

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 21 February 2014

Volume 92, No WA1

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Written Answers to Questions

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

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Ramsey, Ms Sue (West Belfast)
Robinson, George (East Londonderry)
Robinson, Peter (East Belfast)
Rogers, Sean (South Down)
Ross, Alastair (East Antrim)
Ruane, Ms Caitríona (South Down)
Sheehan, Pat (West Belfast)
Spratt, Jimmy (South Belfast)
Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 21 February 2014

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Victims and Survivors Service: Structure

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the management structure and membership of the Victims and Survivors Service.

(AQW 25012/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) is led by a Chief Executive Officer supported by a Head of Corporate Services and Head of Client Services.

A new Chair and Board were appointed to the Service in December 2013.

Social Investment Fund: Money Distributed

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much money has been distributed amongst the community through the Social Investment Fund to date.

(AQW 25602/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A press release announcing the first projects to benefit from the Social Investment Fund was issued on 10 February 2014. It can be found at:

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-ofmdfm/news-ofmdfm-100214-robinson-and-mcguinness.htm>

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

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why AQW 24938/11-15 has not yet been answered; and when it will be answered.

(AQW 25765/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer the Member to the answer to AQW 24938/11-15 on 11 February 2014.

Strategic Investment Board: Childcare

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how the Strategic Investment Board and RSM McClure Watters research, commissioned by their Department, on childcare supply, demand and cost can be accessed.

(AQW 26654/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The research on supply and demand for childcare by RSM McClure Watters has not yet been completed. It is expected that a report of the research will be published on the Department's website later this year. The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) has assisted the Department with analysis to help develop the Bright Start Childcare Strategy but this has been ongoing support rather than the development of an actual research report. OFMDFM officials

updated the OFMDFM Committee on the Childcare Strategy on 2 October 2013 and agreed to look into providing a summary of SIB's work to the Committee.

Outsourcing of Department's Functions

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they intend to outsource any of their Department's functions in a bid to achieve efficiencies.

(AQW 27359/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There are no plans to outsource any of the Department's functions to achieve efficiencies.

Social Investment Fund: Timetable

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the timetable for allocated of the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 27554/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A press release announcing the first projects to benefit from the Social Investment Fund was issued on 10 February 2014. It can be found at:

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-ofmdfm/news-ofmdfm-100214-robinson-and-mcguinness.htm>

Social Investment Fund: Official Announcement

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will make an official announcement on the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 29047/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A press release announcing the first projects to benefit from the Social Investment Fund was issued on 10 February 2014. It can be found at:

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-ofmdfm/news-ofmdfm-100214-robinson-and-mcguinness.htm>

Organ Donation

Mrs Dobson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will answer AQO 5108/11-15, scheduled for answer on 26 November 2013.

(AQW 29345/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer the Member to the answer to AQO 5108/11-15 on 3 February 2014.

Together: Building a United Community

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the proposed process and timetable for the ten new shared campuses under Together: Building a United Community.

(AQW 29373/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The proposals for 10 new shared education campuses complements current work already underway within the Department of Education and will be targeted at infrastructure projects aimed at improving or facilitating sharing initiatives within local schools. The programme will target schools that can demonstrate the following types of sharing: shared facilities; enhanced facilities; and shared campus.

A call for expressions of interest was made in January 2014 with a closing date for applications of 31 March 2014.

Ebrington Square, Londonderry: Creative Industries Hub

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of expressions of interest received from the private sector in relation to the creative industries hub planned for buildings 80 and 81 at the Ebrington site, Derry.

(AQW 29674/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As of 31 December 2013, Ilex had received five formal expressions of interest in relation to the creative industries hub planned for Buildings 80 and 81 at the Ebrington site.

Social Investment Fund: Economic Appraisals

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of projects (i) that have been approved under the Social Investment Fund and (ii) that are currently undergoing economic appraisals.

(AQW 30126/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: To date, 23 projects, which are within the thresholds of allocations across zones, have internal approvals in place. A further 29 projects are currently undergoing economic appraisals.

