needs¹ – 2012/13

School type	Total pupils
Voluntary and Private preschools ²	0
Nursery schools ²	0
Nursery units and reception	0
Primary schools Year 1 - 7	24
Post-primary schools	8
Special schools	29
Total	61

Source: NI school census

Note:

- 1 Figures include pupils at stage 5 of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice only.
- 2 Figures relate to nursery school and voluntary and private preschool centre location, as data for these sectors are collated at an aggregated school level, geographical analysis on special educational needs cannot be undertaken.

Autism: Statement of Special Educational Needs

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education to detail how many (i) pre-school; (ii) primary school; and (iii) post-primary school children, living in the Strabane district, are currently awaiting a statement of special educational needs for autism.

(AQW 30691/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Western Education and Library Board has advised that there are currently four children, living in the Strabane District Council area, who have been statutorily assessed as having autism and who are currently awaiting their final statement of special educational needs as follows:

- Pre-school - Zero
- Primary – Three
- Post-primary – One

External Examinations Developed Locally

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to outline the external scrutiny that will apply to the GCSEs and A Levels to ensure that parents have confidence in external examinations developed locally when Ofqual's oversight is removed.

(AQW 30791/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) is responsible for the regulation of general qualifications. Ofqual does not have a role in regulating CCEA GCSE and A level qualifications. The regulators across the three jurisdictions continue to work co-operatively together to provide assurance over the standard of GCSEs and A level qualifications.

Department for Employment and Learning

Teacher Training Colleges

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in regard to teacher training colleges, for the rationale behind his comment "Stranmillis want a merger" as stated during Topical Questions on Monday 20 January 2014, particularly in light of various representations made to his Department.

(AQW 30005/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): During Topical Questions on 20 January, I said that "It is still Stranmillis' policy that the merger should proceed". I based this assertion on the fact that it was the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College (SUC) which first proposed the merger in 2008.

However, subsequent to this comment, the Chair of the Governing Body of SUC has indicated to me that this position in relation to the proposed merger has been superseded by their submission to the Second Stage of the Review of Teacher Training Infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

Jordanstown University of Ulster Campus

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 28280/11-15, to detail whether the financial costings contained within the business case are still accurate.

(AQW 30325/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University has advised me that costs remain accurate and that the overall cost of the development remains at £254m.

Belfast City Campus of the University of Ulster

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail whether planning approval has been granted for all proposed buildings in the Belfast City campus of the University of Ulster.

(AQW 30326/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster's appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission was announced on 7 February and the appeal was successful. The University has advised that planning approval has been granted for all proposed buildings and is a matter of public record.

Jordanstown University of Ulster Campus

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 28280/11-15, to detail whether the business case for the transfer of business activities from Jordanstown to Belfast City is still financially viable.

(AQW 30327/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster has advised me that the transfer of activities from its Jordanstown campus to its Belfast campus remains financially viable.

Jordanstown University of Ulster Campus

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 28280/11-15, to detail whether the University of Ulster has secured the funding required to enable the transfer of business activities from Jordanstown to Belfast City.

(AQW 30328/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University has advised me that this is the case. It is a matter of public record that funding includes a grant of £16 million from my Department and a loan facility of up to £150 million from the European Investment Bank.

Proposed Northern Regional College

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the proposed Northern Regional College.

(AQW 30372/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Northern Regional College is in the final stages of completing an Outline Business Case (OBC) which will identify the value for money options required to address accommodation deficiencies within its estate. The OBC is expected to be presented to my Department later this month for assessment and approval.

Jordanstown University of Ulster Campus

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 28280/11-15, to detail any studies conducted regarding the relocating of schools from Jordanstown to Magee.

(AQW 30387/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster has advised me that consideration was given to the relocation of schools from Jordanstown to Magee as part of the original Masterplanning exercise which represented the consolidation of much of the activity on the University's two Greater Belfast campuses. This took into account the fact that around 45% of students studying at Jordanstown are part-time students living in the Greater Belfast area.

Jordanstown University of Ulster Campus

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 28280/11-15, to detail whether the business case has been reviewed since its approval.

(AQW 30390/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University has advised me that the business case was prepared in the knowledge that it covered a development extending right through to 2018. The University is confident that the objectives, costs and timescales outlined in the business case remain current and there is no need to carry out a review. The development is underway and is on schedule for delivery in 2018.

Training Opportunities for Young People: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any training opportunities that are available for young people through outside bodies, to gain employment in the North Down area.

(AQW 30429/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department provides a variety of training opportunities to young people to assist them to gain employment. The procurement of programme delivery is the subject of public tendering processes, with successful bidders being awarded contracts to deliver relevant training. The programmes available are as follows:

Training for Success

Training for Success provides a guaranteed offer of training to all unemployed 16 and 17 year old school leavers. There is also extended age eligibility for those with a disability or from an in-care background (up to ages 22 and 24 respectively). The contracted providers for Training for Success in North Down area are: South Eastern Regional College (with campuses in Bangor and Newtownards); North Down Training Ltd; and Rutledge Recruitment and Training (Bangor).

Steps to Work

Steps to Work is my Department's main adult return to work provision. It aims to assist people who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment. The Steps to Work contracted provider in the North Down area is South Eastern Regional College.

Youth Employment Scheme (YES)

YES is a voluntary scheme designed to help young people aged between 18 and 24 develop the skills needed to get a job. It recognises that employability skills are more readily obtained by active participation in a work setting with an employer or a voluntary organisation.

YES offers young people work experience or skills development placements with an employer. During the skills development placement, participants have the opportunity to gain or add to existing qualifications. Since 30 September 2013, following a review of the scheme, Steps to Work programme Lead Contractors deliver both Work Experience and Skills Development elements of the Scheme. The Lead Contractor responsible for delivery in the North Down area is South Eastern Regional College.

Further information and advice for young people on how to access any of these opportunities is available through the Department's Careers Resource Centres, Job Centres or Jobs and Benefits offices.

Steps to Work Programme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for a breakdown of the top 25 organisations, ranked by the number of individuals each has taken on through the Steps to Work programme, in each year since its inception.

(AQW 30443/11-15)

Dr Farry: Steps to Work (StW) is my Department's main adult return to work programme, the aim of which is to assist people to find and sustain employment. The programme is delivered throughout

Northern Ireland by a network of contracted organisations, known as Lead Contractors, over 10 contract areas. Each contracted provider is supported in delivering the programme through a network of sub-contractors.

The Department collates statistics on the programme at a contracted provider/contract management area level. Data is not gathered at a sub-contractor level. Details on the number of participants starting the programme, for each Lead Contractor, have been placed in the Assembly Library and on my Department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

Students Enrolled at Institutions Outside Northern Ireland

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of local undergraduate students who enrolled at institutions outside Northern Ireland, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30508/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table below details the number of Northern Ireland Domicile undergraduate enrolments at institutions outside of Northern Ireland from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

Academic year	GB Institutions (excluding Open University)	Republic of Ireland Institutions	Total
2007/08	13,967	884	14,851
2008/09	14,068	890	14,958
2009/10	13,838	917	14,755
2010/11	14,208	845	15,053
2011/12	15,035	750	15,785

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Higher Education Authority (HEA)

Notes:

1. The latest available data are for the 2011/12 academic year.
2. Data on NI students attending other European or worldwide universities are not available.
3. Figures for NI domiciled undergraduate enrolments at the Open University have been excluded from the above table. Although The Open University is defined as an English Institution it is likely that any NI domiciled enrolments will not be based in England.
4. For information the number of Northern Ireland domiciled undergraduate student enrolments at the Open University is provided in the table below: -

Academic year	NI Domiciled undergraduate enrolments at Open University
2007/08	3,604
2008/09	3,912
2009/10	4,325
2010/11	4,592
2011/12	4,562

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Northern Regional College's Ballymoney Campus

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on any future proposals for the Northern Regional College's Ballymoney campus.

(AQW 30593/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Northern Regional College is in the final stages of completing an Outline Business Case (OBC) which will identify the value for money options required to address accommodation deficiencies within its estate, including the Ballymoney campus. The OBC is expected to be presented to my Department later this month for assessment.

Economic Inactivity Framework

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much funding has been secured to support the Economic Inactivity Framework.

(AQO 5501/11-15)

Dr Farry: The current rate of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland, measured as a percentage of the 16-64 working age population, for the third quarter of 2013, is 27.1%. This equates to more than 315,000 people who are neither in work, nor actively seeking employment. This compares with 21.5% in England, 20.9% in Scotland, 23% in Wales and a UK average of 21.7%.

Within the overall rate of 27.1% for Northern Ireland, 27% are students, 28.4% are categorised as 'Long Term Sick and Disabled', 25.7% are categorised as having 'Family Commitments', 12.4% are 'Early Retirees' and the remaining 6.5% are categorised as 'Other', for reasons such as a short-term illness or injury.

For several decades Northern Ireland has consistently had the highest rate of economic inactivity in the UK. Economic inactivity has not historically been influenced by economic cycles and it is right that we now focus on tackling this long-term problem in a progressive and sustainable way.

It is for this reason that the Northern Ireland Executive has made the unprecedented commitment to develop a strategy to tackle the difficult issue of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland. My Department and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment have jointly developed a new Strategic Framework document, in conjunction with several other key departments, and have recently launched a 12 week public consultation exercise on the proposals which will inform the development of the final strategy. This process will be complemented by a series of forthcoming public consultation events across Northern Ireland.

The final strategy will be the only dedicated government strategy in the UK targeted specifically at addressing the major socio-economic issue of economic inactivity. I should emphasise that this is a Northern Ireland Executive initiative: it is not about welfare reform nor is it driven from Westminster or elsewhere. It is a local initiative focused on finding real solutions to help people who are inactive due to health issues or caring responsibilities go back to work when they are ready. Students or early retirees are not a focus for the strategy.

One of the initial key implementation actions will be to develop and pilot a number of projects which will be rigorously tested, evaluated and potentially upscaled across Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that the initial pilot projects will be funded from within existing baselines.

This will be a major ten year cross-departmental strategy and it is a key Programme for Government commitment. Therefore, where additional resources are required they will be sought from the Executive to ensure the successful delivery of the agreed strategic objectives.

Performing Arts Centre, Bangor

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what discussions he or his officials have had with the performing arts sector prior to, or since, the funding announcement for the

development of a Performing Arts and Technology Innovation Centre at the South Eastern Regional College site in Bangor.

(AQO 5503/11-15)

Dr Farry: My role as Minister for Employment and Learning is to ensure that we are investing in our skills for the economy of the future, including the creative sector.

The Creative Industries in Northern Ireland have been identified as a significant opportunity for wealth and job creation and as such remain a key priority for my Department.

Discussions are ongoing with a number of sectoral representative bodies. Whilst these have been in relation to digital media and animation skills opportunities, should such an approach be made with respect to performing arts, I would be happy to consider the merit of any proposal.

In relation to the Bangor project, a detailed business case was prepared in relation to this project during the previous mandate of this Assembly. Significant consultation took place in the development of the business case. This business case was refreshed in advance of my announcement in October that the development would proceed.

The College offers a range of qualifications that have been developed in consultation with the Sector Skills Councils and with employers. Consultation is also being conducted with the performing arts industry for a proposed Foundation Degree course in the South Eastern Regional College.

This exciting new development will add to other provision across the Further Education sector that is geared to support the creative industries, including the performing arts.

University Students: Cross-Border Mobility

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on his efforts to increase mobility at undergraduate level on a cross-border basis.

(AQO 5504/11-15)

Dr Farry: Graduating to Success, the higher education strategy for Northern Ireland, identifies cross-border student mobility and north-south cooperation in teaching and learning as key aspects of our vision for developing the sector.

A project team has been established, chaired by the Director of the Institute for Cross Border Studies and includes representatives from the higher education sector, North and South and officials from my Department and the Department of Education.

The project aims to identify opportunities for cooperation in teaching and learning and to increase cross border mobility.

The project team has considered the recommendations of the Irish Business and Employers Confederation and the Confederation of British Industry report on undergraduate mobility and progress has been made in the following areas.

In relation to improving information, careers teachers and my Department's careers advisers have received additional training on the Central Applications Office processes. Information on the Central Applications Office system is also available through the Careers Service pages on NI Direct.

The recommendation in relation to student funding has now been achieved as Northern Ireland students studying in the South now have access to funding support.

In relation to A Level and Leaving Certificate grades, I welcome the announcement that Trinity College and Dublin City University are considering changing entry requirements for students from here and I hope others will follow suit.

Research, considering the impact of different fee structures on student flows across the UK, is ongoing. The study also includes the flows from and to the Republic of Ireland.

The issue was raised at the November North South Ministerial Council meeting and it was acknowledged that student flows are underdeveloped in both directions. The issue was also raised at a meeting with officials from Department for Education and Skills in January and I plan to meet with Ruairi Quinn in the very near future.

South West College, Enniskillen

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the potential relocation of the South West Regional College in Enniskillen.

(AQO 5505/11-15)

Dr Farry: The South West College has submitted a draft business case to address accommodation needs at its Fairview campus in Enniskillen. The draft has identified, as the value for money option, a replacement new build at the old Erne Hospital site. This site is currently in the ownership of the Western Health and Social Care Trust. The Trust and Fermanagh District Council are working on plans for the transfer of the site to the Council, which would see it developed as a public sector shared services site, with the College being one of the public sector bodies that would subsequently take ownership of a major part of the site.

The College does not expect to be in a position to finalise the business case, and to purchase the site until the Trust has completed the demolition of the existing buildings. There are also issues around contamination, title and final valuations to be completed or agreed.

Careers Inquiry: Update

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on his response to the Committee for Employment and Learning's Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in Northern Ireland (NIA 141/11-15).

(AQO 5506/11-15)

Dr Farry: At the Assembly debate on the Committee for Employment and Learning Inquiry Report into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in Northern Ireland on 25 November 2013, I advised that I welcomed the report and broadly concurred with the recommendations made.

Members will remember that during the debate, I announced that Minister O'Dowd and I had agreed to conduct a formal review of careers policies and practices in Northern Ireland during 2014.

The terms of reference for the review are still being agreed between both Departments. I will ensure that the recommendations in the Committee report are embedded into the scope of the review.

In advance of this, my Department has identified and commenced work on some of the areas which were highlighted in the Committee report. In particular, the development of the careers website, examination of policies and practice in other regions and countries, and increased Careers Service engagement with industry.

A formal response on the recommendations in the Inquiry report was issued to the Committee on 29 January and officials will provide a further update to the Committee on 26 February.

I would like to assure the Committee that the Careers review is one of my top priorities for my Department.

Science Foundation Ireland: Funding

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the source of the £8.4m funding that was announced for Queen's University, Belfast and the University of Ulster to engage in the Science Foundation Ireland's Investigators Programme.

(AQO 5507/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am sure the honourable member very much welcomes this strategically important decision, which will enable Queen's University and the University of Ulster to participate as full partners with Republic of Ireland universities in carrying out programmes of internationally excellent discovery or fundamental research. It will also act as a key stepping stone in helping the island of Ireland as a whole to maximise the potential funding opportunities under Horizon 2020.

The engagement of Queen's and the University of Ulster in Science Foundation Ireland's Investigators Programme will be funded from my Department's internal budget, which will be allocated following the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

The £8.4 million is spread over six years, commencing April 2015, and will support the universities' participation in an initial two-year "pilot phase" covering the run-out of projects from both the 2014 and 2015 calls for proposals.

As the recognised focus of this programme is on fundamental, investigative, internationally excellent, peer reviewed research, it aligns fully with the objectives of Quality-related Research funding. In view of this, I have approved a small, proportional increase in Quality-related Research funding to allow me to support Queen's and Ulster's participation in this new cross-border research initiative. The initial increase will be 1.68% in 2015/16, rising to 3.36% from 2016/17.

Autism Strategy

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what role his Department will have in implementing the Autism Strategy 2013-2020 and the Action Plan 2013-2016.

(AQO 5508/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has played a full role in the development of the recently announced Autism Strategy and Action Plan. As we now embark on the implementation stages, my Department's contribution will largely fall under the Strategy's Employability Theme. In addition, my Department will contribute to other cross cutting Themes, such as Awareness and Transitions.

Under the Employability Theme, my Department will play a key role in delivering client-centred services and programmes that help address the various needs of those with autism. In particular, my Department and its key providers, such as universities, colleges and training providers, will directly support the two key Priorities in the Strategy.

They are Priorities 10 and 11, which aim to increase the number of people with autism entering employment and to increase the opportunities for them to attain skills and qualifications through access to appropriate training and lifelong learning opportunities.

In addition to a range of general actions for all Departments, such as better awareness and staff training, my Department is committed to a number of specific actions in the Employability Section of the Action Plan, which relate to employment and training, as well as further and higher education provision. The actions incorporate existing services, as well as new and developing initiatives, such as the Pathways to Success Strategy, the Access to Success Strategy and the proposed Economic Inactivity Strategy.

As I stated recently at the Autism NI Employment Breakfast, I am also keen that we work closely with employers, to help them play an increasingly greater role and make it easier for them to provide opportunities for people with autism and to help them progress their career goals.

Further and Higher Education: Participation

Ms McCorley asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he plans to increase participation in further and higher education in deprived communities, such as west Belfast.

(AQO 5509/11-15)

Dr Farry: Further Education continues to have a strong track record in attracting enrolments from deprived areas. In the 2012/13 academic year, 21% of enrolments were derived from areas within the 20% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland.

As the main providers of adult education throughout Northern Ireland, colleges also continue to encourage access to FE by delivering a wide and varied curriculum through their main campuses and network of community outreach centres. My Department drives participation in FE by offering a range of financial assistance to students with low incomes. This assistance is provided from two main sources: Further Education Awards and hardship funds.

These funds are means-tested to ensure that support is directed at those who would otherwise not be able to attend a FE college.

Funding for childcare costs is also available to eligible students who have dependant children through the Care to Learn scheme, Further Education Awards or the Hardship Fund.

My Department developed and implemented the Learner Access and Engagement programme, which enables colleges to contract with third party organisations for the provision of learner support.

Support is directed at 'hard-to-reach' adults, who are disengaged from the labour market, and hold few or no qualifications, to encourage them to enrol in FE.

Similarly, the Learner Access and Engagement NEET pilot enables learners, aged 16 to 18, who hold no more than one qualification at level 2 or above, to undertake mentored and supported learning. The pilot programme is open to eligible participants who have been disengaged from education and who may have barriers to learning.

Likewise, Access to Success, my Department's strategy to widen participation in higher education, has a strong focus on the creation of a more accessible sector.

A single, centralised and co-ordinated awareness and aspiration raising programme is currently being developed to better communicate the benefits of higher education to potential students.

Early interventions, including family support programmes, to raise educational attainment levels while young people are still in school are essential to increasing the participation rate in higher education of individuals from deprived areas.

My Department provides special project funding to higher education institutions for programmes to target post-primary schools in disadvantaged areas, to help pupils to attain the necessary qualification for entry to higher education.

Creative Industries

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department is maximising the opportunities presented by the growth of the creative industries.

(AQO 5510/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Programme for Government recognises the importance of the creative industries to the development of our economy and the key role of the sector in generating economic prosperity.

The STEM Strategy, 'Success through STEM', also recognises the importance of the creative industries. My Department has led on the production of the Strategy and is now implementing its recommendations.

My Department has a number of programmes aimed at helping people into employment and addressing the skills need of the creative sector.

For example, the Youth Employment Scheme was launched in July 2012 to improve the employment prospects of young unemployed people aged between 18 and 24 years.

A fundamental element of the Scheme is to actively engage employers in the key growth sectors, including the creative sector, to provide work experience and skills development placements, with an enhanced employer subsidy also available.

From the launch of the Scheme to the 31 January 2014, some 99 employers from the Sector have offered almost 200 work experience/skills development opportunities. In addition, 43 young people have undertaken employment opportunities within the Sector as part of the enhanced employer subsidy.

In another example, Creative and Cultural Skills worked with my Department to produce an industry factsheet for use by students, parents, teachers, industry.

Another project "A catalyst for creative and cultural apprenticeship" will support the delivery of Level 2 NVQs and encourage creative sector employers to support their staff to go on to undertake a Level 3 Apprenticeship.

The statement I made last month on the Review of Apprenticeships puts employers at the centre of apprenticeship provision and provides opportunities in a much wider range of occupations, including the creative industries.