Victims and Survivors Service Individual Needs Programme, Scheme 6 - Financial Assistance

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Victims and Survivors Service Individual Needs Programme, Scheme 6 - Financial Assistance, will reopen to applications from people living with injuries and bereaved partners, bereaved parents or children who have lost a parent as a result of a conflict related incident, further to its closure on 30 June 2013.

(AQW 30130/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims and Survivors Service Individual Needs Programme, Scheme 6 – Financial Assistance, will re-open in 2014/2015.

Crumlin Road Gaol

Mr Humphrey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the establishment of the distillery at Crumlin Road jail, including the number of jobs this will create.

(AQO 5376/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Belfast Distillery Company (BDC) is currently finalising the plans and financial arrangements for a distillery, restaurant, tasting rooms, bar and visitor attraction at A Wing at the Crumlin Road Gaol. OFMDFM officials are working very closely with Belfast Distillery Company to agree the plans and conclude the legal formalities.

It is anticipated that BDC will commence construction work in the near future. Once the project is fully operational, it is estimated that up to 60 jobs will be created.

Belfast Distillery Company is working with the South Eastern Education and Library Board to develop suitable training courses for potential distillery jobs with approximately 200 training places being created. BDC plans to hold an open day for the local community to explain the processes involved.

The jobs will require a range of different skills and will include management, tour guides, catering, hospitality and retail, as well as distilling.

Social Investment Fund in Upper Bann

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the projects under consideration within the Social Investment Fund in Upper Bann; and the timescale for delivery.
(AQW 30349/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Within the financial allocations agreed by us, 6 projects will be funded across the Southern Zone, which incorporates the Upper Bann constituency. Amongst these are 2 revenue projects which will operate on a zone-wide basis with the objective of increasing employment. There will also be 4 capital projects, 3 of which are cluster projects encompassing a number of smaller capital works. These will result in 11 capital schemes specifically within your constituency, including projects to sustain the infrastructure, enhance community sports facilities and increase physical infrastructure for existing social economy projects.

Three of these projects have full internal approvals in place; officials are currently focusing further efforts on securing approval to the 3 further projects that have not yet been fully approved. We anticipate completing this exercise by the end of the current financial year.

Child Poverty Act 2010: Laying of Report

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the consequences of missing the deadline for laying the report to the Assembly under the Child Poverty Act 2010.
(AQW 30392/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are required by the Child Poverty Act 2010 to Lay the Strategy in the Assembly by 24 March 2014.

While it is unfortunate that we will miss this deadline, we have opted to extend the consultation period for the Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People until 31 March 2014.

On balance and having sought advice on this matter, we believe this is the right decision to take, and one which will be welcomed by many given that we have received numerous requests for consideration of an extension to the consultation from a range of sources including the OFMDFM Committee.

Social Investment Fund: Upper Bann

Mr Gardiner asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what projects have been identified in the Upper Bann constituency that would benefit from the Social Investment Fund.
(AQO 5486/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are pleased that we announced on 10 February 2014 the first 23 successful projects that will be funded from the Social Investment Fund. These projects amount to more than £33 million and are from across all 9 zones. The list of 23 projects is available from the OFMDFM website and officials will also be communicating directly with the organisations involved.

The remaining projects that are within the funding allocations are all currently in the economic appraisal process and over the next few weeks and months we anticipate making the remaining announcements fully committing the full £80 million fund.

Considerable work has been completed in developing the policy and structures, establishing the steering groups and supporting them in the development of their 10 projects for each zone, and in getting these projects through the economic appraisal process to this final stage. Most of the individual projects have many elements within them, some with up to 15 different capital elements.

Within the specific allocation for the Southern Zone, 6 projects will be funded across the Zone that incorporates the Upper Bann constituency. Amongst these are 2 revenue projects which will operate on a zone-wide basis with the objective of increasing employment, including the £2.7 million 'Employment Work It' project.

In addition, there will be 4 capital projects, 3 of which are cluster projects encompassing a number of smaller capital works. These will result in 11 capital schemes specifically within the Upper Bann constituency, including projects to sustain local infrastructure worth £1.25 million. Projects to enhance community sports facilities include a £1.25 million Community Sports Programme.

A5: Executive Commitment

Mr McAleer asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what assurances they can give that the Executive remains committed to the A5 project.

(AQO 5489/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive remains committed to the delivery of the A5 Western Transport Corridor.

Members will be aware that the project was subject to a successful legal challenge and that Minister Kennedy and his officials are now addressing the associated issues.

We understand that part of the work will include a number of important public consultation processes, the first of which is due to commence in April this year.

The next steps in the project will be dependent on the outcome of the public consultation.

Magdalene Laundries

Mr McElduff asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on how they will take forward the issue of people who were in Magdalene Laundry-type institutions.

(AQO 5491/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The publication of the McAleese report into Magdalene Laundries in the Republic of Ireland raised questions about the system of Magdalene Laundries here, and about the situations and experiences of the women who lived in them.

In light of that report and representations made to us, we appointed a senior civil servant to draw up a scoping paper in regard to the Magdalene Laundry type institutions that operated here so as to inform us of what potential actions we might be able to take.

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

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

However, we recognise that there are women who were over the age of 18 when they entered the Magdalene Laundry-type institutions and there is a need to provide them with a forum where their issues can be addressed and their experiences acknowledged.

We are appalled to think that women in Laundries here could have endured the same harsh conditions and callous treatment as was documented by Senator McAleese. Our thoughts and sympathies are with any women who suffered in these types of institutions.

Active Aging Strategy

Mr Newton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress of the Active Ageing Strategy.

(AQO 5495/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Draft Active Ageing Strategy will be launched for public consultation shortly.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Single Farm Payments

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of farmers have been received their Single Farm Payments to date, broken down by constituency; and (ii) the total number of farmers that are still waiting to receive Single Farm Payment.

(AQW 30377/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The Department has delivered a record payment performance in 2013 with 90% of Single Farm Payment claims paid in December 2013.

The figures for claims paid and not yet paid per Constituency are detailed below:-

Constituency	Number of Farmers that have received SFP 2013	Number of Farmers that have not yet received SFP 2013
Belfast East	94	5
Belfast North	49	5
Belfast South	117	9
Belfast West	24	1
East Antrim	1109	19
East Londonderry	2304	74
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	5750	348
Foyle	278	12
Lagan Valley	1596	26
Mid Ulster	4076	208
Newry and Armagh	4160	84
North Antrim	3219	286
North Down	235	6
South Antrim	1630	22
South Down	3696	58
Strangford	1495	30
Upper Bann	1270	32
West Tyrone	4199	196
No Constituency*	211	25
Total	35,512	1,446

* The constituency information is drawn from the postcodes of businesses that submitted a Single Application Form in 2013. The "No Constituency" figure represents businesses that either do not have a valid postcode recorded against their business or are businesses where the addresses held is outside the 18 constituencies listed above.

Single Farm Payments: Remote Sensing Inspections

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what percentage of unpaid Single Farm Payments are due to remote sensing inspections.

(AQW 30378/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are 1,695 Single Farm Payment claims which have not yet been finalised. 53.6% of these businesses have had a remote sensing inspection. All outstanding claims will be finalised as quickly as possible.

Translink: Rural Transport Options in Upper Bann

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what support she can give, in conjunction with Translink, to increase rural transport options in Upper Bann.

(AQW 30448/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Working in conjunction with Department of Regional Development (DRD) my Department through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme continues to fund passenger trips for rural dwellers in the Upper Bann constituency that hold a SmartPass. These trips are delivered via the Assisted Rural Travel Scheme (ARTS) by the Down Armagh Rural Transport Partnership which covers the Upper Bann constituency.

Officials are also currently working with DRD and Translink regarding what could be done to pilot new rural routes across the north.