Students: ROI Costs

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the annual cost of students from the Republic of Ireland studying or taking courses at the Regional Colleges in Northern Ireland.

(AQO 5511/11-15)

Dr Farry: The final total cost for the 2012/13 academic year, which is the last year for which full data is available, was £7,120,887.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project.

(AQW 30400/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The contract for the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project was signed with BT on 4th February. This £24.5million project will bring more choice and improved broadband speeds to over 45,000 premises across Northern Ireland by the end of 2015. BT has commenced implementation by embarking on an extensive survey and design process which will take a number of months to complete. Until such times as that process is complete, it will not be possible to be precise as to which premises are likely to benefit. Further details on the roll-out will be published as they become available.

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulation: Mivan

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether Mivan has been bought over with no obligations under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulation; and if so, to detail how this decision was made.

(AQW 30484/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The administrator has made it clear he was not able to sell Mivan (No1) Ltd as a going concern.

Northern Ireland based MJM Marine Ltd purchased Mivan's property, equipment and Intellectual Property. No employees transferred to MJM under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulation.

Detail as to how this decision was made is a commercial matter that lies with the administrator and the new owner of Mivan's assets.

Department of the Environment

Departmental Buildings: Visitors Diagnosed with Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what provision is made within his departmental buildings to receive visitors diagnosed with autism and to cater for their needs.

(AQW 28514/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): I can confirm that all visitors to my Department's buildings are treated with respect and courtesy by the staff.

Whenever possible, details of visitors are notified to reception staff in advance of their arrival and where visitors with disabilities, including those with autism spectrum conditions, advise of specific requirements, every effort will be made to provide additional help and support to cater for their needs.

All visitors who are attending by appointment or who notify staff in advance will be met at reception and accompanied to their destination.

You will be aware of Minister Poots' announcement of 14 January to the Assembly that, as required by the Autism Act (NI) 2011, a cross departmental Autism Strategy and Action Plan, which contains proposals for autism awareness, has been approved by the NI Executive and I will ensure that they will receive the full support of my Department and that all relevant staff receive the appropriate training.

Meeting with Wired or Less: Taxi Meters, Signs and Calibrations

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment (i) on what date did a meeting take place with Wired or Less in relation to taxi meters, signs and calibrations; (ii) who attended the meeting and in what capacity; (iii) who instigated the meeting; (iv) where did the meeting take place; (v) what was the agenda; and (v) to provide the minutes of this meeting.

(AQW 29799/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Following a request from the constituency office of Chris Lyttle MLA, a meeting was arranged between two representatives of Wired or Less and officials from my Department. The meeting took place on 8 November 2013 at the Wired or Less business premises in Connswater, East Belfast. Chris Lyttle MLA, Anna Lo MLA (who advised the meeting that she was not acting in her capacity as Chair of the Environment Committee) and representatives of Wired or Less were present, along with Iain Greenway, Alex Boyle and Michael O'Neill of the Road Safety & Vehicle Regulation Division of my Department.

There was no formal agenda for the meeting, and no minutes were taken. The discussion at the meeting revolved around a demonstration by Wired or Less of potential risks arising from non-professional installation of taximeters and other electrical appliances in cars, a demonstration of the background systems supporting taximeters, and confirmation of the timescales and target dates for the implementation of the relevant Regulations that had been discussed with the Committee.

North South Ministerial Council: Air Quality

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the joint study commissioned by the North South Ministerial Council into improving air quality on an all-island basis.

(AQW 30167/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The procurement exercise invited interested parties to submit tenders for the project by November 2013. The evaluation of the tenders was undertaken by a panel consisting of officials from both DOE and DECLG and was completed in January 2014, when the successful bidder was selected.

The project is expected to commence at the end of February / beginning of March 2014, and will run for six months. It is anticipated that a final report will be published in September 2014.

Full Driving Licences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have a full driving licence.
(AQW 30171/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As at 27th January 2014, 1,066,555¹ people held a full current driving licence².

1. Please note these figures are not part of official statistics and have not been subject to data validation.
2. This figure includes those with a full licence, a full licence with restrictions (e.g. may only drive an automatic vehicle) and those who have passed their full test but have not yet upgraded their provisional licence (these drivers are entitled to drive as if they held a full licence pending upgrade of their licence).

Driving Licence Applications and Renewals

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many driving licence (i) applications; and (ii) renewals have been processed in each of the last ten years.
(AQW 30173/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As at 27th January 2014, 1,066,555¹ people held a full current driving licence².

1. Please note these figures are not part of official statistics and have not been subject to data validation.
2. This figure includes those with a full licence, a full licence with restrictions (e.g. may only drive an automatic vehicle) and those who have passed their full test but have not yet upgraded their provisional licence (these drivers are entitled to drive as if they held a full licence pending upgrade of their licence).

Dunluce Castle: Visitors

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment how many people visited Dunluce Castle in each of the last five years.
(AQW 30207/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The paying visitor numbers to Dunluce Castle in each of the last five years are as follows:

Year	Visitor numbers
2009	80,890
2010	76,636
2011	59,388
2012	48,105
2013	44,317

Dunluce Castle: Revenue and Operating Costs

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) revenue; and (ii) operating costs for Dunluce Castle in each of the last five years.
(AQW 30208/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The revenue and operating costs for Dunluce Castle in each of the last five full financial years are detailed in Table 1 and 2. As the current financial year for 2013/14 is still ongoing reports for revenue and operating costs for 2013/14 cannot be provided at this stage.

Table 1: Revenue

Financial year	Revenue (admissions)	Revenue (shop sales)	Total Revenue
2008/09	£90,662	£22,698	£113,360
2009/10	£106,453.00	£10,603	£117,056
2010/11	£97,454.00	£2,660	£100,114
2011/12	£138,970.00	£2,950	£141,920
2012/13	£146,850.00	£3,414	£150,264
Totals	£580,389	£42,325	£622,714

Table 2: Operating costs

Financial year	Managing visitor access & Grounds maintenance / overheads.	Conservation of Monument	Total Operating costs
2008/09	£209,672	£40,384.64	£250,056.64
2009/10	£211,769	£18,601.24	£230,370.24
2010/11	£213,887	£4,702.84	£218,589.84
2011/12	£218,165	£22,357.36	£240,522.36
2012/13	£221,438	£417.88	£221,855.88
Total	£1,074,931	£86,463.96	£1,161,394.96

Dunluce Castle: Entry Fees

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to list the entry fees to Dunluce Castle in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30209/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The entry fees to Dunluce Castle in each of the last five years are as follows:

Financial year	Adult	Child	Family (2 adults & 2 children)	Group > 10 people
2009/10	£2	£1	n/a	£1
2010/11	£2	£1	n/a	£1
2011/12	£4	£2	£10	£2
2012/13	£5	£3	£13	£3
2013/14	£5	£3	£13	£3

Planning Development Applications: Neighbouring Trees and Buildings

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what action he take to ensure that planning development applications take into account the safety of neighbouring trees and buildings.

(AQW 30211/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The impact proposed development has on its surroundings is a relevant material consideration in assessing planning applications. Accordingly, when considering an application for planning permission a site inspection is undertaken and an assessment made on the impact the proposed development will have on its surroundings.

If the proposed development will have a detrimental impact on adjacent properties or vegetation, amendments may be requested to mitigate any harmful or undesirable impacts. If satisfactory amendments are not submitted for consideration, the Department can ultimately refuse planning permission.

Furthermore, if proposed development threatens trees, the Department may consider serving a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to provide the trees with a level of protection. It is a criminal offence to damage trees covered by TPO.

Former Desmonds Site at Drumahoe, Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the former Desmonds site at Drumahoe, Londonderry, what progress has been made between the Planning Service and the developer on the submission of a planning application for the site which is capable of approval.
(AQW 30217/11-15)

Mr Durkan: On the 23 January 2014 a “reserved matters” planning application (Planning Reference A/2014/0035/RM) was submitted to the Department for a residential housing development comprising a mix of detached and semi detached units (179 in total) with associated landscaping and vehicular access at Drumahoe Industrial Estate, Drumahoe Road, Londonderry.

The application seeks detailed planning approval for the proposed development which was given outline planning permission by the Planning Appeals Commission on the 1 February 2011. The Department will determine the application as soon as possible following due process.

In relation to the proposal for a major mixed use regeneration development on the same site, a hearing has been scheduled with the Planning Appeals Commission for the 25 March 2014, following the former Minister’s decision to refuse the application on the 23 January 2013.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan: Publication

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the reasons for the delay in the publication of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.
(AQW 30219/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As stated in my response to AQW 28362, the adoption and publication of a development plan can take place when all necessary statutory and procedural requirements have been completed.

My Department has confirmed that these requirements have been satisfied and, 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 operational the Plan.

Planning Approval A/1980/0782

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what action was taken at the site of planning approval A/1980/0782 against the dumping of controlled waste, including large quantities of plaster board containing gypsum, following the dumping being reported to his Department in 2012.
(AQW 30252/11-15)

Mr Durkan: DOE Planning - Strategic Planning Division received a complaint on 11 June 2012 regarding extensive land filling of builder’s rubble at Brolly’s Potato Processing Plant on the Glenshane Road, Derry.

A site inspection and subsequent investigations identified planning approval for the activities of waste disposal. NIEA (LRM) advised that the landfill was closed and it was licensed to accept appropriate restoration material to provide a final cap.

The enforcement case was closed on 23rd July 2013.

NIEA is presently investigating allegations of illegal dumping in this area and cannot comment further at this stage as the investigation is ongoing.

Mineral Extraction Permission

Mr Agnew asked Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29402/11-15 whether a mineral extraction permission which is currently extracting minerals falls within the definition of an extant permission.

(AQW 30254/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Yes, subject to operating within the terms of the permission including any time limits, if any, imposed on the original permission or other conditions. Much will depend on the factors involved in the particular case.

Planning Applications for Wind Farms

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment whether PPS 18 takes account of the attractions of the tourist economy in the evaluation of applications for wind farms.

(AQW 30256/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I can advise that PPS 18 'Renewable Energy' and policy RE 1 provides that development that generates energy from renewable resources will be permitted provided the proposal will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on a number of matters in the public interest, including landscape character. The associated Best Practice Guidance (BPG) further elaborates on the need to ensure that there is no negative impact on tourism potential. Existing policy and the BPG, which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for wind energy development, therefore addresses the issue of wind farms and the tourist economy.

The BPG acknowledges that recreation and tourism are a significant element of the local economy. It advises that wind energy developments are not necessarily incompatible with tourism and leisure interests, but acknowledges that care does need to be taken to ensure that insensitively sited wind energy developments do not impact negatively on tourism potential.

The BPG advises, that for wind farms, the judgment of acceptability based on landscape protection should provide adequate protection for tourism interests. The threshold of landscape protection is generally more sensitive to wind farm development than tourism, therefore if it is deemed to be acceptable within the landscape at the planning stage, there should be no unreasonable impacts on tourism interests.

The BPG also identifies the Northern Ireland Tourist Board as a key consultee in the assessment of proposals for wind energy development. The comments of the NITB in relation to wind energy development will be fully considered through the development management process before a decision is reached.

My Department has recently published a draft single Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for a period of public consultation ending on 29 April. The SPPS consolidates, and where necessary updates the existing suite of Planning Policy Statements, including PPS18. I have instructed officials to use the opportunity of the consultation on the SPPS to listen to and take into account the views of the public and key stakeholders on planning policy for renewable energy.

MLAs: Resignation from Local Councils

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many MLAs qualified for lump sums arising out of their resignation from local councils; (ii) the total amount paid out by councils; and (iii) to list the name of each MLA and the amount they received.

(AQW 30258/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Councillors' Severance Scheme was launched on 1 August 2013. Applications for severance are made directly to the councils by those councillors eligible and the payments made by the councils are then reimbursed by my Department. To be eligible, a councillor must have served a minimum of 12 years, excluding any periods when also serving as an MLA, MP or MEP.

- (i) As at 29 January 2014, my Department has made reimbursement payments to councils relating to 4 councillors who also served as MLAs;
- (ii) as at 29 January 2014, the total reimbursement payments made by my Department to councils amount to £148,000. Of that sum, £74,800 was reimbursed in relation to councillors who also served as MLAs;
- (iii) information on all payments made to individual councillors is held by the relevant councils. Disclosure of this information by councils would be subject to the Data Protection Act and other considerations.

Coleraine Borough Council: Planning Application C/2011/0311/F

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment when he will respond to Coleraine Borough Council's referral of Planning Application C/2011/0311/F.
(AQW 30259/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I will respond to Coleraine Borough Council's referral of planning application C/2011/0311/F for a housing development at lands adjacent to Strandview Avenue and Strandview Drive, Portstewart after we have met on site as agreed and when I have had the opportunity to consider the relevant issues.

Lighthouse Facilities on Rathlin Island

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the refurbishment of the lighthouse facilities on Rathlin Island, what measures will be put in place for bird watchers whose activities will be disrupted by the refurbishment works.
(AQW 30294/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) of my Department has met with representatives of the Rathlin Development Community Association (RDCA), the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Department of Regional Development (DRD) to consider alternative experiences for visitors to the Island while the RSPB Seabird Centre is closed. Several actions were agreed. NIEA itself will liaise with RDCA and other stakeholders to consider how facilities on Kebble and Kinramer Nature Reserve can be managed to provide a nature experience for visitors. Others may also lay on both guided and self-guided walks.

NIEA has worked with RDCA to develop a Local Biodiversity Action Plan and has established two way marked routes advertised on WalkNI. However DOE must ensure that any new use of this European site is compatible with its carrying capacity and that its designation features are not damaged.

NIEA recognises that the RSPB bird watching experience at the West Light is unique and very popular with bird watchers. However, whilst intrepid visitors may be prepared to walk across fields and unsurfaced paths to get alternative views of sea birds on other sea stacks, there is no infrastructure to provide shelter and toilets which are an essential visitor requirement and only stock fencing along the cliff top. NIEA has to consider the Health and Safety implications of bringing substantial numbers of visitors to a remote wilderness. Consequently my Department cannot safely provide an alternative to the Seabird Centre during 2014 and agrees with other stakeholders that the temporary closure of the Centre needs to be well publicised so that tourists do not arrive with the expectation of a "Seabird Centre experience". Instead all stakeholders will publicise opportunities to enjoy the scenery, other wildlife and heritage of Rathlin Island.

Taxi Operator Licences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29847/11-15, to detail any instances when Taxi Operator Licences, including temporary licences, were granted to a specific taxi company for an Operator Centre at Ravenhill Rugby Ground, Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast, including the relevant dates.

(AQW 30315/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A Taxi Operator Licence was issued on 19 June 2013 to Fonacab, which listed Ravenhill rugby ground as an operating centre. Subsequently, on 1 October 2013, Ravenhill rugby ground was removed from this operator's licence.

Private Hire Operators: Marshalls

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment what the difference is between (a) private hire operators using marshalls to obtain fares and (b) touting, as defined by current legislation.

(AQW 30382/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Public Service Vehicles (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1985 prohibits a person employed as driver of a vehicle from touting, calling out or importuning any person to be carried for hire in the vehicle.

Departmental guidance, based on legal advice, and issued to major taxi operators in respect of taxi provision at Ravenhill rugby ground indicated that the use of marshalls does not fall within the above prohibition providing certain conditions are fulfilled. These are:

- An explicit engagement must be made between a third party and the operator to provide specified numbers of taxis at a particular time and place;
- Appropriate records must be kept as required by the Taxi Operator Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012;
- The marshal should not be listed as an affiliated driver on that operator's Operating Licence; and
- Prospective taxi users should be made aware that they are free to use other means of transport.

I am aware that there has recently been some confusion around this issue, however, the proposed implementation of new taxi vehicle regulations in September 2014 will help bring clarity to this situation.

Illegal Waste at Mobuoy Road: Cost

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) whether there has been an estimate made of the total cost of the clean up associated with the site at Mobuoy Road in Campsie, Londonderry; (ii) who will pay for the clean up; and (iii) how long it will take to complete.

(AQW 30406/11-15)

Mr Durkan:

- The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is taking a phased approach in dealing with the waste issues on the Mobouy Road site. In the past 7 months, works at the Campsie site have focussed on removing high risk waste materials on the licenced Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) site in addition to the NIEA undertaking environmental monitoring of the water quality in and around the site. Costs incurred to date by the Department of the Environment are in the region of £800K.
- NIEA is engaging top-class experts to advise on longer term clean-up options at the Campsie site, including cost estimates. Clean-up decisions will be based on this expert advice which will include detailed estimates of the likely costs and timescale.
- We will pursue the polluters vigorously to recover all clean up costs. If we are not wholly successful at that stage I will consider further options.

Roe Valley Country Park: Public Pathways

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the reasons for the closure of the public pathways in Roe Valley Country Park; and whether there are plans to reopen them.

(AQW 30415/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Officials in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) have advised me that two pathways have recently been closed to public access in Roe Valley Country Park due to safety concerns.

A one-mile section of pathway leading from the disabled angling jetty to the Scutch Mill at Carrick Mills was closed to public access on 13 December 2013 as a precautionary measure due to the deteriorating condition of an old farm building next to the path which has a structural crack in its gable wall.

NIEA officials subsequently sought professional advice from a structural engineer to determine if the pathway should remain closed. The survey identified loose brick work on the gable wall above a window which will require urgent redial works before the pathway can be re-opened to the public. Given that the building is not in the ownership of the Department further discussions will be required with the owner of the building to allow for these works to be completed. To help to minimise the impact upon users of the pathway, signage which advises of alternative routes and how to access them has been erected.

The second closed pathway is a ¼ mile stretch between Carrick Mills Bridge and Carrick Flats. This section was closed to public access on 20 January 2014 as a safety precaution during civil engineering works associated with Phase 2 of Roe Valley Country Park Hydro Electric Power scheme. It is anticipated that this section of pathway will be closed for approximately one month. Signage has been erected advising of the need for the temporary closure and the estimated time scale for the closure. As this project progresses there may be a requirement in future to temporarily close sections of pathways within the Country Park to facilitate further works associated with this project.

It is unfortunate that these two heavily used and popular walking routes have had to be closed to public access temporarily but I can assure you that NIEA is committed to ensuring these temporary closures are kept to a minimum whilst ensuring the safety of visitors to DOE properties.

Driver and Vehicle Agency: Ravenhill Rugby Ground

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29850/11-15, for his assessment of this method of booking a taxi, including the difference between marshalling and touting.

(AQW 30418/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department sought legal clarification and advice in respect of the provision of private hire taxi services at Ravenhill rugby ground, including the use of taxi marshals. Departmental guidance, based on legal advice, was issued on 21 October 2013 to major taxi operators and concluded that the method of booking a taxi and the use of taxi marshals at Ravenhill rugby ground satisfied current legislative provisions providing that certain conditions are met. These are:

- An explicit engagement must be made between a third party and the operator to provide specified numbers of taxis at a particular time and place;
- The marshal should not be listed as an affiliated driver on that operator's Operating Licence;
- Prospective taxi users should be made aware that they are free to use other means of transport; and
- Appropriate records must be kept as required by the Taxi Operator Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.

I am therefore satisfied with these arrangements and do not consider the use of taxi marshals in these circumstances constitutes touting under the current PSV Regulations which prohibits a person employed as driver of a vehicle from touting, calling out or importuning any person to be carried for hire in the vehicle.

Radioactive Materials Waste Water

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of locations which are permitted to dispose of naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORM) waste water.

(AQW 30444/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are no premises within Northern Ireland that are authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 to accumulate and/or dispose of waste water containing NORM.

Prior to granting such an authorisation the waste producer would have to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the NIEA that the disposal routes proposed would not have any adverse impact on the environment and that any potential exposure of the general public was well below dose constraints set out in UK legislation. To-date no applications have been made to NIEA for the disposal of waste water containing NORM.

River Faughan Anglers: Hydroelectric Applications

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether the specialist advice sought by his Department on issues raised by River Faughan Anglers (RFA) on hydroelectric applications, and referred to by the Head of Planning in her letter to the Ombudsman on 7 September 2012, has been received; (ii) if so, when it was received; (iii) what was the nature of the advice sought; (iv) what advice was received; and (v) when the advice will be provided to RFA.