Contingency Plans for Flooding in Northern Ireland

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, following the recent exceptionally poor weather resulting in the flooding of farmland in Great Britain, whether she has put contingency plans in place should similar problems arise in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 30461/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD has a Major Emergency Response plan which provides the overarching framework for the central management and co-ordination of the Department's involvement in a major emergency. DARD also has a range of plans in place to deal with specific emergency and business continuity situations. These have been developed over a number of years and are regularly and rigorously tested to ensure they remain fit for purpose. If an emergency situation is likely to affect the north of Ireland infrastructure, including the delivery of public services, OFMDFM will convene a meeting of the Civil Contingencies Group NI (CCG (NI)). During emergencies the membership of the Group will be tailored to the particular needs of the situation, and additional support organisations will be invited as appropriate. In respect of contingency plans already in place within my Department, DARD officials have been engaged with industry representatives on a Fodder Task Force, and staff at CAFRE have embarked on a comprehensive programme of workshops, advisory events and publications, helping farmers to maximise fodder production, to stocktake their individual fodder supply and to manage their stock to make most efficient use of the available fodder. Farmers are also being directed to the appropriate government departments and agencies on issues such as maintaining utility supplies. I can also advise you that Rivers Agency has emergency plans in place to respond to calls for assistance during flooding events. If there was major flooding of agricultural land, the key focus for the Agency in its response would be on reducing the risk to life and serious damage to property from flooding.

Water Courses in the Upper Bann Area

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many times approved water courses in the Upper Bann area have been cleaned, in the last five years, broken down by river.

(AQW 30504/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rivers Agency operates a 6 year cyclical inspection and maintenance programme for rural watercourses which are designated under the terms of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973. All designated

rural watercourses are inspected within the 6 year cycle and where necessary maintenance is identified this is subsequently undertaken. The table below shows each designated watercourse within the Upper Bann constituency. The columns to the right of the table show each of the last 5 years, and a tick against any specific watercourse indicates maintenance was undertaken in that year to ensure its free flow and reduce any risks of flooding. Maintenance works can range from channel works to removal of obstructions from watercourses including the natural build up of debris such as branches weeds etc and also bush cutting and removal of trees.

Watercourse Name	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Island Cottage				✓	
Jerrettspass	✓				
Cusher	✓		✓		
Annagh		✓	✓	✓	
Derryhale	✓				✓
Drumnakelly	✓		✓		✓
Kilmoriarty	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lisavague	✓				✓
Ballybay	✓	✓	✓		
Derryneskin				✓	✓
Farlough		✓		✓	✓
Foymore		✓		✓	
Tall	✓	✓		✓	
Blackwater	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Clonmakate		✓		✓	
Derrycor		✓		✓	✓
Gallrock		✓		✓	✓
Newry Canal		✓	✓	✓	
Gilford Drain		✓			✓
Blacker Burn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lagan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Farlough River Lower	✓	✓			
Bann (Upper)	✓			✓	
White Chapel River				✓	
Closet			✓		
Annagh River Diversion	✓	✓		✓	
Lough Gullion			✓		
Tarsan Drain	✓			✓	
Derryvore No 1	✓			✓	

Watercourse Name	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Derryvore No 2	✓			✓	
Derryvore & Seagoe	✓			✓	
Gilford Drain		✓			
Park Bog	✓			✓	
Seapatrick Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
St Mary's Drain			✓		
Bannfoot Rd Farlough Drain		✓			✓
Derrytrasna Drain					✓
Derryinver/Derrycrow					
Haughians Drain	✓		✓		
Dunbarton Burn			✓		
Gilford Mill Race	✓			✓	
Ballynery Drain					
Clare Bog Drain			✓		
Charlestown Drain			✓		
Civiltown Drain					
Clare Bog Branch Drain			✓		
Derryadd Drain					
Canal Drain		✓	✓		
Ardmore Drain			✓		
Ardmore Extension Drain			✓		
Derryloste Boundary Drain			✓		
Derryloste Tributary Drain			✓		
Derrycorr Drain			✓		
Derrytagh North Drain	✓		✓		
Blackerburn Extension Drain.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ballymacrandal Drain.			✓		
Drumnacanvy Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Derrycorr Drain No 2			✓		
Flow Bog Drain		✓	✓		✓
Muckragh Hill	✓	✓			
Muckragh Hill Extension	✓	✓			
Derryhirk	✓	✓			
Derryhirk Extension	✓	✓			