(AQW 30445/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Following receipt of the representation by the River Faughan Anglers Ltd to planning application A/2011/0246/F, NIEA-Natural Heritage, DCAL Inland Fisheries, Loughs Agency, Roads Service and NIEA Water Management Unit were all consulted. To date all of the bodies with the exception of DCAL have responded.

While each response is available on the Public Portal, as indicated in my response to your previous Assembly Question, AQW 30003/11-15, I have instructed my officials to provide the River Faughan Anglers Ltd with a detailed response to their letter by the 14th February 2014.

Land: Wildlife and Heritage Value

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment, following his recent announcement on Tullyhogue in Co Tyrone, what assurances he can give that the land passed from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to the Environment Agency's Environment Service will be managed for their wildlife and heritage value.

(AQW 30523/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department of Environment has been working in partnership with Cookstown District Council on a project to improve the visitor facilities at Tullaghogue Fort. We are developing plans, to be submitted to Planning Service for a new, safer, vehicular access, new car park, toilets, access paths to the site and interpretation areas.

The Department is carefully considering all aspects of the proposed redevelopment works to ensure minimal impact upon the historic and natural environment at Tullaghogue Fort, while complying with current departmental policy and maximising the potential for this important historic monument and the land directly around it.

On completion of the site works a management plan will be drawn up that will focus on all aspects of this site, from maintenance of the car park, toilets and access, to conservation of the fort itself and use of land around it. This will ensure the long term preservation of the site and ensure good management practise will implemented

I have been assured by my officials in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) that the land transferred from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to my Department at Tullaghogue will be managed for its wildlife value as well as its archaeological and cultural heritage. In

taking forward the management of the site, careful consideration will be given towards the management of the grassland, woodland and riverine habitats which occur there. Officials in NIEA have built up a wealth of experience which will benefit the management of this site for wildlife through their management of Country Parks, Nature Reserves and State Care Monuments over many years. I have also been assured that if, in the future, any parts of the site such as the woodland, were transferred, for example, to the local council to manage, NIEA officials would provide management advice to ensure its continued management for all its conservation interests.

Rural Community Transport

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of the Environment what steps are being taken to ensure the provision of Rural Community Transport is not negatively impacted should the proposals for all Partnerships to have a commercial operators licence proceed.

(AQW 30548/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department is developing proposals to introduce a new bus operator licensing regime which will deliver a safe, fair and fit for purpose licensing regime which complies with EU law. In bringing forward the proposals I am mindful of the need to support a thriving community transport sector to the benefit of the whole of Northern Ireland, and this is one of the key objectives which a new regime will be designed to meet. My Department is therefore committed to ensuring that community transport providers will be accommodated within any new licensing regime in such a way that they can continue to deliver transport of benefit to the community.

Since the review of bus operator licensing began in 2008 my Department has undertaken significant stakeholder engagement, including with the Rural and Community Transport Partnerships and the Community Transport Association with a view to understanding the roles and activities undertaken by the Partnerships.

The Department for Regional Development has primary responsibility for ensuring the provision of rural and community transport. In developing proposals for a new licensing regime, my officials continue to work closely with DRD officials to ensure that our policy proposals do not impact on the funding of the Partnerships to deliver rural and community transport.

Policy development is still ongoing, as is engagement with key stakeholders, and no final decisions have been made. Once I am content that proposals meet the objectives I have set out above my Department will consult widely and will welcome views of everyone involved in or availing of community transport.

Alcohol Consumption on Public Service Vehicles

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the events at the Odyssey Arena on 6 February 2014, for his assessment of the effectiveness of the current laws governing alcohol consumption on public service vehicles.

(AQW 30752/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Current law states that it is an offence for a passenger to consume alcohol on a public service vehicle. This is contained in the Public Service Vehicle Regulations 1985. The Justice Act 2011 makes it an offence to carry alcohol onto certain vehicles en route to regulated sports matches.

PSNI has advised that the PSV Regulations offence is very difficult to enforce, as they need to collect evidence that particular individuals consume alcohol whilst on board the vehicle. My officials have therefore considered options to address this.

A question on this issue was asked in my Department's consultation on Bus Operator Licensing in 2010. The results were inconclusive – around half the responses were in favour of a ban on carrying alcohol on public service vehicles, and around half were against. The matter was therefore discussed further in the Northern Ireland Bus Forum set up by my Department and, after extensive discussion with stakeholders and some qualitative research, my Department issued a focussed consultation on the issue in July last year.

The options in the paper were, after discussion with other Departments, restricted to those within the vires of my Department, but the option was also given for respondents to make other suggestions as to the way forward. The options on the consultation were therefore:

- Do nothing;
- Introduce a restriction on the bus operator's licence prohibiting them from carrying alcohol on their vehicles;
- Create a road traffic offence for operators of carrying alcohol on a public service vehicle.

Responses to the consultation were mixed, and genuine difficulties were raised with each of the options. Operators highlighted the difficulties their drivers can have in stopping passengers from bringing alcohol on board and consuming it. I recognise that this has also become the expectation of many passengers using buses to travel to venues.

A number of respondents commented that the only effective solution would be a total ban on the carriage of alcohol on public service vehicles. The creation of such an offence would be a matter for the Department of Justice and I discussed it with Minister Ford in November last year. Respondents highlighted the need to be proportionate in taking such an approach, for instance exempting people buying groceries including some alcohol and taking it home on a Metrobus service.

Other respondents called for a repeal of the current ban on consumption, commenting that passengers can consume alcohol on the Enterprise, on ferries and on planes.

As a result of the responses to the consultation, I agreed a four pronged approach at this stage. The actions were:

- To commission communication activities to highlight that it is illegal to drink on buses, and the road and passenger safety risks involved in this practice. This work will be proportionate to the road safety risks involved; we have discussed it with our advertising agents who will take forward the work;
- To introduce a new licensing condition for operators requiring them to highlight to hirers that they cannot consume alcohol and to take all reasonable steps to prevent this. This provision is currently being finalised and reviewed before being implemented;
- To engage with the Department of Justice to ask that they consider the extension of the current ban on alcohol carriage to the whole bus sector in NI. As I indicated, I have discussed this with Minister Ford; and
- To continue to engage with DHSSPS who are responsible for the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs, as problems with alcohol consumption on buses form one facet of the wider societal problems with alcohol in NI.

All of these actions are being taken forward and reflect the extent to which my Department can act in this area. A ban on carrying or consuming alcohol is a very black and white matter, and whereas I believe many members wish to see excessive drinking on buses outlawed, I suspect many would want to allow a passenger to carry a bottle of wine home from the supermarket on a Metrobus, or a bride and groom able to drink a glass of champagne in a wedding car. I sense that it is the public order issues which concern members, and these are in my opinion best addressed through public order legislation and not road traffic legislation.

Ultimately, of course, responsibility for appropriate consumption of alcohol rests with individuals – or in the case of minors, with their parents; we cannot expect bus operators or anyone else to shoulder this personal responsibility.

Department of Finance and Personnel

New Business Start Ups

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the ratio of success to failure of new business start ups, in the last five years.

(AQW 29807/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The ratios of success to failure of new business start-ups in the calendar years 2007 to 2011 are shown in Table 1 overleaf. The latest available estimates are for business start-ups occurring in 2011.

Table 1: ratios of success to failure of new business start-ups in the calendar years 2007 to 2011

Year of Start-up	Ratio of success to failure ¹ after:				
	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
2007	17.6	3.4	1.7	1.1	0.8
2008	4.4	1.7	1.0	0.7	..
2009	5.9	2.0	1.2
2010	6.7	2.6
2011	9.1

Source: Office for National Statistics Business Demography, 2012

Notes:

1. The ratio of success to failure after a given number of years is equal to the number of businesses that remained successful divided by the number of businesses that did not.
2. A business is defined as successful after a given number of years if it has turnover or employment activity in each of these years and as a failure if it doesn't.
3. The table above includes all new business start-ups headquartered in Northern Ireland which are VAT and/or PAYE registered but excludes agriculture and public sector organisations.

PSNI and Northern Ireland Office Equal Pay Settlement

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when he will be in a position to make a final decision as to whether or not PSNI and Northern Ireland Office Staff will receive an equal pay settlement.

(AQW 29868/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: It was clearly established in court that there is no legal equal pay liability within the PSNI or the NIO. Nevertheless I am mindful of the strength of feeling on this issue and am continuing to explore ways in which the moral argument could be recognised in some way. I have spoken to the Minister of Justice and am consulting with officials to investigate if there are any possible solutions to the issue that could be considered by the Northern Ireland Executive.

PSNI and Northern Ireland Office Equal Pay Settlement

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the anticipated cost of an PSNI and Northern Ireland Office equal pay settlement; and (ii) if any award is given, will it be on par with the settlement previously made to other Northern Ireland Civil Service claimants.

(AQW 29870/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: As I have stated previously, staff in the PSNI and in the NIO have no legal entitlement to an equal pay settlement and I am not prepared to comment on the potential terms of a hypothetical settlement. Nevertheless I am mindful of the strength of feeling on this issue and am continuing to

explore ways in which the moral argument could be recognised in some way. I have spoken to the Minister of Justice and am consulting with officials to investigate if there are any possible solutions to the issue that could be considered by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Northern Ireland Civil Service: Equal Pay Settlement

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when a final decision on the Northern Ireland Civil Service equal pay settlement will be made.

(AQW 29913/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: It was clearly established in court that there is no legal equal pay liability within the PSNI or the NIO. Nevertheless I am mindful of the strength of feeling on this issue and am continuing to explore ways in which the moral argument could be recognised in some way. I have spoken to the Minister of Justice and am consulting with officials to investigate if there are any possible solutions to the issue that could be considered by the Northern Ireland Executive.

PSNI and Northern Ireland Office Equal Pay Settlement

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the equal pay settlement for PSNI and Department of Justice staff.

(AQW 29947/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: It was clearly established in court that there is no legal equal pay liability within the PSNI or the NIO. Nevertheless I am mindful of the strength of feeling on this issue and am continuing to explore ways in which the moral argument could be recognised in some way. I have spoken to the Minister of Justice and am consulting with officials to investigate if there are any possible solutions to the issue that could be considered by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Equal Pay Settlement

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the action he has taken in regard to the equal pay settlement since his comments on the matter in September 2013.

(AQW 30075/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: It was clearly established in court that there is no legal equal pay liability within the PSNI or the NIO. Nevertheless I am mindful of the strength of feeling on this issue and am continuing to explore ways in which the moral argument could be recognised in some way. I have spoken to the Minister of Justice and am consulting with officials to investigate if there are any possible solutions to the issue that could be considered by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Land and Property Services: Advance Payments

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline why Land and Property Services are unable to accept advance payments and whether they will consider putting in place a facility to do so.

(AQW 30144/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Currently there is no mechanism in place for LPS to accept a payment from ratepayers in advance. There are two main reasons for this:

Firstly, any payment received in advance of a new rating year would be credited to the year in which the payment is received as no assessment would have been created for the following year, which would in effect create an overpayment on the account.

Secondly, legislation (Article 32 (1) of the Rates NI Order 1977) does not allow LPS to request or allocate a payment to any unbilled assessment. As the advance payment would relate to an uncalculated assessment (as the rate poundages for the following year would yet not be struck) it would require an amendment to existing legislation to allow LPS to process and allocate an advance payment.

PSNI and Northern Ireland Office Equal Pay Settlement

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline when a decision will be made on the PSNI and Northern Ireland Office equal pay issue.

(AQW 30159/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: It was clearly established in court that there is no legal equal pay liability within the PSNI or the NIO. Nevertheless I am mindful of the strength of feeling on this issue and am continuing to explore ways in which the moral argument could be recognised in some way. I have spoken to the Minister of Justice and am consulting with officials to investigate if there are any possible solutions to the issue that could be considered by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Disabled Persons Allowance Rates Rebate

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many people were in receipt of the Disabled Persons Allowance rates rebate, broken down by month, for the last three years.

(AQW 30200/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The table overleaf shows the number of properties which benefited from the Disabled Persons Allowance at month-end from September 2011 to December 2013.

Number of Properties benefitting from Disabled Persons Allowance

Month Ending:	Number of Properties
September 2011	11,118
October 2011	11,141
November 2011	11,110
December 2011	11,112
January 2012	11,093
February 2012	11,061
March 2012	11,105
April 2012	11,043
May 2012	11,148
June 2012	11,156
July 2012	11,161
August 2012	11,147
September 2012	11,118
October 2012	11,127
November 2012	11,139
December 2012	11,145
January 2013	11,131
February 2013	11,119
March 2013	11,105
April 2013	11,148
May 2013	11,190

Month Ending:	Number of Properties
June 2013	11,198
July 2013	11,196
August 2013	11,177
September 2013	11,126
October 2013	11,117
November 2013	11,115
December 2013	11,089

VAT and PAYE Registered Operational Businesses

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the latest statistics for the number of VAT and/or PAYE registered operational businesses, broken down by number of employees.

(AQW 30231/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses operating in Northern Ireland, broken down by number of employees, is provided in Table 1 overleaf.

These figures have been sourced from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR).

Table 1: Number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses operating in Northern Ireland, broken down by number of employees

Employee size band	Number of businesses
0*	22,330
1-9	37,870
10-19	3,765
20-49	2,140
50-99	780
100-199	375
200-249	85
250+	300
Total	67,645

Source: Inter-Departmental Business Register, January 2014

Notes:

*The size band includes sole proprietors and partnerships, holding companies and those companies that are not yet trading, for example, if a factory is under construction.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and thus may not add to totals.

Land Registry System

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 29574/11-15, to detail the plans he has to update the Land Registry system to make property sales values available to the public.

(AQW 30324/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Property sales values are currently available to individuals who pay a fee to search against individual properties registered in the Land Register.

Although property prices are contained on the Land Register, the current legislation does not require information to be provided to indicate whether the property concerned is domestic, non-domestic, agricultural, housing, commercial premises, or land only.

A review of the Land Registry Legislation is due to commence in 2014 and one of the issues which will be raised during the consultation process is whether more detailed information should be requested in relation to property sales and whether this information can then be made more widely available. Should any legislative changes be required, the Land Registry Landweb System will be updated to ensure that additional data fields are incorporated into the Registration process and further information recorded.

Rates Relief Applications

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 29660/11-15, what measures his Department has put in place to reduce the number of people currently waiting over four months for their application for Rates Relief to be processed.

(AQW 30354/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: LPS Housing Benefit Central Unit (HBCU) has been actively targeting claims older than four months and all have been reviewed by an assessor, resulting in the completion of the assessment or the request for further information for which LPS is currently awaiting a reply.

Therefore, currently all claims older than four months are in progress.

Public Service Employees: Bonus Payments

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any bonus payments that have been awarded to public service employees in the past year.

(AQW 30355/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Information on bonus payments to all public sector employees is not held centrally by my department.

Northern Ireland Civil Service Shower Facilities

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 27675/11-15, when shower facilities will be provided in each of the two buildings.

(AQW 30375/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The answer to AQW 27675/11-15 stated that provision of additional shower facilities is planned in a further 2 buildings. This is a matter for the department with premises officer responsibility for the building. My Department does not have premises officer responsibility for either of these buildings.

Welfare Reform Penalties

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the potential level of Welfare Reform penalties during 2014.

(AQW 30393/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: In January Monitoring the Executive had to set aside £15 million to meet the cost of welfare reform penalties covering the final three months of this financial year. The penalty will increase significantly next year and is now forecast to be £105 million in 2014-15.

I do not believe that this penalty can be funded through reduced requirements declared in the monitoring rounds next year. Addressing this £105 million pressure will therefore require cuts to departmental Resource DEL baselines of around 1%. To give some perspective to what the £105

million cut will actually mean for public services, this quantum represents the annual costs of employing some 2,500 nurses or 2,100 teachers.

Absorbing this significant pressure next year when our public services are under increasing financial pressure is simply unjustifiable and a great disservice to the people of Northern Ireland. It is now critical that the Welfare Reform Bill is progressed to avoid spending cuts that will severely damage our public services.

Rates Collected: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the rates collected in North Down, in each of the last five years, broken down by ward.

(AQW 30437/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The attached table provides information on the rates collected in each ward in the North Down Borough Council area in each of the last four years for which information is available.

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Ballycrochan	£1,849,426	£1,778,283	£1,753,395	£1,741,001
Ballyholme	£1,551,792	£1,505,144	£1,465,659	£1,407,834
Ballymacconnell	£1,043,280	£1,084,506	£971,624	£962,951
Ballymagee	£1,418,848	£1,376,034	£1,326,736	£1,398,877
Bangor Castle	£3,096,300	£2,967,842	£2,873,572	£3,175,208
Bloomfield	£4,841,825	£4,389,696	£4,197,249	£4,262,713
Broadway	£1,409,127	£1,353,456	£1,309,882	£1,291,313
Bryansburn	£1,973,292	£1,874,011	£1,820,059	£1,540,853
Churchill	£1,197,409	£1,163,527	£1,108,145	£1,107,776
Clandeboyne	£3,020,181	£2,295,749	£2,357,700	£2,323,627
Conlig	£4,684,104	£4,777,895	£4,110,883	£3,973,448
Craigavad	£1,955,089	£1,840,936	£1,775,636	£1,686,601
Crawfordsburn	£2,164,083	£2,037,944	£1,915,544	£1,937,846
Cultra	£2,424,728	£2,387,630	£2,165,354	£2,080,974
Dufferin	£719,408	£684,650	£664,994	£900,313
Groomsport	£1,638,245	£1,540,429	£1,464,970	£1,467,942
Harbour	£4,477,297	£4,407,710	£4,534,901	£4,196,580
Hollywood Demesne	£3,530,826	£3,481,690	£3,372,021	£2,974,568
Hollywood Priory	£2,198,237	£2,029,878	£1,985,641	£1,898,605
Loughview	£1,893,702	£1,866,142	£1,826,456	£1,716,722
Princetown	£1,969,324	£1,889,910	£1,820,663	£1,698,533
Rathgael	£913,534	£895,645	£877,407	£891,827
Silverstream	£1,019,761	£980,753	£925,754	£931,016

Ward Name	Receipts 2012/13	Receipts 2011/12	Receipts 2010/11	Receipts 2009/10
Spring Hill	£1,052,463	£996,292	£972,754	£943,035
Whitehill	£604,614	£594,835	£565,775	£545,019
Miscellaneous*	£1,331,877	£1,290,934	£1,235,806	£1,168,597
North Down Borough Council	£53,978,772	£51,491,523	£49,398,578	£48,223,778

*The 'Miscellaneous' ward relates to properties that cover more than one ward.

Totals may not add due to rounding

Drug Related Deaths: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many drug related deaths have been recorded in North Down, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30439/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The attached table shows the number of drug related¹ deaths registered in the North Down Constituency between 2008 and 2012, which is the latest available data.

Table 1: Number of Drug Related¹ Deaths Registered in the North Down Constituency, 2008 - 2012

Assembly Constituency	Registration Year				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
North Down	2	5	6	4	3
Northern Ireland	89	84	92	102	110

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.

Land and Property Services: Rates Relief

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 29660/11-15, to provide figures for 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, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 30464/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The information requested is not held at constituency level.

Access to Finance Implementation Panel

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the work to date of the Access to Finance Implementation Panel, established as recommended in the Economic Advisory Group's Review of Access to Finance for NI Business.

(AQW 30521/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I understand the work of the Access to Finance Implementation Panel has been progressing well since it was launched on 31 October 2013.

The Implementation Panel has developed a work plan for delivering on their terms of reference which I discussed with them when we met on 2 December 2013. Since then the Panel has been engaging with the local banks and business bodies in order to develop action plans to address the recommendations included in the Economic Advisory Group report on access to finance as well as any other relevant issues identified.

Legislative Changes to Family Law

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any plans to bring forward legislative changes to family law.

(AQW 30583/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There are no changes planned at present. However, in the coming months I hope to elicit views with regard to parental responsibility for unmarried fathers and contact with children in order to determine whether any legislative amendments are required.

Equal Pay Settlement

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel following his remarks made during Question Time on Monday 14 January regarding Equal Pay, where he stated "I have come to the clear conclusion that there is no legal way to extend the terms of the equal pay settlement to those members of staff", and "officials from each of our Departments will commence work on identifying possible solutions on the issue that we can then in turn take to our Executive colleagues", to detail (i) how he explains this apparent contradiction in statements; and (ii) whether the work mentioned has commenced and the progress made to date.