Watercourse Name	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
County Boundary Drain	✓	✓			
County Boundary Drain Extension	✓	✓			
Navvies Drain	✓	✓			
Aghalee Burn / Selshan Drain		✓			
Ballinderry Drain		✓			
Ballinderry Drain Extension		✓			
Closet Drain					
Closet Branch					
Boconnell Drain	✓				✓
Annaloist Drain	✓				✓
Annaloist Drain Extension	✓	✓			✓
Drumnakelly Drain		✓		✓	
Kinnegoe Drain		✓			✓
Clanrolla Drain		✓			✓
Goudy River		✓			
Goudy River Extension		✓			
Montaighs Derryvore		✓			
Feddian River		✓			
Derrymore Drain	✓	✓			
Goudy Trib		✓			
Laverys Hill Drain	✓	✓			
Laverys Hill Trib	✓	✓			
Clanrolla Trib		✓		✓	✓
Derryash Drain		✓			
Lurgantarry		✓			✓
Derryadd Boundary Drain.		✓			✓
Parkmore Drain		✓			
Park Moss Drain Extension		✓			
Aghagallon Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lough Beg Drain	✓	✓			
Brankinstown Drain		✓			
Derryhirk Drain No 2	✓	✓			
Derryola Drain	✓	✓			

Watercourse Name	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Rabbit Island Drain	✓	✓			
Derryola Bridge Drain	✓	✓			
Holy Island Drain	✓	✓			
George Island Drain	✓	✓			
Brockler Hill Drain					✓
Lake View Drain		✓			
Bog Head Bridge Drain	✓	✓			
Moss Drain		✓			
Portmore Lough West Drain		✓			✓
Lough Mona Drain		✓			
Tirsogue Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Flush River (Lurgan)	✓			✓	✓
Flush River (Lurgan) Tributary	✓				✓
Tirsogue Drain Tributary	✓		✓	✓	✓
Derryadd Boundary Drain Branch.		✓			✓
10th Lock Feeder Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Terryhoogan	✓	✓		✓	✓
Terryhoogan Hoss					✓
Tullyhugh		✓			✓
Artabrackagh			✓		
Cushenny			✓		
Drumhariff	✓	✓			
Drumhariff Extension	✓	✓			
Selshion					
Ballyworkan	✓			✓	
Carrowbrack	✓			✓	
Brackagh East	✓			✓	
Brackagh West					
Ballyfodrin	✓	✓		✓	✓
Selshion Branch Drain					
Ballymakeown Drain			✓		
Kilmoriarty Branch Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mullahead West Drain	✓			✓	

Watercourse Name	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Derryhale Extension					
Rampart		✓			
Ballymagowan					✓
Ballymagowan Drain Extension	✓			✓	
Derryanvil		✓			✓
Derryanvil Extension		✓			✓
Corbrackey		✓			✓
Foybeg			✓		
Derrykeeran		✓			✓
Derrykeeran Extension		✓			✓
Derrymacfall	✓			✓	
Derrybrughas	✓			✓	
Derrycory	✓			✓	
Derrycory Branch	✓			✓	
Tarthlogue					✓
Maghery					
Derrylileagh	✓				
Derryvane			✓		
Greenisland				✓	✓
Derrinraw		✓			✓
Cannagola More				✓	
Derryall		✓			✓
Ferron's Drain		✓			✓
Clonmakate Drain					✓
Runlet Drain					✓
Derrylard	✓			✓	
Derrylard Extension Drain	✓			✓	
Derrylettiff					✓
Derrycory No 2		✓			✓
Cloncore		✓			
Derrykeeran No2		✓			
Clonmartin Drain				✓	
White Island Drain	✓			✓	
Sullivan's Drain	✓		✓		