(AQW 30698/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There is no contradiction. In the first statement I was referring to the decision in the County Court cases which confirmed there is no legal liability and therefore no obligation on the NICS to make payments to these staff. In the second statement I was reflecting my desire to find a way to recognise the feelings of PSNI/NIO staff on this issue.

I have spoken to the Minister of Justice and am consulting with officials to investigate if there are any possible solutions to the issue that could be considered by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Postgraduate Education Budget: Medical and Dental Workforce Group

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a breakdown of the postgraduate education budget provided by his Department for the medical and dental workforce group, in each of the last three financial years, including the funding for (i) nursing development; (ii) doctors and consultants; and (iii) dental services.[R]

(AQW 30178/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Post graduate education and training for doctors and dentists is delivered by the Northern Ireland Medical Dental Training Agency

(NIMDTA). NIMDTA's budget for each of the last three years is set out in the table below. The budget includes a range of training courses for dentists, for GPs and for junior doctors. 85% of NIMDTA's budget is for salaries of junior doctors and dentists in training. This budget does not include any education and training courses for consultants.

The budget provided by the Department for post graduate education and training of nurses for each of the last three years is also included in the table

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Doctors/dentists (NIMDTA Funding)	£53,289,187	£52,728,348	£53,009,863
Nursing Development	£8,123,223	£8,123,222	£7,323,000

Spinal Fusion Surgery

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the waiting times for spinal fusion surgery in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; and for his assessment of the adequacy of specialist postoperative bed provision for patients undergoing spinal fusion procedures at Musgrave Park Hospital.

(AQW 30180/11-15)

Mr Poots: The waiting times for spinal fusion surgery in the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust, at 30th September 2013, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, is shown in the following table -

HSC Trust	Patients waiting for inpatient admission for spinal fusion surgery at 30th September 2013, by weeks waiting						Total Waiting
Belfast	0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-30	>30	
	7	15	20	11	7	20	80

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has advised that the post-operative care of patients undergoing spinal fusion surgery and whether or not they require any specialist bed will depend on the clinical need of that patient; this decision will be a medical decision. If specialist post-operative care is required, it will be in one of eight Enhanced Recovery beds, which I have been advised adequately meet current service demand.

Clinical Negligence Claims

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much funding his Department has allocated for potential clinical negligence claims in the 2014/15 financial year.

(AQW 30189/11-15)

Mr Poots: The financial planning process for the 2014/15 financial year, which considers all emerging pressures and savings opportunities available in determining how budgets are allocated across the Health and Social Care system, is currently in progress. Therefore at this stage and until this work has been completed, it is not possible to confirm the allocation for potential clinical negligence claims.

January Monitoring Round: Clinical Negligence Claims

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what proportion of the January Monitoring Round allocation to his Department will be spent on clinical negligence claims.

(AQW 30190/11-15)

Mr Poots: The January Monitoring allocation will play a critical role in helping to address a range of pressures in those front line services that affect the most vulnerable in our society, including looked after children and our elderly population.

Trusts have been experiencing increasing pressures and demands within unscheduled care / emergency admissions and domiciliary care services. There is also a focus on maintaining and improving the safety and quality of patient care across all our settings. In terms of children's services, there has been an increase in the numbers of Looked After Children during 2013/14, requiring additional expenditure on child protection registration, costs of care (in foster care or residential care), legal costs and social work costs. Funding has not been provided at this stage for clinical negligence cases.

January Monitoring Round: Spend

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how the £30m allocation from the January Monitoring Round will be spent.

(AQW 30191/11-15)

Mr Poots: The January Monitoring allocation will play a critical role in helping to address a range of pressures in those front line services that affect the most vulnerable in our society, including looked after children and our elderly population.

Trusts have been experiencing increasing pressures and demands within unscheduled care / emergency admissions and domiciliary care services. There is also a focus on maintaining and improving the safety and quality of patient care across all our settings. In terms of children's services, there has been an increase in the numbers of Looked After Children during 2013/14, requiring additional expenditure on child protection registration, costs of care (in foster care or residential care), legal costs and social work costs.

Confidentiality of Staff's Personal Details

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps the Southern Health and Social Care Trust is taking to protect the confidentiality of its staff's personal details, following staff IDs and job titles being sent openly in the post to all employees.

(AQW 30210/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust take the protection and confidentiality of staff data extremely seriously. It has in place a range of measures to ensure and protect the personal details of all staff, including password protected IT systems and locked manual filing systems. Its Human Resource and Finance departments ensure that a range of security checks are in place to verify the identity of any individual requesting personal data.

Haematology and Microbiology Specimens

Mr D McIlveen asked Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) haematology; and (ii) microbiology specimens, from each Health and Social Care Trust, have been sent to laboratories outside Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30234/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of haematology and microbiology specimens sent to laboratories outside Northern Ireland is not collected centrally and was requested from each Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust.

The information provided by HSC Trusts on the number of haematology and microbiology specimens sent to labs outside Northern Ireland is detailed in Table 1 and 2 overleaf for each of the last five years.

Some specialist tests cannot be efficiently provided within Northern Ireland as the volume of tests are too small to maintain competencies and are therefore sent to laboratories outside of Northern Ireland. These laboratories provide specialist and confirmatory testing for the whole of the UK.

Table 1: Number of haematology specimens sent to laboratories outside Northern Ireland in each of the last five years:

HSC Trust	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	1/4/2013 - 28/1/2014
Belfast ¹	90	116	125	111	62
Northern	4	5	6	6	6
South Eastern	3	3	4	3	2
Southern ²	-	2	1	6	6
Western	21	0	7	0	4

Source: HSC Trusts

Table 2: Number of microbiology specimens sent to laboratories outside Northern Ireland in each of the last five years:

HSC Trust	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	1/4/2013 - 28/1/2014
Belfast ³	2190	2334	2722	2963	3187
Northern	225	228	231	235	237
South Eastern ⁴	181	171	233	336	654
Southern ²	-	339	413	385	385
Western	569	500	455	398	364

Source: HSC Trusts

- 1 Data for the haematology figures in Belfast HSC Trust have been given for each calendar year instead of financial year.
- 2 Prior to 2010/11 data for Southern HSC Trust is not available.
- 3 Belfast HSC Trust have made estimates based on activity for some of the figures but indicated they are reflective of the volume of tests they refer.
- 4 The increase in microbiology tests during 2013/14 for South Eastern HSC Trust was largely due to laboratories participating in a prevalence study.

Detox Facilities: Londonderry and the North West

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he will address the need for detox facilities in Derry and the North West.

(AQW 30237/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Health and Social Care Trust has informed me that they provide a diverse range of services for individuals in the area experiencing difficulties associated with alcohol and drug use.

The Alcohol and Drug Service at Woodlea House is a multi-disciplinary team which specialises in assessment, treatment, advice, education and counselling. Alcohol and opiate detoxification is also available when clinically indicated. Based on assessment, alcohol detoxification can be provided in a person's home or in a variety of appropriate facilities. Opiate detoxification is managed by the

Substitute Prescribing aspect of this service. Substitute Prescribing offers a range of interventions for persons with opiate dependence or abuse of both prescribed and over the counter medication. The Alcohol and Drug Service also works in close association with a number of statutory, community and voluntary organisations.

The recent consultation by the Health & Social Care Board provided everyone with opportunity to influence what Tier 4 Inpatient Addiction Treatment Services, will look like in Northern Ireland over the next 5 to 10 years. The consultation has just closed, therefore the HSCB still need to analyse and consider all input before submitting finalised proposals on the way forward. Accordingly no decision has as yet been made about the future of Tier 4 addiction services across Northern Ireland.

Looked After Children: Independent Fostering Providers

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many looked after children, in each Health and Social Care Trust, have been placed with independent fostering providers in each of the last six months.

(AQW 30247/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not held centrally within the Department and has therefore been provided by the Health and Social Care Trusts.

There were 22 children placed with independent foster care providers in the last six months (July 2013 – December 2013). It was not possible to provide a monthly breakdown due to small numbers in some months and the need to avoid personal disclosure. Table 1 below provides a breakdown by Health and Social Care Trust area. The numbers relates to new placements during the period.

Table 1: Children Placed with Independent Foster Care Providers in the last six months by HSC Trusts area

HSC Trust	No. of Children
Belfast	11
Northern	< 5
South Eastern	< 5
Southern	< 5
Western	< 5
Total	22

Source: HSC Trusts.

Note these figures have not been validated by DHSSPS

Emergency Foster Care Placements

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many emergency foster care placements are available in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 30248/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not held centrally within the Department and has therefore been provided by the Health and Social Care Trusts.

There were 41 dedicated emergency foster care placements in Northern Ireland at 28th January 2014, these are time limited placements provided at short notice for children who need somewhere safe to stay. This number includes both places that were occupied and available. Table 2 below sets out the number of emergency foster care placements available by HSC Trust. HSC Trusts may also use existing approved respite and short-term carers in an emergency situation if a suitable match can be found.

Table 2: Emergency Foster Care Placements by HSC Trust area

HSC Trust	No. of Emergency Foster Care Placements
Belfast	0*
Northern	5
South Eastern	15
Southern	13
Western	8
Total	41

Source: HSC Trusts.

Note these figures have not been validated by DHSSPS

* Belfast HSC Trust does not have specific dedicated emergency foster care placements but would use other arrangements of approved respite and short-term carers in emergency situations.

Looked After Children: Independent Fostering Providers

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many looked after children, with high level needs, have been placed with independent fostering providers in the last six months.

(AQW 30249/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not held centrally within the Department and has therefore been provided by the Health and Social Care Trusts.

20 children with high level needs have been placed with independent foster care providers in the last six months (July 2013 – December 2013). High level needs has been interpreted to mean those children whose needs are so complex that a regular foster care placement would not be suitable.

Patient and Client Council

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cases were dealt with by each Patient and Client Council in each Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last three full calendar years.

(AQW 30262/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of cases dealt with by the Patient Client Council (PCC) for each Health & Social Care (HSC) Trust is detailed in the table below for each of the last three years.

HSC Trust	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast Trust	209	216	292
Northern Trust	174	184	289
South Eastern Trust	193	269	208
Southern Trust	166	136	198
Western Trust	132	175	194
Northern Ireland	874	980	1,181

Prisoners: Medication

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many prisoners have been provided with (i) anti-depressants; and (ii) any other prescribed medication, in the last three years.
(AQW 30273/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of prisoners provided with (i) anti-depressants; and (ii) any other prescribed medication, in each of the last three years is as follows

Year	Number of prisoners provided with anti-depressants	Number of prisoners provided with any other prescribed medication
31/01/11 – 31/01/12	1738	3950
31/01/12 – 31/01/13	1946	4067
31/01/13 – 31/01/14	1733	3491

Western Health and Social Care Trust: Locums

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the spending on locums in the Western Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three financial years; and to express that figure as a percentage of the overall spending on consultants' fees in the Trust in each of those three years.

(AQW 30274/11-15)

Mr Poots: Western Health and Social Care Trust has provided the following table to illustrate the spend on locum consultant costs within the Trust for the last 3 financial years. The 13/14 year to date figure is also included.

Year	2010/11 £'000	2011/12 £'000	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000 (9 months to 31/12/13)
Locum/Agency Consultant Costs	4,570	2,989	2,811	2,360
Total Consultant Costs	32,568	32,712	30,251	24,723
Percentage	14.03%	9.14%	9.29%	9.55%

Belfast City Hospital Ward 6 North

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many beds are available for the GP direct assessment and admission unit in Belfast City Hospital Ward 6 North; and whether the number of beds is sufficient to meet the demand.

(AQW 30275/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are four assessment beds in ward 6N of the Belfast City Hospital. If a patient requires admission, 6N is a 20-bed unit and beds can also be accessed in the respiratory wards, giving a bed capacity for medical patients of 64. The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has advised that there are sufficient beds on the Belfast City Hospital site to meet the current demand from GPs.

Royal Victoria Hospital: GP Direct Assessment

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a GP direct assessment and admission unit is fully operational in the Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 30276/11-15)

Mr Poots: Direct assessment for GPs to the Royal Victoria Hospital site has not yet been fully implemented but the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is working to deliver this.

GP Direct Assessment

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current configuration of each GP direct assessment and admission unit throughout the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 30277/11-15)

Mr Poots: Development of GP direct assessment and admission services is a matter for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. The Trust has advised that currently the Belfast City Hospital GP direct access and admission unit is the only such facility in its area. The Trust is working to implement GP direct assessment and admission on the Royal Victoria Hospital site. Belfast Trust staff are members of the Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) in Belfast, along with GPs and other health and social care providers. ICPs are currently developing investment proposals for the development of frail elderly services and a key aspect of the future model will be a single point of access for assessment, diagnostics, acute care at home, other treatment pathways and direct hospital admissions where appropriate.

GP Direct Assessment

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his plans and timeline for the future configuration of GP direct assessment and admission units throughout the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 30278/11-15)

Mr Poots: Development of GP direct assessment and admission services is a matter for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. The Trust has advised that currently the Belfast City Hospital GP direct access and admission unit is the only such facility in its area. The Trust is working to implement GP direct assessment and admission on the Royal Victoria Hospital site. Belfast Trust staff are members of the Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) in Belfast, along with GPs and other health and social care providers. ICPs are currently developing investment proposals for the development of frail elderly services and a key aspect of the future model will be a single point of access for assessment, diagnostics, acute care at home, other treatment pathways and direct hospital admissions where appropriate.

GP Direct Assessment

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department is liaising with GPs on the current and future planning of the configuration of GP direct assessment and admission units throughout the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 30279/11-15)

Mr Poots: Development of GP direct assessment and admission services is a matter for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. The Trust has advised that currently the Belfast City Hospital GP direct access and admission unit is the only such facility in its area. The Trust is working to implement GP direct assessment and admission on the Royal Victoria Hospital site. Belfast Trust staff are members of the Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) in Belfast, along with GPs and other health and social care providers. ICPs are currently developing investment proposals for the development of frail elderly services and a key aspect of the future model will be a single point of access for assessment, diagnostics, acute care at home, other treatment pathways and direct hospital admissions where appropriate.

Western Health and Social Care Trust: Dentistry Services

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 28146/11-15, how much has been spent on independent sector dentistry services for patients in the Western Health and Social Care Trust, in the current financial year to date.

(AQW 30281/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that information is not available in the format requested.

Waiting List for Dentistry Services

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 28146/11-15 and AQW 28148/11-15, given his assurances that patients would be treated in the independent sector where demand exceeds capacity for dentistry services, why the waiting list for dentistry services has increased at Altnagelvin Hospital.

(AQW 30282/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Health and Social Care Trust provide an oral maxillofacial service (OMFS), which includes dental, oral surgery and oral medicine; dental patients account for around 24% of the total referrals to this service. Whilst the waiting list for OMFS has increased, this is an indication of an increase in demand for oral medicine and facial skin cancers; the referrals do not demonstrate an increase in dental only referrals.

Chair of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether the now appointed Chair of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust was interviewed following the first advertising of the post, but then not appointed; (ii) how many applicants there were as a result of the re-advertisement; and (iii) whether the now appointed Chair of the Trust's Audit Committee was answerable for bad debt.

(AQW 30304/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The newly appointed Non- Executive Chair of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust was not interviewed following the first advertisement of that post. All interviews were conducted following the re-advertisement of the position.
- (ii) The re-advertisement yielded four applications bringing the total applications for the post to eight.
- (iii) The Audit Committee supports the Trust board and Accounting Officer with regard to their responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance and associated assurances, through a process of constructive challenge. The Non-Executive Chair of the Audit Committee has responsibility for ensuring that the work of the Audit Committee is effective, that the Committee is appropriately resourced, and is maintaining effective communication with stakeholders. By definition, the Audit Committee is not answerable for issues such as bad debts, as these are integral elements of the Accounting Officer role.

Children's Cardiac Surgery

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children's cardiac operations have been preformed in Belfast since his statement on 9 December 2013.

(AQW 30316/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have reported that between the 9th December 2013 and the 31st January 2014, there has been one children's cardiac operation performed in Belfast.

Children's Cardiac Surgery

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children from Northern Ireland have undergone cardiac surgery in Dublin since his statement on 9 December 2013.
(AQW 30317/11-15)

Mr Poots: There have been no cardiac surgery procedures on children from Northern Ireland undertaken in Dublin since the Ministerial statement on 9 December 2013.

In the period April 2013 to January 2014, 13 children from Northern Ireland have undergone cardiac surgery in Dublin (4 emergency cases, 5 urgent cases and 4 elective cases). Given the small number of Northern Ireland cases undertaken in Dublin there will be monthly variances in the activity. Each paediatric cardiac surgery case is subject to a clinical decision making process to assess the most appropriate location for surgery.

International Independent Review on Children's Heart Surgery

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the international independent review on children's heart surgery lead by Professor Mayer into the viability of a two site network on the island of Ireland, which is expected to deliver a report in June 2014.
(AQW 30318/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has been engaging with the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland and the Expert Group in developing the project work plan for the Assessment. The Expert Group of Dr Mayer, Dr Moran and Dr Sinclair, have been appointed to carry out an Assessment of a potential all-island service for the future delivery of Congenital Cardiology and Cardiac Surgical services for both adults and children recommending the most appropriate model that meets the population health needs and other requirements of both jurisdictions.

Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department: Nurses

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much the Northern Health and Social Care Trust spent on agency nurses in Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department in each month since September 2013; and which agencies were used.
(AQW 30331/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information below has been provided directly by the Northern HSC Trust. The costs identified are from the Trust's financial accounting system. Agency invoices are paid in arrears therefore the expenditure detailed represents the spend for the preceding month.

Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department

Month	Expenditure on Agency nursing staff (£)
September 2013	37,312
October 2013	11,758
November 2013	5,306
December 2013	1,628
Total Spend	56,004

The Northern HSC Trust has provided the following information regarding the agencies used:

Contracted Agencies

- Kennedy Recruitment
- First Choice
- Diamond Recruitment
- MPA Recruitment
- Premiere People
- Trust Caring & Nursing

Non-Contracted Agencies

- Rutledge
- Balmoral
- Scottish Nursing Guild

Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department: Nurses

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many agency nurses have been used in Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department in each month since September 2013; and what was the hourly rate paid to each agency.

(AQW 30334/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information below has been provided by the Northern HSC Trust. The number of agency nurses used has been derived by the Northern Trust from Total Spend Analysis.

Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department

Month	Number of Agency nurses used
September 2013	14.93
October 2013	4.7
November 2013	2.12
December 2013	0.65
Total	22.4

The Northern Trust is unable to provide the level of detail requested in respect of the precise hourly rate paid to each agency. Recruitment Agency Services contract rates vary dependant on the provider and the period of employment. The Northern HSC Trust advises that for Band 5 nurses the rates can range from £10.25 per hour for a standard Mon-Fri working day to £22.50 per hour for Bank/Public Holidays in circumstances where the nurse has been in post over 1 year.

Non-contracted Agencies can charge up to £60.95 per hour however it should be noted that this rate is for a Specialist Nurse working unsociable hours in an emergency setting.

Accident and Emergency Units: Admissions

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many admissions to Accident and Emergency Units occurred at each Acute Hospital in each of the last eight full calendar years.
(AQW 30348/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the number of attendances (new and unplanned reviews) at each emergency care department in Northern Ireland.

Information on the number of new and unplanned review attendances at emergency care departments is available for each year since 2007/08 and is detailed in the overleaf.