Watercourse Name	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Carrick Drain		✓			✓
Clonmacash Drain		✓			✓
Farlough Extension Drain				✓	✓
Derrylard No 2 Drain					✓
Derrycarran Drain					
Drumcree Drain	✓		✓	✓	
Whitechapel Extension			✓		
Banbridge Town Culverts Extension 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fort Street Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fort Street Stream Extension	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Lodge Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Showgrounds Stream	✓	✓			
Factory View Stream	✓		✓	✓	
Rowans Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Showgrounds Stream Extension			✓	✓	
Gilford Road Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Scrogg Stream Extension	✓	✓	✓		✓
Brookfield Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brookfield Stream Extension.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Castlewellan Road Stream	✓			✓	
Winona Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ballymacmaine Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flush River Diversion	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Woodville River	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Waringstown Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Waringstown Drain Extension	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regency Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Springhill Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Springhill Stream Extension	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Kernan Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kernan Stream Tributary A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Turmoyra Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Taughrane Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Watercourse Name	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Halfpenny River	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tamnamore Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cambrai Heights Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Flush River	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fallowfield Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Greenan Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Loughbrickland Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Loughbrickland Stream Extension	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Collingwood Drain	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Kingsway Drive Drain	✓		✓		✓
Ashgrove	✓		✓		

Farm Safety Issues

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to promote farm safety issues.

(AQW 30507/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In response to the deteriorating situation regarding fatalities on farms, the Farm Safety Partnership was established in May 2012. My Department is one of the partners along with the Health & Safety Executive NI, the Ulster Farmers Union, NFU Mutual, the Young farmers Clubs of Ulster and NIAPA.

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

The Action Plan contains 44 commitments of which DARD has lead responsibility for 7. To date my Department has completed the following:

- Developed new health and safety training materials for presentation to farmers.
- Under the Farm Safe Awareness programme, has recorded 2701 registrations with 143 workshops being completed and attended by 2545 participants.
- Spent £159,896 in relation to the Farm Safe Awareness courses which are funded under the Rural Development Programme.
- Since November 2012, CAFRE have held 1027 events with over 17,500 participants where in addition to the main topic of the event, farm safety material has been made available to those attending.
- All CAFRE courses have always contained a high level of farm safety as part of the course. Since the introduction of the Farm Safety Partnership there is a heightened focus on safety. CAFRE have been working with HSENI in relation to course content aiding the increase of focus on safety. Translink have also presented to students in relation to the safety of farm machinery at railway crossings.
- 250 Farm Safety Awareness packs have been delivered to all students who will be on work placements during the 2013/14 academic year.

- Over the three Tranches of the Farm Modernisation Programme, some £4.6m of financial support for items that promote safer working on farms was awarded in letters of offer to successful applicants.
- A pilot survey on Farm Safety was posted to a random sample of 1,000 farmers in December 2013. The survey closed at the end of January and the returns will be evaluated in February 2014. Any lessons learned will be incorporated into a main survey on Farm Safety which will issue shortly.

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

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development on how many occasions since May 2007 has her Department not accepted the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding.
(AQW 30527/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: None.

Maximising Access in Rural Areas Programme

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the total number of household visits that have taken place in East Antrim under the Maximising Access in Rural Areas programme.

(AQW 30545/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Four hundred and forty four households have been visited in the East Antrim constituency area through the Maximising Access in Rural Areas (MARA) Project.

Not-For-Profit Organisations: Management of Reservoirs

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether funding will be available to not-for-profit organisations responsible for the management of reservoirs to assist in complying with the increased responsibilities proposed in the Reservoirs Bill.

(AQW 30554/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Reservoirs Bill has only just been introduced in the Assembly and is currently within the legislative scrutiny process. It is therefore too early to be committing funding to assist organisations with their responsibilities as set out in the Bill, as these may be subject to change. The Bill, as drafted, does however provide for a grant scheme, by regulation, and during the second stage debate I recognised the services offered by not for profit organisations who operate reservoirs, and committed to explore in more detail the possibility of meeting the costs of public safety measures for these bodies.

Trawling: Monitoring and Regulation

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

(AQW 30559/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) All commercial fishing vessels must be authorised to fish, including to trawl in loughs, by a fishing licence issued by virtue of the Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967, as amended. Local inshore fishing regulations prohibit the use of trawl nets within inshore waters in Carlingford Lough, Strangford Lough and inner Belfast Lough. These fishing regulations also restrict the use of trawl nets within inshore waters in Lough Foyle and outer Belfast Lough to vessels with a length

not exceeding 15.24 and 12.19 metres respectively. Mussel dredgers operate in Lough Foyle and Belfast and Carlingford Loughs but only within specific aquaculture sites licensed by the Department and for husbandry purposes only.