**Number of New and Unplanned Review Attendances at Emergency Care Departments
(2007/08 – 2013/14 1)**

Hospital	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14¹
Belfast City Hospital ²	42,836	44,769	42,840	43,990	24,701	0	0
Mater Hospital	40,371	41,220	39,457	41,405	42,845	43,087	33,437
Royal Hospital	50,927	68,428	67,457	73,677	81,094	92,618	70,393
RBHSC	27,192	31,372	30,727	31,683	32,478	32,976	24,798
Antrim	59,859	64,612	65,594	70,902	71,175	70,859	53,754
Whiteabbey	20,623	20,955	19,006	9,860	8,614	8,306	6,405
Mid Ulster	17,885	17,700	17,251	7,587	6,133	7,115	6,042
Causeway	36,730	40,232	41,367	43,695	43,080	42,771	31,806
Ulster Hospital	66,493	71,301	72,110	73,833	77,757	82,436	62,218
Ards MIU	9,865	9,545	9,144	9,122	9,076	9,071	7,501
Bangor MIU	10,561	10,550	11,384	12,308	12,240	10,154	9,258
Lagan Valley Hospital	29,435	31,775	32,128	32,559	27,443	26,297	20,705
Downe Hospital	21,964	23,209	23,398	22,064	20,124	20,697	16,344
Craigavon Hospital	65,188	70,093	71,281	71,522	71,645	71,746	55,035
Daisyhill Hospital	32,316	33,411	34,269	36,464	37,927	39,373	30,842
South Tyrone Hospital	13,280	14,946	15,491	17,151	18,751	19,902	16,305
Armagh/Mullinure	8,193	8,086	7,574	7,763	7,793	7,320	5,241
Altnagelvin	45,362	50,748	53,455	53,570	53,045	53,826	42,666
Erne Hospital / South West	22,131	23,547	26,296	26,806	27,662	28,387	22,189
Tyrone County	20,883	19,992	12,732	13,920	15,258	15,474	12,359
Northern Ireland	642,094	696,491	692,961	699,881	688,841	682,415	527,298

1 2013 refers to April to December 2013

2 Belfast City closed on a temporary basis in November 2011.

Regional Mother and Baby Unit

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the establishment of a regional mother and baby unit.

(AQW 30351/11-15)

Mr Poots: It was originally planned to develop a joint Women's and Children's Hospital on the Royal Group of Hospitals site. However, due to budgetary constraints a decision was taken to progress the two projects separately – a Women's Hospital and a Children's Hospital.

The new Maternity Hospital will be located beside the Critical Care Building on the Royal Group of Hospitals site and will be linked to it by a bridge. The top 3 floors of the new Critical Care building will accommodate post natal beds and outpatient services, with delivery theatres, birthing rooms, antenatal services and neonatology being provided from the new build Maternity Hospital. Work is underway and the hospital is currently scheduled for completion in mid 2017.

An outline business case for a new Regional Children's Hospital has been developed by the Belfast Trust and is currently being considered by DFP. Subject to receiving business case approval shortly, the new Children's Hospital could be completed in 2020/21.

Young People: Inpatient Mental Health Treatment

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many young people under the age of 13 years received inpatient mental health treatment in each of the last four years. **(AQW 30360/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Information on the number of young people aged 12 years and under receiving inpatient mental health treatment is not collected centrally and was requested from each Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust.

The information provided by HSC Trusts on the number of children aged 12 years and under admitted for inpatient mental health treatment is detailed in the table below for each of the last four years.

Number of Children Aged 12 & Under Admitted for Inpatient Mental Health Treatment (2010/11 – 2013/14)

Year	Number
2010/11	13
2011/12	10
2012/13	6
2013/14*	3
Total	32

* Covers period 1 April 2013 - 31 December 2013

Over the last four years, 32 children aged 12 years and under were admitted for inpatient mental health treatment, all of which were admitted to Beechcroft (Regional Child and Adolescent Inpatient Mental Health Unit).

Children: Complex Mental Health Needs

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provision is planned for children with very complex mental health needs, in addition to local outpatient services. **(AQW 30361/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The Bamford vision is that people with mental illness should be treated in the community close to their families and friends, unless there is a clinical reason for not doing so.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Northern Ireland are provided through a stepped care model and based on the clinical needs of the individual.

CAMHS are delivered through four community based teams, with Belfast HSC Trust providing services to both the Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas. These CAMHS teams are currently being developed to ensure primary mental health teams and home treatment crisis response services are available across the Region.

In addition to these community-based services, inpatient care for young people is provided in the 33 bedded Regional Unit (Beechcroft) on the Forster Green Hospital site in Belfast.

A number of voluntary sector organisations also provide support to children and young people with mental health needs.

Regional Inpatient Mental Health Provision for Young People

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the regional inpatient mental health provision for young people under the age of 13 years.

(AQW 30362/11-15)

Mr Poots: Inpatient mental health care for children and young people is provided in Beechcroft, the Regional Child and Adolescent Inpatient Mental Health Unit, located on the Forster Green Hospital site in Belfast.

Young People with Mental Ill Health: Inpatient Beds

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many inpatient beds are available regionally for young people under 18 years old with mental ill health.

(AQW 30363/11-15)

Mr Poots: Inpatient mental health care for children and young people is provided in Beechcroft, the Regional Child and Adolescent Inpatient Mental Health Unit, located on the Forster Green Hospital site in Belfast.

At 31st January 2014, there were 31 beds available regionally for young people aged 18 years and under with mental ill health.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what facilities exist within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust for people attending Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services; and which of these facilities are within the Down District.

(AQW 30370/11-15)

Mr Poots: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Northern Ireland are provided through a stepped care model, based on the clinical needs of the individual. Services are provided by four CAMHS teams, with Belfast HSC Trust providing services to both the Belfast and South Eastern HSC Trust areas, including the Down District.

Inpatient care for young people, when required, is provided in Beechcroft, the Regional Child and Adolescent Inpatient Mental Health Unit at the Forster Green Hospital site in Belfast.

Within the South Eastern HSC Trust, CAMHS are provided from two community based teams, one in Newtownards and one in Lisburn. The team in Lisburn also provides outreach to Downpatrick. These are multidisciplinary teams which specialise in the assessment and intervention for under 18s with mental health needs and their families/carers.

Services for children and young people presenting in crisis, and requiring assessment and intervention within 24/48 hours, are provided by a mobile Crisis Assessment Intervention Team, available 7 days per week to GPs and Emergency Departments.

There are also specialist services for young people with eating disorders or drug and alcohol issues. A number of voluntary sector organisations also provide support to young people with mental health problems.

Deep Brain Stimulation Treatment

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will consider Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) as part of an area of cooperation on the island of Ireland; and what is the annual cost of sending patients to England for DBS treatment.

(AQW 30371/11-15)

Mr Poots: The commissioning of health services is the responsibility of the Health and Social Care Board. My Department will ask the Board to give consideration to potential options for providing a deep brain stimulation service, including on a cross-border basis, subject to available resources and other competing priorities.

Detailed costings for patients who have received deep brain stimulation surgery in specialist centres in Great Britain are not available. However the Health and Social Care Board estimate that in the period 2011-2013 the cost was around £1m based on NHS tariffs.

Aircraft Transporting Patients from Northern Ireland

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many precautionary landings have been recorded with aircraft transporting patients from Northern Ireland to, and from, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, in each of the last three years; (ii) whether there is a contract in place for the air transport of local Health Service patients to and from hospitals within the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland; and if so, (iii) to provide details of this contract.

(AQW 30374/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Patients, including children, are flown by air ambulance outside Northern Ireland to access a range of specialist treatments which are not routinely available in Northern Ireland to ensure the best possible patient outcomes. Around 250 patient transfers to and from GB take place each year. In the last three years the number of precautionary landings were as follows:
 - 2011/12 – 0 (zero)
 - 2012/13 – 0 (zero)
 - 2013/14 – 1 (one)
- (ii) An air ambulance contract is in place to support the transfer and retrieval of patients from Northern Ireland accessing specialist care outside Northern Ireland including the Republic of Ireland. The majority of journeys on the island of Ireland are undertaken using road transport.
- (iii) The document – ‘A Framework Scope and Service Specification for Air Ambulance/Air Transfer Service for Northern Ireland’ details the services to be provided under the contract for the air ambulance service for Northern Ireland. It is available from the Health and Social Care Board, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS, email: Enquiry.hscb@hscni.net . Tel 028 90321313

Public Awareness of Essential Tremor

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 29071/11-15, whether an awareness campaign publicising the existence of Essential Tremor would be of benefit to the wider public.

(AQW 30388/11-15)

Mr Poots: I would refer the Member to my answer to AQW 29071/11-15.

Slievemore Nursing Unit, Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 26154/11-15, for an update on the future of Slievemore Nursing Unit, Derry.

(AQW 30389/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are currently five remaining patients in Sleivemore Nursing Unit. In light of the concerns of the families of residents I asked the Commissioner for Older People to facilitate mediation between residents, families and the Western Trust. That process remains ongoing with a timeframe for completion of the mediation process yet to be agreed.

Emergency Departments: Staff

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the discussions he has had with (i) his ministerial counterparts in the UK; (ii) Health and Social Care Trusts; and (iii) Royal Colleges to address the ongoing shortages of staff in Emergency Departments.

(AQW 30391/11-15)

Mr Poots: Parts (i) and (ii): I liaise regularly on a range of matters with my ministerial counterparts in the UK, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and have frequent discussions with individual health and social care Trusts on how to address the ongoing shortage of staff in Emergency Departments.

Part (iii): At my request a meeting has been held recently with the College of Emergency Medicine to discuss the pressures facing Emergency Departments, and my Department will continue to work with the College and HSC in seeking to address this UK-wide difficulty.

Residents in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Dementia

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety pursuant to AQW 30041/11-15, whether he will undertake an investigation into the reasons for the almost 40 percent greater prevalence of dementia among residents in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area compared to the Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 30405/11-15)

Mr Poots: The response to AQW 30041/11-15 expresses prevalence 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. Prevalence rates can therefore be affected by general population characteristics such as age profile. For example, NISRA 2012 population figures indicate that there are 30% more people aged 65 or over in the South Eastern Trust than in the Western Trust. As dementia prevalence rates increase with age, it would be expected that the prevalence rate of dementia would be greater in areas with an older population.

In light of this and, in the context of the Alzheimer's Society study "Mapping the Dementia Gap 2013" which shows that, expressed as a percentage of the population estimated to have dementia, the Western Trust's diagnosis rate (67.4%) is the second highest in Northern Ireland, I do not feel that an investigation is necessary at this point.

Going the Extra Mile Scheme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how much has been expended on the G.E.M. Scheme in each of the last five years ; and (ii) the criteria used to make the awards.

(AQW 30407/11-15)

Mr Poots:

(i) Expenditure on the GEM Scheme in each of the last five years is set out in the table below.

Year	Number of Young People on Scheme	Expenditure
2008/09	182	£895,132
2009/10	206	£1,123,288

Year	Number of Young People on Scheme	Expenditure
2010/11	221	£1,161,082
2011/12	222	£1,208,061
2012/13	231	£1,387,424

Source: Health & Social Care Board

(ii) The criteria used to make the awards is as follows:

The aim of the Going the Extra Mile (GEM) scheme is to promote the continuity and stability of living arrangements in post care life for young people aged 18 to 21 years.

The Scheme is available to young people who are in foster care at age 16/17 and have a minimum period of being looked after of 13 weeks from age 14. As part of the Pathway Planning process the carer/s and young person, in discussion with the relevant Health and Social Care Trust, agree that this is a suitable and viable option. The arrangement is agreed and formalised through the young person's Pathway/Care Plan Review and is a continuation of the looked-after child's placement arrangements. Carers who qualify for the scheme include: non-kinship foster carers, former foster carers (approved as suitable for the scheme), kinship foster carers including friends and extended family. While the scheme also aims to promote better outcomes for young people leaving care in relation to education, training, and employment (ETE), this activity is not a condition of scheme access.

Expenditure on Departmental Ministerial Travel

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total expenditure on departmental Ministerial travel in the periods (i) January to June 2013; and (ii) July to December 2013.

(AQW 30408/11-15)

Mr Poots: The total expenditure incurred on departmental Ministerial travel is as follows:

- (i) January to June 2013 £ 8167.95
- (ii) July to December 2013 £ 7897.86

Altnagelvin Hospital: Orthopaedic Surgeon

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is an orthopaedic surgeon at Altnagelvin Hospital; and if not, if children are required to travel to Belfast to receive their treatment.

(AQW 30412/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the paediatric orthopaedic service. Emergency paediatric trauma and orthopaedic (T&O) surgery is provided in the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHST) by consultants from the T&O service in the WHST; children of all ages are treated within this service.

WHST orthopaedic consultants also treat children aged 13 and over for elective orthopaedic surgery and outpatient care.

Elective paediatric orthopaedic surgery for children aged under 13 years is provided in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHST); paediatric orthopaedic outpatient services, for this patient group are provided at Altnagelvin Hospital by paediatric surgeons from the BHST.

Continuing Healthcare Package

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Health Service operates a continuing healthcare package.

(AQW 30428/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts are responsible for carrying out assessments of need for individuals with continuing care needs. As set out in Circular ECCU 1/2010 'Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance' the outcome of the assessment could be either a primary need for health care, where the support package is provided free or social care for which a means tested contribution may be required.

Within our integrated system, it is clinicians, together with other health and social care professional colleagues, who are responsible for making decisions about appropriate long term care, in consultation with the client and their families and carers.

Social Media Game Neknomination: Dangers

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what level of resources are being targeted to raise public awareness about the dangers to health of the social media game Neknomination.

(AQW 30458/11-15)

Mr Poots: Neknomination is a relatively new development in Northern Ireland, which unfortunately has the potential to have tragic consequences. The Public Health Agency released a statement on 3 February 2014, stating that Neknomination can be a highly dangerous practice, that real friends don't neknominat, informing people of their right to say 'no', and encouraging people to stand up against this "game". They also appeared on the media to promote these messages, which have been shared through Facebook and Twitter.

Through the overarching strategy, the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2, we focus on raising awareness of the generic risks of alcohol excessive consumption – in both the long and the short term. The Public Health Agency manages the 'Know Your Limits' website which can be accessed at: <http://www.knowyourlimits.info/>. This website provides useful information about the effects of harmful drinking practices as well as the health benefits of reducing alcohol consumption. In addition, the PHA undertakes and commissions work at a local level that seeks to raise awareness of issues that pose risks to people's health – this type of work is usually targeted at those deemed to be most at risk, and is taken forward through community support and education.

Pregnant Women: Group B Strep

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many pregnant women were diagnosed as having Group B Strep in each of the last three calendar years.

(AQW 30459/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of pregnant women diagnosed with Group B Streptococcus (GBS) is not routinely collected.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety has an Action Plan on GBS which is divided into three main work areas: Education; Surveillance and Notification; Research and Development. One of the actions includes the development of a laboratory request form which will record if a woman is pregnant, even if the test request is not pregnancy related. Chief Medical Officer has written to the Pathology Network asking them to take this work forward and a sub-group is being established to complete this work.

Care Orders: Family Law Cases Originating as Private Law Cases

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many applications each Health and Social Care Trust has made for a Care Order in Family Law cases originating as Private Law Cases, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30475/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not centrally available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on how many occasions since May 2007 has his Department not accepted the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding.

(AQW 30529/11-15)

Mr Poots: There have been no occasions since May 2007 in which the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety has not accepted a recommendation made by the Ombudsman.

Financial Transactions Capital

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department intends to make any bids for funding under Financial Transactions Capital; and what projects his Department is exploring for delivery using this capital.

(AQW 30531/11-15)

Mr Poots: As part of the 2014/15 Capital Budget exercise, my Department successfully bid for £5m under Financial Transactions Capital, split equally between a scheme for Dentists and GPs. It is planned that this funding could be utilised to support investment in premises and equipment across GP and Dental Practices.

DFP have advised that it is likely that increasing levels of FTC funding will become available in the period 2014/15 to 2017/18, for which Departments will be entitled to bid. My Department is currently exploring options for future use of this funding stream.

Her Majesty's Armed Forces: Veterans

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what respite services are currently available for veterans of Her Majesty's Armed Forces with a disability.

(AQW 30537/11-15)

Mr Poots: Ex-service personnel have the same access to statutory primary and secondary care services, including respite services, as the rest of the population. This is underpinned by my Department's protocol for delivering health and social care services to members of the armed forces, their families, and veterans.

In addition, the Armed Forces Liaison Forum, which meets regularly and which my Department chairs, provides a valuable forum for departmental officials, representatives from health and social care, Defence Medical Services staff, and veterans' organisations to discuss relevant health and social care issues.

Her Majesty's Armed Forces: Veterans

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the funding options available for organisations which represent veterans of Her Majesty's Armed Forces with a disability to access the provision of respite facilities.

(AQW 30538/11-15)

Mr Poots: Ex-service personnel continue to have the same access to statutory primary and secondary care services, including respite services, as the rest of the population. This is underpinned by my Department's protocol for delivering health and social care services to members of the armed forces, their families, and veterans.

Bangor Minor Injuries Unit

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total number of patients who visited Bangor Minor Injuries Unit on (i) Monday; (ii) Tuesday; (iii) Wednesday; (iv) Thursday; (v) Friday; (vi) Saturday; and (vii) Sunday, between 23 November 2012 and 23 November 2013.

(AQW 30625/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the number of attendances (new and unplanned reviews) at Bangor Minor Injuries Unit.

Information on the number of new and unplanned review attendances at Bangor Minor Injuries Unit between 23rd November 2012 and 23rd November 2013 is detailed in the table below.

Number of New and Unplanned Review Attendances at Bangor Minor Injuries Unit, By Day of Week (23rd November 2012 - 23rd November 2013)

Day of Week	Number
Sunday	667
Monday	2,487
Tuesday	1,905
Wednesday	1,878
Thursday	1,768
Friday	1,862
Saturday	1,036
Total	11,603

Source: Admissions & Discharges Universe

Between 23rd November 2012 and 23rd November 2013, there were 11,603 attendances at the Bangor Minor Injuries Unit.

Coronary Care Centres of Excellence

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the expected impact that the introduction of two Coronary Care Centres of Excellence will have on existing coronary care units across each trust area, and particularly on the Downe Hospital unit.

(AQW 30628/11-15)

Mr Poots: The question is assumed to refer to the establishment of two centres which can offer primary PCI (percutaneous coronary intervention) to patients suffering the most severe form of heart attack, known as STEMIs (ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction) and is capable of undertaking the procedure 24/7.

The primary PCI service in the east of the Province, located in the Royal Victoria Hospital, commenced on 30 September 2013. The service in the west, to be located in Altnagelvin Hospital, is expected to commence in the summer of 2014. Eligible patients are taken directly to the closest primary PCI centre. For those whose local hospital is not that centre, repatriation to a coronary care unit in a hospital closer to home is arranged after the procedure.

The treatment reduces total length of stay in hospital for a STEMI heart attack from an average of 5 days to 3, so all coronary care units, including the unit in the Downe Hospital, will see a reduction in occupied bed days. In addition, the 24/7 operation of cath labs (catheterisation laboratory) in both centres is expected to shorten the waiting time for cath lab procedures for other coronary care unit inpatients, including patients who have had non-STEMI heart attacks.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Facility

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are plans to open a post-traumatic stress disorder facility.

(AQW 30671/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has currently no plans to open a post-traumatic stress disorder facility. In keeping with the Bamford vision, my Department's priority for development of mental health services will continue to be focussed on the improvement of community-based services.

The development of psychological therapies, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in the treatment of PTSD, continues to be a priority for my Department and the HSC. Currently £6.5M is being spent recurrently on psychological therapies, with recent investment being used to develop of Primary Talking Therapy hubs.

Downe Hospital: 24-Hour Accident and Emergency

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline if he is committed to the restoration of 24 hour Accident and Emergency services at the Downe Hospital, Downpatrick.

(AQO 5520/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no proposals for a 24-hour accident and emergency service at the Downe Hospital. Prior to the recent temporary reduction in the emergency department's opening hours, a 24/7 urgent care co-operative operated at the Downe Hospital in which the emergency department opened from 8am to 10pm and an enhanced GP Out of Hours service, which is co-located, provided urgent care between 10pm and 8am. I have clearly stated that I expect the HSC Board and South Eastern Trust to work to ensure that this model of care is sustained and that the temporary reduction in opening hours ends as soon as possible.

Health and Social Care: Data Collection

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made in developing a data collection process which will produce robust and consistent information from independent providers in the health and social care sectors.

(AQO 5521/11-15)

Mr Poots: I assume the Member is asking about data collection on terminations of pregnancy by independent clinics in Northern Ireland.

There is no legislative basis to require the independent sector to provide information on lawful health procedures. Officials are exploring the legislative and regulatory options to ensure that information is collected in all sectors, including the private/independent sector.

The public consultation on termination of pregnancy guidance recognised the importance of robust information on this subject. A new system of data collection in HSC facilities has been developed and I intend to launch this shortly.

Ovarian Cancer

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of a single issue campaign on ovarian cancer.

(AQO 5522/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Public Health Agency (PHA) is currently developing a cancer awareness campaign for Northern Ireland which will prioritise ovarian cancer as an area within the campaign. In order to ensure that the campaign is as effective as possible the PHA is evaluating current cancer awareness campaigns and conducting an evidence review. This review will determine which messages have the best effect and the best context in which these messages should be delivered; be that as part of a general or single issue campaign.

Organ Donation

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will outline his strategy to increase the number of organs available for transplant.

(AQO 5523/11-15)

Mr Poots: In July 2013 I launched the NHS Blood and Transplant's (NHSBT) new UK-wide organ donation and transplantation strategy, 'Taking Organ Donation to 2020 – A UK Strategy'.

This strategy was developed by NHSBT in collaboration with all UK Health Departments and all those involved in organ donation and transplantation, including professional bodies, patient groups, transplant surgeons and the wider health service. The overall aim is to match world-class performance in organ donation and transplantation.

In addition to the actions set out in this strategy, at my request the Public Health Agency (PHA) has completed a major survey to test local public opinion on organ donation. The findings of that survey will be addressed by a public information campaign which the PHA will launch on 12th February aimed at encouraging people to let their family know if they wish to donate their organs at the end of life. The aim is to increase public awareness of organ donation and the number of donors. Following this campaign the PHA will conduct a second public attitudes survey into organ donation. When the results of that survey are known I will be in a position to reach a decision on whether we need to move forward with statutory measures as an additional mechanism.

I firmly believe that increased public awareness, education on the key issues and the further development of transplantation services through UK-wide action is the right way forward for organ donation in Northern Ireland at this time.

Nurses Employed by the Health Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how does the number of nurses employed in the health service compare with when he took up office in early summer 2011.

(AQO 5524/11-15)

Mr Poots: There were 13,649.0 whole-time equivalent Qualified Nurses/Midwives and 3,866.5 whole-time equivalent Nurse/Midwife Support staff employed at 31st March 2011 (a total whole-time equivalent of 17,515.5). At 30th September 2013 there were 14,179.6 whole-time equivalent Qualified Nurses/Midwives and 4,013.5 whole-time equivalent Nurse/Midwife Support staff (a total whole-time equivalent of 18,193.1).

This is an increase of 677.7 whole-time equivalent in the Nursing and Midwifery workforce between 31st March 2011 and 30th September 2013; equating to a 3.9% increase in Qualified Nurses/Midwives, a 3.8% increase in Nurse/Midwife support (or an overall whole-time equivalent increase of 3.9% in the Nursing and Midwifery workforce).

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he will ensure that the revised suicide prevention strategy will support and enhance the suicide prevention work in areas of high social need.

(AQO 5525/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Public Health Agency (PHA) implements the refreshed Protect Life Strategy through a thematic action plan on suicide prevention and mental health promotion. In line with the action plan, and associated local action plans, the PHA is delivering more intense and sustained interventions in the 20% most deprived wards and to population groups known to be at greater risk of suicide.

These enhanced services include: additional self harm and family support services; training for “gatekeepers” such as teachers, youth workers, primary care staff, and sports coaches; counselling and complementary therapies; drug and alcohol awareness; crisis response; and support programmes for rural communities, Travellers, prisoners, and the LGB&T community.

Health and Social Care: E-Health

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the progress of utilising eHealth within the health and social care sectors.

(AQO 5526/11-15)

Mr Poots: We continue to make significant progress in driving forward the eHealth agenda. Only yesterday I attend a ‘Leaders in eHealth Forum’ event in the Long Gallery at which the pathways to introducing and commissioning new eHealth and eLearning technologies to improve patient outcomes were explored. The event highlighted the training and assessment of clinicians as one area where new technological solutions are coming increasingly to the fore and I will be watching developments in this arena with interest.

One of the most significant developments in recent months has been the implementation across the Health and Social Care sector of the Electronic Care Record. The ECR is a web-based portal system which brings together summary information from hospitals and GP systems across Northern Ireland, giving health professionals a single, secure overview of key information about their patients and clients. This is facilitating better, faster, safer decision-making and improving the quality and efficiency of the services provided.

My Department is also continuing to work closely with DETI and Invest NI on the implementation of the recommendations of the Economy and Jobs Initiative Task and Finish Group. These include the development of a Connected Health Integration Platform which would provide a framework to facilitate interaction between different healthcare ICT systems and could potentially offer significant opportunities for data sharing and data analytics. Also recommended is the establishment in Northern Ireland of an International Health Analytics Centre, with the aim of harnessing the large volumes of data generated by the health and social care sector to support research and improve patient outcomes, potentially positioning Northern Ireland as a centre of excellence in this field.

eHealth is a fundamental component of our healthcare transformation programme. It is imperative that we maintain the current momentum and maximise the opportunities – both health-related and economic - which it presents.

Department of Justice

Prison Service Staff: Payment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice why Prison Service staff who left the service in March 2012 have not received the correct payment on the calculation of their annual leave; and to outline the plans his Department have to rectify this.

(AQW 30285/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): Prison Service staff who left in March 2012 were paid in line with the terms of the Annual Leave Chapter of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) HR Handbook relating to cash compensation for leaving the NICS.

There are no plans to revisit these payments as they were made in accordance with NICS policy.

Budget for Coroners Courts

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice to detail the budget for Coroners Courts in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30295/11-15)

Mr Ford: The annual budget for 2011/12 to 2013/14 for the Coroners Service for Northern Ireland is:

Financial Year	Budget (£million)
2011/12	2.43
2012/13	2.27
2013/14	3.15

Prisoners: Medication

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of prisoners currently in each Prison Service facility, including the Young Offenders Centre and Juvenile Justice Centre; and of these, how many are in charge of their own medication.

(AQW 30299/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below contains the number of prisoners currently in each Prison Service facility and the Juvenile Justice Centre at the 28 January 2014.

Maghaberry	1076
Magilligan	549
Hydebank Wood YOC	168
Hydebank Wood Females	74
Juvenile Justice Centre	25

The information regarding the number of prisoners who are in charge of their own medication is not readily available in the form requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

In relation to those in the care of the Juvenile Justice Centre none are in charge of their own medication.

Capital Works Programme: New Women's Prison

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to taking forward the Capital Works Programme, whether the intended timescale proposed for the new women's prison will proceed alongside that for Magilligan Prison.

(AQW 30310/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following my updates to the Assembly on March 19th and October 21st 2013, NIPS Officials continue their work in developing the plans for all the projects included in the Estate Strategy including that of the rebuilding of Magilligan and the development of a new women's prison.

Both of these projects, and all of the others included in the Capital Works programme, are subject to following the business case process and approval by the Department of Finance and Personnel. As such it is not possible to state the timescale for each project. NIPS Officials are, however, pressing ahead with the development of the projects and their business cases with the objective of securing approval as quickly as is possible.

Prisoners: Medication

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) when the Northern Ireland Prison Service introduced an assessment to ascertain the suitability of a prisoner being in charge of their own medication; (ii) the criteria used in drawing up the assessment; and (iii) to provide a copy of the current assessment template and all previous versions since its introduction.

(AQW 30329/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer to my response to AQW 30298. NIPS does not currently have information which refers to the period when in-possession medication was introduced. The South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust is responsible for provision of healthcare services, and continues to provide in-possession medication.

The assessment template is the responsibility of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

Protection of Vulnerable Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of whether the protection of the rights of prisoners to have free association is compromising the human rights of the vulnerable prisoners to be kept safe from threat, attack, particularly in respect of drugs issues; and to detail his plans to address this to ensure that vulnerable prisoners are protected.

(AQW 30330/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service core Statement of Purpose is to 'Improve public safety by reducing the risk of re-offending through the management and rehabilitation of offenders in custody'.

The process of rehabilitation is delivered through a regime which provides offenders with the opportunity to reform their lives addressing their offending behaviour, and much of this is achieved through participation in regime activities and the normalisation and testing of behaviour through association with others.

When association takes place adequate supervision ensures that safety and good order are maintained. Work Area Risk Assessments have been produced and are reviewed regularly, to determine the level of supervision deemed appropriate.

The service has a duty of care toward vulnerable prisoners which it takes seriously, and has a range of support mechanisms available to enable it to discharge that responsibility.

Performance measures have also been developed to monitor the level of assaults within prisons and action is taken if risks appear to have increased.

It should be recognised that the external oversight and inspection of prison regimes in Northern Ireland has to date encouraged the Prison Service to increase opportunities for association.

Prisoner Ombudsman's Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the report by the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland on the death of Mr D, and in attempt to gauge the level of drugs supply in prisons, whether he plans to introduce a short-term pilot whereby no prisoner is in charge of any medication and compare the results to a similar timeframe outside of this pilot.

(AQW 30332/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans to introduce such a pilot as described. NIPS has recently achieved an increase in drug finds, including prescribed medication, due to effective intelligence led searching and joint working with partners such as PSNI. The majority of prisoners do not abuse their medication and the introduction of such a pilot would have significant impact on prison resources.

Legal Aid Reform: Firms

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, since the introduction of Legal Aid reform, how many law firms and/or solicitors have made representations opposing reform; and of these, how many appear on the most recently released list of the top 100 firms receiving Legal Aid.

(AQW 30383/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since my first public consultation on legal aid reform in November 2012, my Department has received representations from 31 law firms and/or solicitors opposing reform. Of these, 12 firms appear in the latest list of the top 100 firms receiving legal aid.

Prisons: Drug-Taking and Drug-Dealing

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of whether it is acceptable for prison officers to openly state they are aware of an active drug dealer or taker in the prison or which prisoners are bullying vulnerable prisoners for medication, clearly indicating that staff are very much aware of what is going on and yet nothing is being done, and to detail (i) the procedure for prison officers in these instances; (ii) the support offered to ensure they are able to carry out their relevant duties; and (iii) whether the discipline and control of drug-taking or drug-dealing prisoners is an issue which is prohibiting staff.

(AQW 30386/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prison Officers are expected to act with due diligence in regard to drugs within prison in line with the Northern Ireland Prison Service stated zero tolerance policy and the actions expected of them as Prison Officers under the Northern Ireland Prison Service Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics and Values, both of which are available in the Assembly library.

If an officer has clear evidence of any of the breaches of discipline as described then he/she can place a prisoner on report, the case will be considered by a Governor and if appropriate the prisoner will have sanctions imposed. In addition there is a system in place whereby prison staff can report on intelligence which when collated can lead to action taken against guilty parties.

Prison staff are provided with training commensurate with their role. There is in place a command structure which allows staff to raise concerns with their manager. All staff are suitably supported in fulfilling their challenging role.

Prison staff are trained to carry out their role. Staff have access to their line manager if they have concerns and wish to report any incident which comes to their attention, including prisoners misusing drugs. Staff and line management do have access to a range of support, including the disciplinary procedures outlined above, the Progressive Regime and Earned Privileges procedures, which decides a prisoner's regime level, and access to drug support services provided by the South Eastern Trust.

Proposed Legal Aid Cuts

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the proposed Legal Aid cuts, broken down by (i) criminal; and (ii) civil Legal Aid.

(AQW 30397/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since launching my Departmental Action Plan in July 2012, I have introduced significant reforms in relation to Criminal Legal Aid which will yield savings in the region of £20 million per year. A further reform to Crown Court fees has been subject to consultation with projected annual savings of up to £5.6 million.

In terms of Civil Legal Aid, my Department has consulted on: reforming publicly funded legal representation in the Civil and Family Courts; reforming financial eligibility for Legal Aid; alternative methods for funding money damages claims; and introducing standard fees in the Civil Courts. The projected savings from these reforms, if fully implemented, are up to a further £18 million per year.

Expenditure on Departmental Ministerial Travel

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total expenditure on departmental Ministerial travel in the periods (i) January to June 2013; and (ii) July to December 2013.

(AQW 30409/11-15)

Mr Ford: Expenditure on Ministerial travel is not separately recorded by the Department of Justice. The cost of Ministerial travel is recorded with travel costs for the Minister's Office staff.

Expenditure on departmental Ministerial travel, including the costs of the Minister and Minister's Office staff during the above periods is shown in the table below.

January to June 2013	£1,532
July to December 2013	£1,327

Banbridge Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the funding provided to Banbridge Policing and Community Safety Partnership in relation to meeting the demand from victims of crime across the district.

(AQW 30416/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department and the Northern Ireland Policing Board jointly fund PCSPs so that they can help make communities safer, and ensure that the voices of local people are heard on policing and community safety issues. The partnerships aim to develop local solutions that will help to tackle crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

On that basis, it is for each PCSP to consult and engage with local people and other relevant bodies to identify those issues of greatest concern locally, and prioritise its expenditure accordingly. Banbridge PCSP received funding totalling £183,889 from the DoJ and NIPB for the 2013/2014 period, £88,340 of which was allocated to support a wide range of community safety initiatives aimed at reducing crime and reducing the risk of becoming a victim of crime. This included a contribution of £10,000 to the Banbridge Secure scheme – an initiative aimed specifically at meeting the needs of victims of crime.

The scheme offers victims of burglary, or those who may be vulnerable to this type of crime, free basic security measures for their homes. Referrals to the scheme are made through the PSNI Crime Prevention Officer and local Neighbourhood Teams.

Banbridge PCSP also supports Community Safety Wardens who offer reassurance and support by conducting follow up visits to those who have availed of the Banbridge Secure scheme.

PCSPs are currently reviewing their 2013/15 actions plans to ensure the work they are delivering continues to reflect locally identified priorities for the 2014/15 period.

Prisoners: Storage of Prescribed Medicine

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what arrangements are in place for prisoners to store their prescribed medicine; and how safe is this storage facility from the theft of medicine.

(AQW 30419/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prisoners have been provided with lockable cabinets in which to store their medication. NIPS are aware that there have been issues regarding malicious damage to the cabinets. A new contract will be signed shortly to replace the cabinets with a more robust metal storage box.

2013/14 Savings Target

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice why his Department is anticipating missing its 2013/14 savings target by £18.3m.

(AQW 30423/11-15)

Mr Ford: As at 30 September 2013, the Department is forecasting savings of £85.1m against a target of £103.4m.

The difference of £18.3m is mainly due to the extension of the NI Prison Service staff exit scheme.

More staff have left under the scheme than originally planned. Whilst increasing costs this year to fund leavers, this will generate more recurring savings in future years. Also, during 2013-14 it has not been possible to release some staff as quickly as intended for operational reasons, delaying the impact of savings.

The Department expects to deliver a total savings target of £101m by

2014-15 and will continue to work with spending areas, including NI Prison Service to look at ways to continue to deliver further savings.

The Department provides 6 monthly updates on Savings Delivery Plans to the Justice Committee and publishes these on the Department of Justice internet site.

Judicial Reviews

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of judicial reviews in each of the last five years; and how many of these reviews were successful.

(AQW 30434/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of Judicial Reviews heard in each of the last five years and the number found in favour of the applicant.

Year	Judicial Review applications heard	Finding for the applicant
2009	100	31
2010	92	27
2011	89	30
2012	90	22
2013 ¹	116	42

¹ Data currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS).

Maghaberry Prison: Visiting Arrangements

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the alteration of visiting arrangements at Maghaberry Prison, in particular Braid House, to detail the (i) date of commencement of the revised arrangements; (ii) specific reasons for the changes; (iii) whether this is a temporary measure, and if so, the estimated date of return to original visiting arrangements; and (iv) whether risk assessments were carried out in preparation for or at the time the changes were implemented.

(AQW 30447/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) The new visiting arrangements for the Mourne complex commenced on 30 January 2014.
- (ii) These new arrangements were put in place to ensure that domestic visits are afforded the appropriate level of supervision, and to enable prisoners to have visits in purpose built facilities, providing access to a refreshment area and a play area for young children.
- (iii) This is not a temporary arrangement.
- (iv) As the new visiting arrangements are taking place within an area already being used for domestic and legal visits within the Mourne complex a risk assessment has already been completed.

Human Trafficking for Sexual Services or Prostitution: Sentences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the current sentences in respect of human trafficking for sexual services/prostitution and under what circumstances this is variable due to aggravating factors, including the timespan of offences and the victim's mental capability.

(AQW 30455/11-15)

Mr Ford: Sections 57 to 59 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) set out the relevant offences of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. I secured an amendment of the 2003 Act through section 8 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2013 so that these offences are now triable on indictment only and as such, in most cases, attract a maximum sentence of 14 years.

Human trafficking may also involve the abuse of vulnerable victims and specific provision is made for sexual offences against persons with a mental disorder in Part 4 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (the SO Order).

The offences under the 2003 Act and the SO Order are specified as Serious Offences under paragraph 28 and 31A of Schedule 1 to the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (the 2008 Order) with the effect that, if an individual is convicted of one of these offences, and the court considers them to be dangerous, the court has powers to impose a discretionary life sentence, an indeterminate custodial sentence or an extended custodial sentence. In such cases offenders are subject to the public protection sentences and the associated release arrangements provided for under the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 and the 2008 Order, including supervision in the community on release (on licence).

Within this framework, sentencing is a matter for the courts and every case must be considered on the basis of the specific facts, having regard to established legal principles. The deliberate targeting of vulnerable victims is regarded by the judiciary as an aggravating factor. In addition, Crown Court sentencing guidance was issued by His Honour Judge Burgess following *R v Pis* (2012) and included a range of aggravating factors that judges should consider when sentencing for offences of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. That guidance set out that any case involving the trafficking of other human beings is a serious case meriting a sentence which is proportionate to the offending and is a genuine and real deterrent; that anyone who is brought before the courts in Northern Ireland for offences of this nature can, other than in exceptional circumstances, expect a custodial sentence; and that the sentence will be heavier for those who coerce their victims, who use violence against them, who sexually assault and degrade them and who placed them in fear of their own or their loved ones' lives.

The Department of Justice is currently consulting on proposals to increase the maximum sentence for all human trafficking and slavery offences to life imprisonment and to specify these offences as Serious Offences under Schedule 1 of the 2008 Order.

Litigants in Person within the Family Court System

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice whether Litigants in Person within the Family Court system are afforded the same level of service and respect in compliance with the relevant articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights.

(AQW 30479/11-15)

Mr Ford: All court users receive the same level of service and respect in court regardless of whether they are legally represented or acting as a personal litigant.

Family High Court Judgment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how; and (ii) when the Family High Court Judgement, made by Mrs Justice Parker in London on 23 December 2013 in relation to parental alienation and the consequential emotion abuse, will be conveyed to the Judiciary.

(AQW 30513/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Lord Chief Justice is responsible for judicial training and guidance.

Solicitors and Barristers: Family Law Cases

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice how many solicitors and barristers have received warnings by the judiciary in Family Law cases in the last 12 months for (i) failing to comply with court orders; and (ii) misleading the court; and to detail the sanctions imposed by the courts on these individuals.

(AQW 30514/11-15)

Mr Ford: This information is not available as it is not recorded.

House Repossessions in South Tyrone

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of writs and summonses issued regarding house repossessions in South Tyrone in the last two years; and of these, how many have resulted in enforcements and house repossessions.

(AQW 30517/11-15)

Mr Ford: In 2012 130 writs and summonses were issued regarding property repossessions in the Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough, 115 were issued in 2013.

It is not possible to identify how many of these cases resulted in enforcement action and the repossession of a property without incurring a disproportionate cost. However, in 2012 the Enforcement of Judgments Office completed 45 repossessions of property in the Dungannon Local Government District and 52 repossessions in 2013.

Prison Service CCTV Footage

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the Prison Service CCTV footage which is being introduced as evidence to the John Deery inquest, whether the staff shown in this footage at the time of Mr Deery's death and the hours prior to it, were all subject to suspension and/or disciplinary procedures.

(AQW 30520/11-15)

Mr Ford: At the present time it is not possible to supply an accurate answer as it is not yet known precisely what footage the Coroner wishes to play. Some members of the Northern Ireland Prison Service staff were subject to suspension and/or disciplinary procedures as a result of examination of

the circumstances surrounding Mr Deery's death in custody, but it is not known if the said individuals are on the footage the Coroner intends to show.

Prosecutions arising from Deaths of Cyclists

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of successful prosecutions arising from the death of a cyclist in a road traffic collision in each financial year since 2002; and whether the outcome resulted in a custodial or non-custodial sentence.

(AQW 30541/11-15)

Mr Ford: Conviction data is recorded for generic offences, such as, for example, causing death by dangerous driving or causing death by driving carelessly when unfit. Datasets held by my Department currently do not contain information on the location and circumstances in which offences were committed. Therefore, it is not currently possible to identify from the data whether a conviction associated with a road traffic collision relates to one involving the death of a cyclist.

Anti-Social Behaviour: Portadown, Lurgan and Banbridge

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Justice what action his Department is taking to tackle anti-social behaviour in (i) Portadown; (ii) Lurgan; and (iii) Banbridge.

(AQW 30562/11-15)

Mr Ford: Tackling anti-social behaviour is a key strand of the Community Safety Strategy. At a strategic level, an inter-Agency Delivery Group has developed an Action Plan which includes measures to clarify roles and responsibilities for dealing with anti-social behaviour and to remove the barriers to effective partnership working to address this type of behaviour.

At a local level, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) have developed Action Plans to provide tailored solutions to address local priorities.

Initiatives to address anti-social behaviour, led by Craigavon PCSP, include a Youth Engagement Partnership, which promotes early intervention and focuses on issues such as alcohol, drugs and anti-social behaviour; an inter-generational programme which brings together young people and older people in a series of workshops to discuss a range of issues including anti-social behaviour; a "Rights and Responsibilities" project to help young people make informed choices and display good citizenship behaviour; a number of midnight events which are held at weekends to engage young people in activities such as soccer and dance; Neighbourhood Watch Schemes which work with communities to reduce crime; and a number of seasonal campaigns to reduce crime, including anti-social behaviour, at specific times of the year.

Specific examples of work by the Banbridge PCSP to address anti-social behaviour in the area include a range of shared community events with disadvantaged communities to increase their capacity to address local anti-social behaviour issues; the delivery of multi-agency youth engagement projects which address anti-social behaviour in a variety of ways, including through projects, such as "Young Passenger and Driver" awareness-raising, and "Nite Safe" and "Street Scene" workshops; a local drug and alcohol strategy, launched by the Partnership in Autumn 2013, which involves public meetings, awareness training for community leaders, sports coaches and a road show; and the "Assisting People And Communities" project which facilitates extensive work with individuals involved in anti-social behaviour and their families.

Contempt of Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail what constitutes Contempt of Court.

(AQW 30645/11-15)

Mr Ford: Contempt of court may be either criminal or civil in nature, and may be dealt with under the Contempt of Court Act 1981, or under common law. There is no overall statutory definition of the

term. It includes acts or omissions which may interfere with the due administration of justice, such as disobeying a court order; misbehaviour in court; or being rude or disrespectful to the Court.

Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre: Visit

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30480/11-15, whether the proposed visit by Mr Kelly was initially approved by security in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and by a Deputy Governor; and if so, what changes in procedures have been implemented and if disciplinary proceedings are planned.

(AQW 30659/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Governor of Hydebank Wood has begun an investigation into the circumstances relating to the proposed visit of Mr Kelly. Decisions will then be taken in the light of any findings made with regards to the requirement for any changes in procedures, or any other action.

Prisons: Flying of Flags

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the days on which the Union Flag is flown from HM Prisons; and (ii) any prisons which failed to fly the flag on any of those dates and an explanation as to why this occurred.

(AQW 30703/11-15)

Mr Ford: Annex A attached details the days on which the Union Flag is flown at prison establishments.

NIPS has advised that flying of the Union Flag is not specifically recorded. However, it has come to light that, due to an oversight, the Union Flag was not flown at Hydebank Wood on the first three occasions of 2014.

Annex A

Dates for flying the Union Flag on UK government buildings in 2014

- | | |
|--|--|
| ■ 9 January Birthday of the Duchess of Cambridge | ■ 17 July Birthday of the Duchess of Cornwall |
| ■ 20 January Birthday of the Countess of Wessex | ■ 15 August Birthday of the Princess Royal |
| ■ 6 February Her Majesty's Accession | ■ 9 November Remembrance Day (second Sunday in November) |
| ■ 19 February Birthday of the Duke of York | ■ 14 November Birthday of the Prince of Wales |
| ■ 1 March St David's Day (in Wales only) | ■ 20 November Her Majesty's Wedding Day |
| ■ 10 March Birthday of the Earl of Wessex | ■ 30 November St Andrew's Day (in Scotland only 1) |
| ■ 10 March Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March) | |
| ■ 17 March St. Patrick's Day (in Northern Ireland only) | |
| ■ 21 April Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen | |
| ■ 23 April St George's Day (in England only) | |
| ■ 9 May Europe Day | |
| ■ 2 June Coronation Day | |
| ■ 10 June Birthday of the Duke of Edinburgh | |
| ■ 14 June Official celebration of Her Majesty's birthday | |
| ■ 21 June Birthday of the Duke of Cambridge | |

Legal Needs of Children and Young People

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice (i) to detail any independent research his Department has commissioned into the legal needs of children and young people; (ii) whether the research has now been completed; and (iii) when the research will be published.

(AQW 30749/11-15)

Mr Ford: In May 2013, I commissioned Queens University Belfast to carry out independent research on the legal needs of children and young people. The research has now been completed and the report is in the final stages of preparation. I intend to publish the report shortly.

Department for Regional Development

A6: Funding Bids

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline why bids to fund the dualling of the A6 have been unsuccessful.

(AQO 5234/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Following the court ruling in April of this year, which delayed the A5 Western Corridor dualling scheme, I wrote to the then Finance Minister in May, highlighting other schemes which could commence construction in 2014/15. The A6 Randalstown to Castledawson section was one of four schemes for which bids were submitted as part of the October 2013 Monitoring Round and the 2014/15 Capital Budget Exercise.

Unfortunately, the bid to commence construction on the A6 in 2014/15 was not met by the Executive. However, sufficient funding was secured to establish a “no-value” contract that allows a contractor to be appointed to complete the detailed design work, and be ready to commence construction, when funding is confirmed.

The A6 Londonderry to Dungiven section has been through a Public Inquiry. My officials have considered the Inspector’s recommendations and I expect to make a Departmental Statement on the way forward later this financial year. Although well advanced, this scheme is not in a position to commence construction in 2014/15 and was therefore not eligible for construction funding in this period.

I will continue to press the need for this scheme in future bids for funding.

Roads on School Routes: Grit

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he would consider amending legislation to ensure all roads on school routes are gritted.

(AQW 29573/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The winter service policies and procedures operated by my Department’s Roads Service follow the well-established practice of targeting the limited resources available for this service on the busier main through routes.

In general, this means Roads Service salts the main through routes which carry more than 1,500 vehicles per day. Whilst this policy does not specifically provide consideration for schools located on steep hills, it does however, in exceptional circumstances, provide for extra consideration to be given to roads with difficult topography such as steep hills which carry between 1,000 and 1,500 vehicles per day.

In addition, this policy provides that buses in service, including school buses, should receive further consideration in that a 40-seater bus is counted as 40 vehicles when a road is being assessed for potential inclusion onto the salting schedule, regardless of the number of passengers on the bus.

Roads Service has also introduced enhanced communication arrangements and priority “secondary” salting to over 40 rural schools most affected by weather conditions throughout the winter of 2008/09. This amended policy was designed to give priority to such schools and is in operation again this winter.

The policy, which is maintained at a local level by Roads Service Section offices, takes on board local weather conditions and makes provision for other schools to be added as conditions dictate throughout the winter period. At the same time the criteria for the provision of grit or salt piles and salt bins was also amended so that these can now be provided to affected schools, if requested

That said, following on from the severe weather in January and March of last year, I wanted to independently assess the effectiveness of the Roads Service arrangements for dealing with winter weather and identify any areas for improvement.

To facilitate this process, I sanctioned an independent review of the winter service provision and policy. The review was carried out by The National Winter Service Research Group, which has extensive experience in this area. The review itself was very comprehensive and was carried over a number of weeks, examining every aspect of the winter service programme. I was encouraged that the review was generally positive and found that Roads Service winter service policies are well-considered and consistent.

Illegal Landfill at Mobuoy Road

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the discovery of the illegal landfill at Mabuoy Road (i) if his Department will revisit the Environmental Statement prepared for the A6 road scheme, to take account of the significant effects of this environmental disaster; (ii) what opportunity will be afforded to the public to examine the Department's assessment of how the Strategic Roads Improvement will impact on the illegal landfill site and any knock on effects to the River Faughan Special Area of Conservation; and (iii) for his assessment of whether the current Environmental Statement is a sound basis on which to proceed with the Strategic Roads Improvement.

(AQW 29943/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The published environmental statement identified the City Industrial Waste and Campsie Sand and Gravel sites as potentially contaminated, leading to the proposed A6 dual carriageway being aligned around the eastern periphery of these sites thus avoiding the illegal landfill. I am content it is not necessary to revisit the published Environmental Statement, which can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

www.drdni.gov.uk/index/roadimprovements/schemes/derry-dungiven/a6ld_project_documents/a6ld_project_documents_draft_orders_and_environmental_statement.htm

The scheme includes a proposal to reinstate part of the Campsie Sand and Gravel quarry, located between Mobouy Road and the River Faughan, to replace flood storage capacity lost to the new dual carriageway. If the illegal landfill is still present when the road is being constructed, I am content that installation of appropriately engineered measures to contain the illegal waste will ensure that the compensatory floodplain can be constructed as planned. Such engineering measures would stop contaminants leaching into the River Faughan Special Area of Conservation.

Strategic Roads Improvements: Strategic Environmental Assessment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail whether (i) a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was necessary for the overall national plan of Strategic Roads Improvements (SRI); (ii) a SEA was undertaken for the national plan of SRIs before individual elements of this plan were implemented; and (iii) his Department is in a position to proceed with the A6 road scheme element of SRI, in the absence of SEA.

(AQW 29945/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) was ratified into Northern Ireland law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. The SEA Directive applies to plans and programmes where the

first formal preparatory act is on or after 21 July 2004, and also to those where formal preparation began before 21 July 2004 but which have not been either adopted or submitted to a legislative procedure leading to adoption by 21 July 2006.

The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP) was published in March 2005, setting out the Strategic Road Improvement (SRI) Programme. Consultation on this document took place before and during 2003, and included a Working Conference on the emerging RSTNTP attended by a wide range of stakeholders, in September of that year. The European SEA Directive therefore does not apply to this Plan.

The SRI Programme was augmented through the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland and an enhanced programme included in the Investment Delivery Plan for Roads (IDP), published in April 2008. In January 2009, my Department took legal advice as to whether it was necessary to undertake a SEA of the IDP. This reaffirmed that a SEA was not necessary.

The Direction Order for the Randalstown to Castledawson Dual Carriageway was published in March 2011. I anticipate making a Statement on the progression of the A6 Londonderry – Dungiven Dual Carriageway within the next few months.

Proposed A6 Strategic Roads Improvement

Mr Agnew asked nister for Regional Development whether the preferred option for the proposed A6 Strategic Roads Improvement was the least environmentally damaging of all options considered, in terms of its effects on the River Faughan and Tributaries Special Area of Conservation.

(AQW 29946/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The River Faughan and Tributaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) was a key consideration in the selection of the preferred route for the proposed A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dual carriageway scheme. The preferred route was selected following extensive environmental and engineering assessments and Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment screening of the possible routes for the scheme.

A Habitats Directive Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment has been prepared for the published scheme. This concluded that, with the inclusion of appropriate mitigation, the construction and operation of the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dual carriageway would not, by itself or in combination with other known plans or projects, adversely affect the integrity of the River Faughan and Tributaries SAC and the River Roe or Tributaries SAC, or their ability to meet their conservation objectives.

January Monitoring Round: Ballymena Station

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department anticipates spending the £1.5m of extra capital resources granted in the January Monitoring Round; and whether this will include upgrading Ballymena Station.

(AQW 30149/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink is carrying out a programme of work aimed at ensuring that all of its bus stations, workshops and garages meet the required standards under current legislation, regulations and British Standards. The £1.5 million granted in January Monitoring will be used in the main towards this programme. £66,000 has been allocated for the refurbishment of the roof at Ballymena Bus Garage and work on this project has now been completed. A separate major project is being considered by Translink for Ballymena station and this is included in the 2014/15 programme of capital projects. That project will be subject to securing the necessary approvals and funding.

Ulsterbus Fleet: Average Age of Buses

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the current average age of the Ulsterbus fleet.

(AQW 30203/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink officials have advised that the current average age of the Ulsterbus fleet is 6.52 years.

Over recent years the fleet age has been around this level. The Department has set targets for average fleet age (8 years), accessibility and to ensure buses do not exceed 18 years and coaches 12 years.

Significant progress has been made but continued investment will be required.

Ministerial and Special Advisor Travel: Expenditure

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total expenditure on (i) ministerial travel; and (ii) Special Adviser travel in 2013.

(AQW 30224/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The travel costs incurred by (i) the Minister; and (ii) the Special Adviser for the 2013 financial year to 31st December 2013 are provided below:

Travel Costs	Minister £	Special Advisor £
Total	49,792	2,791

The Minister's costs include the costs of the Ministerial car and driver as well as other travel costs incurred. Non cash costs are not included.

Residents who Live in Unadopted Sites

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail who has responsibility for the safety of residents who live in unadopted sites with no street lighting and where the building contractor has entered administration.

(AQW 30261/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Until my Department has adopted the roads within a housing development, the developer generally has the primary responsibility for the health and safety risks associated with the development's roads infrastructure, including the provision and operation of street lighting.

Where a developer has entered into administration, then responsibility falls to the administrator or other responsible parties. In such cases, my Department's Roads Service will initially liaise with the administrator to seek completion of the development's roads infrastructure, including street lighting. If this is not possible, Roads Service will call upon the available road bond and arrange for a contractor to complete the necessary works.

However, in cases where urgent repairs are required to prevent or remove danger to persons or vehicles, my Department may, on giving at least 48 hours notice to the responsible person, carry out such urgent repairs under Article 22 of the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980.

Translink: Free Travel Passes

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of free travel passes issued by Translink to senior citizens; (ii) the number used compared to the number issued; and (iii) the cost of administering the scheme.

(AQW 30264/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The information requested is supplied below:

- (i) At 29 January 2014 there were 220,393 'active' Senior smartpasses for those aged 65 plus and 61,649 active 60 plus smartpasses. NOTE the definition of 'active' is that the person has a current valid working smartpass, regardless of whether or not it is used.

- (ii) 140,326 individual Senior Smartpasses have been used in the last 12 months (64%) and 55,209 60 plus passes have been used in the last 12 months (89.5%).
- (iii) The cost of administering the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares scheme in 2012/13 was £675k. This covers costs incurred by Translink, reimbursed by the Department, as well as direct costs for items such as application forms.

Belfast to Dublin Rail Service

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made to advance the upgrading of the Belfast to Dublin rail service.

(AQW 30265/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Enhancement of the Enterprise Service was one of the investment packages up for discussion in the consultation exercise undertaken by my Department last year seeking the public views on prioritisation of railway investment in future budget rounds over the period 2015-2035.

The objective of this package would be to deliver a 90 minute journey time and hourly frequency on the Enterprise service. This package also included electrification of the line. There was considerable support from consultation respondents for improvements to the Enterprise Service with mixed response for electrification, because of the costs involved.

An analysis of the information gathered from the public consultation is continuing, alongside the ongoing work to determine the prioritisation of future investment in the wider transportation infrastructure in Northern Ireland. It is planned that a report on the railways analysis including the future investment requirements of the joint cross-border service will be published soon.

In the meantime Translink and Iarnród Éireann are liaising in order to take forward a major overhaul of the existing Enterprise trains. I am confident that the required £12m funding will be secured from the EU Interreg IVA programme and other sources. When this project is complete it is expected that there will be considerable improvement to the reliability of the service as well as to the aesthetics of the trains.

A project, with expected costs of £1.2m, to carry out safety critical works to the trains is underway and is expected to be completed in 2015.

Translink is considering future upgrades of the track on the Belfast to Dublin line and progress is being made to take forward the upgrade of the section between Knockmore and Lurgan. The necessary approvals and securing of funding are required before this project can commence.

Electric Cars

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the number of electric cars that will be registered locally by the end of 2015.

(AQW 30308/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The most recent projections, supplied by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles in December 2013, suggest that by the end of 2015 0.5 to 0.9 per cent of new vehicles registered in the United Kingdom would be electric vehicles, or between 370 and 670 electric vehicles in Northern Ireland.

Including estimates for 2014 registrations and vehicles already registered, the number of electric vehicles that would be registered locally by the end of 2015 is estimated to be between 685 and 1,135 vehicles.

Energy Efficiency: Street Lighting

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 29534/11-15, what measures his Department has put in place to improve energy efficiency and reduce the amount spent on electricity for street lighting.

(AQW 30352/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has put in place a range of measures to improve energy efficiency and minimise street lighting electricity costs.

Key energy efficiency measures have included:

- ensuring designs for new street lighting are to the appropriate standards and avoid over-lighting;
- replacement of older, high wattage lanterns with modern versions which have lower power consumption and improved optical performance;
- use of electronic photo-cells and electronic control gear; and
- use of the most efficient and cost effective lantern types, including increased use of light emitting diodes (LED).

To minimise electricity costs for street lighting, my Department procures the electricity needed through annual competitive tendering, to ensure we pay the lowest price available.

Cyclists: Quietways

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has given consideration to the introduction of quietways for cyclists.

(AQW 30427/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The recently formed Cycling Unit within my Department 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.

The introduction of 'Quietways' for cyclists is one of the avenues the Cycling Unit intends to explore and has been included in the Cycling Unit draft work programme.

Cleaning and Maintenance of Gullies on Rural Roads

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development who is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of gullies on rural roads in the Western Division.

(AQW 30441/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the storm water gullies within the public road network across Northern Ireland.

NI Water: Non-Domestic Users

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development why there is a distinction made by NI Water whereby domestic users can be granted an allowance in respect of excessive usage resulting from a leakage, whereas no such allowance is afforded for non-domestic use when the consumer is not connected to the main sewer, and if this will be addressed.

(AQW 30481/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the absence of direct charging of domestic customers for water and sewerage services means that a distinction must be made between domestic customers and the charged non-domestic customers. All water supplied to metered non-domestic customers is charged regardless of whether it is consumed or lost through leakage on their private supply pipes. It is therefore the case that all non-domestic customers, whether connected to the sewer or not, are treated equally in so far as they are all billed for the water consumption

recorded through the meter and account adjustments are not available in respect of the water element of the bill.

In cases where a customer has a metered supply which serves both domestic and non-domestic use (such as a farm house sharing the supply to a farm, or a flat above a shop sharing the same supply as the shop) the customer is treated as non-domestic for billing purposes and a domestic allowance of 100 cubic metres per six month period is granted in respect of the domestic use element. If a leak occurs on such a 'mixed use' supply, the location of the leak will be taken into account by NIW. If the leak has occurred on the pipework serving the non-domestic element then this will be treated in the same way as all other non-domestic customers in that an account adjustment will only be available in respect of any sewerage charges if they are connected to the sewer. On the other hand, if a leak occurs on a 'mixed use' supply on the pipework that is serving the domestic element then the customer will be eligible for an account reduction on the water element of the bill and the sewerage element.

In the absence of domestic charging, any leaks on the supply serving the domestic element have to be treated in the same manner as other domestic customers, otherwise customers with mixed use supplies would be charged for domestic leakage while other domestic customers would not be charged.

NIW considers the current billing policies to be appropriate for the charging arrangements which prevail and there are no plans to undertake a review at this time.

Community Transport Operatives

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail whether Community Transport Operatives (i) will be required to hold a commercial licence; and (ii) will be able to avail of future funding. **(AQW 30546/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I can advise that bus licensing is a matter for the Department of Environment.

Currently my Department is undertaking an evaluation of the transport policies and schemes initiated by the Department to promote social inclusion. Services provided by rural community transport partnerships come under this heading. 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 and to determine how such services may be delivered. My Department has no current plans to reduce the level of grant assistance to the rural community transport partnerships.

North Down: Footpaths and Pavements

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the areas of North Down that will have footpaths and pavements resurfaced in 2014/15. **(AQW 30587/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department is currently preparing work programmes for 2014/15, details of which will be published in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. Once completed, the Council Reports for the 2014/15 financial year will be placed on my Department's internet site.

Department for Social Development

Maintenance Contracts: Low Performance Damages

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the current response maintenance contracts, how much the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has withheld from contractors in respect of Low Performance Damages arising out of Key Performance Indicator scores; and of those amounts, how much has been (i) undisputed; and (ii) disputed by the contractors. **(AQW 29926/11-15)**

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive has advised that against the overall expenditure in response maintenance contracts in the year to August 2013 the Low Performance Damages (LPD) taken to date is £66,525.88, which represents 0.36% of the spend. This has not been disputed by the contractors.

Crisis Loan Phone Line

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many calls the Crisis Loan phone line has received in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30230/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as statistics on the number of calls received by the Social Fund Crisis Loan phone line service is only held for the last two years. The figures for the last two years are set out in the table below.

No of Telephone calls received by the Social Fund Crisis Loan phone line service

Year	Totals
2012	1,961,071
2013	1,473,517

Crisis Loan Phone Line

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what percentage of crisis loan phone line enquires were dealt with; and what percentage were missed, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30232/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The percentage of crisis loan phone line enquiries dealt with and percentage missed is only held for the last two years. The figures for the last two years are set out in the table below. The Social Fund Crisis Loan Service is primarily a face to face service delivered at the front office and in addition, a limited telephone service is provided to support this service. The Agency recognises that the telephone service is limited and requires modernisation and, as part of Welfare Reform, a programme of investment is underway which is due for completion next year.

Crisis Loan phone line - Percentage of calls dealt with and percentage of calls missed

Year	% of calls dealt with	% of calls missed
2012	81.01	18.99
2013	82.13	17.87

Crisis Loan Phone Line

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many staff operate the crisis loan phone line.

(AQW 30233/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the number of staff expressed in terms of whole time equivalents rather than actual headcount allocated to the Crisis Loan phone service in each Social Security Agency Region.

Social Security Agency Region	No of staff allocated to the Social Fund Crisis Loan Phone Service
Northern	2.69

Social Security Agency Region	No of staff allocated to the Social Fund Crisis Loan Phone Service
Southern	2.28
Belfast	4.26
Total	9.23

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Social Development when the Welfare Reform Bill will return to the Assembly.

(AQW 30241/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I issued an Executive Paper on 28th January for the Executive meeting on 30th January, seeking approval for a package of measures designed to shape how Welfare Reform will be implemented in Northern Ireland. This Paper was not discussed as a substantive agenda item. I remain fully committed to taking the Bill through its remaining legislative stages and am frustrated by the lack of progress.

Welfare Reform: Financial Implication

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Social Development what are the financial implications of breaching parity with the rest of the UK on welfare reform; and when these implications will take hold.

(AQW 30242/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Currently Northern Ireland receives over £5 billion directly from HM Treasury for spending on social security benefits outside of the Northern Ireland Block Departmental Expenditure Limit. This funding relationship which has sizeable financial advantages for Northern Ireland is based on parity between the social security system being maintained.

Breaching parity could have significant financial implications for Northern Ireland as to maintain current levels of spending on social security would require that any reduction in the funding from HM Treasury would have to be met from the Block thereby impacting on the level of funding available for vital Northern Ireland public services such as health and education.

United Kingdom Ministers have highlighted their concerns about the lack of progress of welfare reform and the potential consequences arising from breaches of parity. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury has already confirmed that as a result of the continued delay in progressing the Welfare Reform Bill financial penalties of £15 million will be applied for 2013–14, funding which could have been allocated to other Northern Ireland public services

I can confirm that my department has now estimated that the potential total cost of financial penalties for the Northern Ireland Block from the continuing delay in not implementing the Welfare Reform Bill could rise to an estimated £1 billion by 2018-19. The potential annual costs are set out in the table below.

Table 1 estimated cost of not implementing welfare reforms

	Millions 2014-15	Millions 2015-16	Millions 2016-17	Millions 2017-18	Millions 2018-19	Millions 14-15 to 18-19
Estimated cost of not implementing welfare reform	£104.7	£144.9	£193.2	£276	£343	£1,061.9

The Department for Social Development will also have to pay the increasing costs of administrating, calculating and paying social security benefits to some 600,000 Northern Ireland social security

claimants as the two social security systems increasingly diverge. Northern Ireland currently use Department for Work and Pensions complex and expensive IT at a significantly lower cost than having its own standalone systems. As the social security systems diverge, the Northern Ireland Block will have to either meet the costs of administrative workarounds where the Department for Work and Pensions have upgraded their systems, or fund new IT systems where the Department for Work and Pensions close their systems because they have introduced a new benefit but Northern Ireland has decided to breach parity and retain the legacy benefit.

Housing Executive and the PSNI: Protocols

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Social Development what protocols are in place between the Housing Executive and the PSNI when it emerges in the course of a police investigation that a tenant, who is subject of the investigation, has a mental health condition.

(AQW 30306/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that an Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in place between themselves and the PSNI. They advise however that the mental health of a tenant is a medical issue and therefore would not be relevant and not recorded on any Housing Executive databases and used as a source of information either by them or the PSNI.

Housing Needs: Older People

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department is responding to the housing needs of older people.

(AQW 30366/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department responds to the housing needs of older people through a range of measures which are detailed below:

Housing Provision

Elderly social housing provision is normally classified into three categories:

- Category 1 relates to general needs / active elderly
- Category 2 relates to general needs with an element of care provision to enable independent living
- Category 3 relates to fully supported living. The need for this accommodation is assessed and identified by Health Trusts who also provide the support required. Category three housing schemes are identified and programmed via the supporting people commissioning process.

The NIHE's Housing Related Support Strategy (2012-15) identifies older people as one of three priority vulnerable client groups for receipt of housing support services. The strategy recognises the changing demographics as well as the diversity and range of needs of the client group and that while many older people will continue to maintain independent lifestyles until well into old age, many will require housing support and other services in future years.

Current Supporting People funded housing support service provision for older people for 2013/14 comprises 425 accommodation based services (over 10,000 clients) and also 10 floating support services (approximately 345 older clients at any one time) for older people living in their own homes in the community. Supporting People also funds two Home Improvement Agencies whose role is to assist and advise applicants who have a disability, through the grants' application process.

In responding to needs and taking forward new housing related services for vulnerable or older people, the housing and housing support needs are identified and programmed through the Supporting People commissioning structures and process.

Adaptations

The Housing Executive provides an adaptation service for both Housing Executive tenants and people living in private accommodation such as owner occupiers, landlords or private tenants. Disabled Facilities Grants are payable under Articles 50-56 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and are administered by the Housing Executive.

The adaptation service is demand led and if an adaptation is required the Occupational Therapist (OT) will make a recommendation to the Housing Executive (District, Region or Grants Office) and will inspect the adaptation when it is completed to ensure it is adequate for the client's needs.

Housing Selection Scheme

Under the Housing Selection Scheme, there are many factors which can be taken into consideration when assessing the needs and circumstances of older people.

The Housing Executive considers how an applicant is able to function within their own home and functionality points are awarded taking into account internal and external factors, use of aids and level of dependency.

An assessment is also made based on how an applicant can carry out 'self care needs' (e.g. getting dressed/washed) and 'home management needs' (e.g. cook meals, do household duties) and points are awarded accordingly. Where it is found that an applicant is in need of a high level of care and support, they can be assessed by a Housing Support Officer for Complex Needs points or alternatively can be identified for fully Supported Housing in special schemes which cater for particular client groups such as frail elderly, physically disabled etc.

Further points can be awarded for 'Other Social Needs' factors some of which would be particularly relevant to older people e.g. 'Unable to maintain current accommodation' 'Socially isolated', 'Needs to move to an area to receive support' 'Extra room is needed for a live in carer'.

If an elderly person is interested in Sheltered accommodation, which in general is provided by Housing Associations, they can be placed on the waiting list for the scheme (s) of their choice and the assessing officer will make enquiries to the relevant Housing Association on their behalf to check availability, turnover etc.

In the last financial year 2012-2013, the Housing Executive has rehoused 959 elderly households.

In more serious situations, whereby an applicant's accommodation is totally unsuitable and cannot be adapted, the applicant will be considered under the Homeless Legislation and can be awarded an additional 70 points if Full Duty Applicant status is awarded in addition to any other points which may apply (as above).

Grants

The Housing Executive may also provide assistance to older people living in privately owned housing through the following grants/schemes-

Disabled Facilities Grants

The aim of a Disabled Facilities Grant is to help improve the home of a person with a disability. While discretionary grants are restricted, the Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant, and is available for works recommended by the Occupational Therapist. Owner occupiers, landlords or private tenants can get assistance to carry out adaptations, providing there is a person with a disability living in the house.

Discretionary Grants

Some older people may qualify for Renovation or Home Repair Assistance Grants. A Renovation Grant is intended for improving a home which has been deemed unfit to live in or which needs repair work carried out to prevent it becoming unfit.. Home Repair Assistance Grant aid is for external repairs and for work which will improve health and safety, for example electrical wiring.

Renovation Grants and Home Repair Assistance Grants are Discretionary Grants, which are currently only available in exceptional circumstances- for example where there is considered to be a serious and imminent risk to the occupants of the property if the repair is not carried out.

Warm Homes Scheme and Boiler Replacement Scheme

Older people can avail of energy efficiency measures provided by my Department. Both the Warm Homes Scheme and the Boiler Replacement Scheme aim to enhance the energy efficiency of private sector homes. The Warm Homes Scheme is available to those on a range of means tested benefits and the Boiler Replacement Scheme is aimed at those on low incomes.

However, Pension Credit is one of the qualifying benefits for Warm Homes Plus, that element of the Warm Homes Scheme that can provide new central heating systems.

An analysis of the Boiler Replacement Scheme in October 2013 indicated that around 44% of new boilers installed under the Scheme at that stage had been installed in the homes of applicants who were 66 years of age and older.

Retirement Village Pilot Schemes

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department has explored the development of retirement village pilot schemes with the private sector.

(AQW 30367/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development has in its mission a strong focus on tackling disadvantage and, across its priorities, has to focus limited resources on programmes and initiatives which deliver on this mission. Therefore, the Executive and my department have, to date, focused resources on providing social housing to those in need and also to helping people who need to access the housing ladder

However, as there is evidence that older people wish to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible, a scheme such as this may help to make that possible. I would be keen to hear how any investment of this kind could support my Department's priorities.

Housing Options: Older People

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department is advises older people on suitable housing options in both the private and public sector.

(AQW 30368/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The introduction of the Community Care policies during the 1990's led to increasing numbers of elderly and disabled people opting to live at home with appropriate community care support rather than being cared for in residential care facilities. Housing therefore plays a central role in maintaining independence and in response to this the Housing Executive has developed a number of services and housing solutions tailored to each individual's own circumstances such as housing support and adaptations services which includes: -

- Staying put with support
- Staying put without support
- Move with care and support
- Move without support

Adaptations Service

If an elderly Housing Executive tenant wished to stay at home but experienced difficulty functioning within their home environment an adaptation could enable them to continue to live independently. Staff in the local Housing Executive office will therefore advise tenants of the types of adaptations that can be carried out without an Occupational Therapist's recommendation such as handrails and lever

taps. If it is felt that other minor adaptations are required, such as installing a shower, the Housing Executive will refer that to the Occupational Therapist (OT) on behalf of the tenant to consider a formal recommendation.

Major adaptations such as stair-lifts or extensions require an OT recommendation and tenants can make direct referrals themselves to the OT Service. The Housing Executive provides a range of information leaflets in relation to adaptations which are available in a range of formats; this information is also available on the website. Staff in Housing Executive local offices will provide adaptation information for all tenants.

Occupational Therapists are nominated on behalf of the Health and Social Care Trusts to carry out assessments in order to determine the needs of disabled/elderly people, including their housing needs. Upon receipt of an OT recommendation for a major adaptation, such as an extension, the Housing Executive's Regional Welfare Officer (RWO) will visit the tenant to discuss the options available along with the adaptation process. If the tenant refuses the adaptation, the RWO will liaise with the OT Service to discuss the way forward. If the tenant wishes to transfer to other accommodation, or if the adaptation is not technically feasible and the tenant is happy to move, the RWO will advise the Housing Executive's local office staff and a transfer application will be initiated. The tenant will then be advised of the housing options available.

Privately Owned Housing

In relation to older people living in privately owned housing, the Housing Executive may provide assistance through various grant schemes, namely, Disabled Facilities Grants, Renovation Grants, and Home Repair Assistance Grant aid. Information about these grants is available from the Housing Executive offices and is also on their website.

Warm Homes Scheme and Boiler Replacement Scheme

Older people can avail of energy efficiency measures provided by my Department's funding. Both the Warm Homes Scheme and the Boiler Replacement Scheme aim to enhance the energy efficiency of private sector homes. Once again, information about these schemes is available from the Housing Executive offices and is also on their website.

Housing Support Service

Many elderly people are unable to remain in their home and apply for social housing; the Housing Executive will assist through assessing their needs and placing them on a common waiting list either for Housing Executive or Housing Association accommodation. The assessing officer will discuss the options available for the applicant. Within the Housing Selection Scheme provision is made for these circumstances where people are likely to be unable to live independently without substantial support or care being provided.

For those applicants who have additional care needs that would require them to live in supported accommodation or to have access to an intensive support package to enable them to live independently a more detailed assessment is undertaken. The Housing Executive has dedicated Housing Support Officers within each Regional Office who deal specifically with such cases and work in conjunction with Health and Social Care Trust staff, the applicant or their representative and any other stakeholders involved in the case to ensure an appropriate housing solution is secured for the applicant.

The range of options includes:

- Re-housing – applicant or transfer,
- Transfer and adapt,
- Consideration of new build scheme (including any specific design requirements to reflect the applicant's needs),
- The provision of support services and/or an allocation to a specialist supported housing scheme.

Landlord Registration Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the approximate budget spend in January/February 2014 for advertising on issues related to the Landlord Registration Scheme.

(AQW 30403/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The approximate budget spend in January/February 2014 for advertising on issues related to the Landlord Registration Scheme is £60,500.

With no central database of landlords in Northern Ireland the independent focussed research carried out before embarking on an advertising campaign determined that television, outdoor and press would be the best mediums to reach private landlords.

Expenditure on Departmental Ministerial Travel

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total expenditure on departmental Ministerial travel in the periods (i) January to June 2013; and (ii) July to December 2013.

(AQW 30410/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total expenditure on Ministerial travel in my Department is outlined below:

Period of Travel	Travel Costs
January to June 2013	£2,124.73
July to December 2013	£1,783.89

Antisocial Behaviour in Housing Executive Properties

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development whether the proposed new legislation to deal with antisocial behaviour in Housing Executive properties will impact on current cases.

(AQW 30438/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Proposals for a Housing (Anti-Social Behaviour) Bill were published for consultation on 2nd December 2013. Subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise, and taking into account the typical timeframe for bringing forward legislation, the legislation is not expected to come into operation before the summer of 2015. Therefore, in the circumstances, it is not anticipated that there would be any impact on current cases.

Warm Home Scheme: Independent Economic Appraisal

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Social Development whether an independent economic appraisal has been carried out to compare the costs of the current Warm Home Scheme with the proposed replacement model costs.

(AQW 30489/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department undertook a pilot in 2012 working with local councils and targeted 2,145 low income households to test the effectiveness of an area based approach to tackling fuel poverty as an alternative to the existing Warm Homes Scheme. The evaluation of the pilot has shown that using an area based targeted approach works. My Department will launch a public consultation document later in February 2014 seeking views on the eligibility criteria, measures available and delivery model of a new Affordable Warmth Scheme. The responses to this public consultation will be analysed and used in an Economic Appraisal and Business Case which will assess the options for the future delivery of energy efficiency improvements to low income households. My Department has a rigorous process in place before an Economic Appraisal and Business Case is approved, including a thorough examination by the Department's Economist and the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Housing Executive's Direct Labour Organisation: Response Maintenance Repairs Contracts

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive's Direct Labour Organisation tendered for the Response Maintenance Repairs contracts that were awarded in September 2012.

(AQW 30490/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive's Direct Labour Organisation does not tender for any Housing Executive contracts.

Framework of the Response Maintenance Repairs Contract

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive intend to replace the contractors who have been in administration from the Framework of the Response Maintenance Repairs contract that were awarded in September 2012.

(AQW 30491/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that a number of contractors went into administration which resulted in eight contracts being covered by back up arrangements involving a combination of adjacent contractors and the Housing Executive's Direct Labour Organisation. The Housing Executive's intention is that three of these contracts will be awarded through a mini competition process from the existing Frameworks with the remaining being covered by an expanded Direct Labour Organisation should the required contractual approvals be received.

Social Housing New Builds in the Upper Bann Area

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on plans for social housing new builds in the Upper Bann area.

(AQW 30506/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that in their current programme year (2013/14), 38 new social housing starts are planned in the Upper Bann constituency.

In the Social Housing Development Programme for the period 2014/15, there are 66 social housing units programmed to start onsite; a further 20 units in 2015/16 programme year; and four units in the 2016/17 programme year.

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.

Double Glazing Windows in Social Housing

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 29952/11-15, when it is estimated that the next scheme will commence.

(AQW 30518/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the double glazing contracts have now been formally accepted by the appointed contractors and the Housing Executive is working with them to ensure a speedy start to the work. However, given the timescale required for surveying of the properties and the preparation of design proposals by the contractors and the necessary internal scheme approvals by the Housing Executive it is unlikely that the first schemes will not start on site until mid to late May.

Draft Campbell Tickell Report: Changes

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development whether he had access to the draft Campbell Tickell report; and whether he was in agreement with the changes made to the report.

(AQW 30589/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I did not have access to the draft Campbell Tickell report, therefore I am not aware of the changes you refer to.

Housing Executive: Choice Based Lettings

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the areas in which the Housing Executive are piloting choice based lettings, broken down by district office.

(AQW 30635/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) pilot scheme is being phased in through close liaison between the Housing Policy section and the Housing Managers. The list of proposed CBL locations was compiled based on nominations from Housing Managers who selected locations based on Difficult- to- Let criteria in the Housing Selection Scheme Guidance Manual.

The table attached provides details of the locations where the CBL pilot scheme was introduced on 15 January 2014: -

Location	Local Office/District Office	Common Landlord Area
Florence Square/ Walk/ Court	Shankill	Lower Shankill
Ardoyne Road, Wheatfield	North Belfast	Wheatfield
Cranbrook Court/ Gardens Farringdon Court/ Gardens	North Belfast	Ardoyne
Greenmount Place/ Glenrosa Link	North Belfast	Upper/Lower Duncairn
Chamberlain Street/ Lendrick Street/ Parker Street/ Tower Street/ Tower Court/ Finmore Court/ Westbourne Street	East Belfast	Newtownards Road
Ashfield Gardens	Omagh	Fintona
Castlevew	Banbridge	Gilford

In the coming weeks the Housing Executive also intend to initiate the process in Omagh (Strathroy estate), Magherafelt (Leckagh estate) and in some rural locations such as Greencastle, Trillick, Innisrush, Culnady and Upperlands.

Welfare Reform: Ministerial Talks with Parties

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has been (i) made aware of; or (ii) involved in talks, in his Ministerial capacity, with other parties that have led to agreement on Welfare Reform.

(AQW 30652/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am not aware of, nor have I been involved in talks with other parties which have led to agreement on Welfare Reform.

I remain committed to working to reach a consensus on the reform of the welfare system in Northern Ireland and am seeking agreement to discussions on the package of measures with Executive Colleagues as soon as possible.

Review of the Housing Allocation Systems

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development whether he, or his Department, rejected an initial report on the Review of the Housing Allocation systems carried out by the University of Ulster in partnership with Cambridge University.

(AQW 30735/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department commissioned independent research on this subject. As part of the standard contract management process, which includes quality assurance and review, the three reports that were commissioned from the University of Cambridge and University of Ulster went through a number of drafts before they were signed off for publication.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 14 February 2014

(AQW 30400/11-15)

The contract for the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project was signed with BT on 4th February. This £23.5million project will bring more choice and improved broadband speeds to over 45,000 premises across Northern Ireland by the end of 2015. BT has commenced implementation by embarking on an extensive survey and design process which will take a number of months to complete. Until such times as that process is complete, it will not be possible to be precise as to which premises are likely to benefit. Further details on the roll-out will be published as they become available.



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