- (ii) The DARD Fisheries Inspectorate has the responsibility for monitoring this activity and enforcing the legislation. They do this by shore based observation, sea patrols and by operating the mandatory satellite based tracking system for fishing vessels.

Local Fishing Industry: Selective Fishing Gear

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department plans to reward the local fishing industry for adhering to European demands on selective fishing gear in recent months.

(AQW 30566/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The reason why our fleet is fishing with highly selective fishing gears is to reduce cod mortality. This must to be done because the Irish Sea cod stock is in poor condition and is showing little signs of improving. Back in December 2011 our industry was faced with the prospect of having unacceptable technical measures imposed on it by the European Commission. The commitment I made then with the co-operation of the industry was to have the fleet fish with gears that would exempt them from days at sea restrictions which are a feature of the Cod Recovery Plan. To achieve this, the fishing gears would need to be sufficiently selective to constrain cod catches to less than 1.5% of the total catch.

This allowed us breathing space to develop measures more suitable for our fleet. We now have several more acceptable gear types that are capable of reducing cod catches to below 1.5% and allow vessels to become completely exempt from Days at Sea restrictions.

We will continue to improve these gears and over the next two years and beyond the focus will be on overall reduction in catches of unwanted fish.

It is in everyone's interest that we move to a position where there is the cleanest prawn fishery possible in the Irish Sea so that unwanted catches are minimised by technical and other management measures. The reward for doing so is to have fisheries that exploited sustainably both now and for future generations.

Local Fishing Industry: December Fisheries Council Process

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how the local fishing industry can be integrated into the December Fisheries Council process.

(AQW 30567/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The December Fisheries Council is a negotiation restricted to Member States and the Commission and as such the fishing industry cannot be directly involved. Prior to Council my Department and Fisheries Administrations in Britain routinely consult with their respective fishing stakeholders to discuss what our negotiating priorities should be and the likely impacts of different scenarios that might play out at Council. This is an extremely important engagement for Fisheries Ministers and one which I am fully committed to.

Fishing Vessel Decommissioning Scheme

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she plans to introduce a 'scrap and build' or a vessel decommissioning scheme for the local fishing industry.

(AQW 30568/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: EU funding rules expressly forbid financial assistance for the purpose of construction of new fishing vessels so it is not possible to have a "scrap and build" scheme. You may be aware that I decided in December 2012 not to proceed with a decommissioning scheme following consideration of the business case and feedback from the fishing industry about the scope of the proposed scheme.

While I have no plans to introduce a scheme I am aware that some individuals would welcome such a development. My Department will shortly be undertaking a consultation exercise on the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund which we hope will be open to applications early in 2015. The matter of whether a decommissioning scheme should be included in future investment proposals will be considered fully as part of that consultation.

Local Fishing Industry: Selective Fishing Gear

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance her Department will provide to the local fishing industry as a result of the changes to fishing gears, in order to reduce catches of small haddock, whiting and plaice.

(AQW 30569/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department fully funded trials on a variety of experimental gears during 2012 and 2013. The outcome of these trials was acceptance by the Commission's scientific advisors that the preferred designs were highly selective and capable of constraining cod catches to 1.5% of the overall catch. These gears also reduced catches of juvenile haddock and whiting by more than 50%. The European Fisheries Fund has been used to assist the industry to adapt its fishing gear to incorporate larger square mesh panels, bigger mesh cod ends and selectivity features such as the Seltra box. Making fishing gear more selective is a priority because of new landing obligations that will impact on the prawn fleet from 1 January 2016. My Department will continue to work with the industry this year to continuously improve the selectivity of nets to reduce unwanted catches. Grant will also be available under the EFF to assist with the cost of replacement fishing gear or to carry out further adaptations.

Local Waters: Sustainable Fishing

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department can ensure local waters are sustainably fished, but not underexploited, in the years ahead.

(AQW 30571/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under the new Common Fisheries Policy targets have been set to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) exploitation rate by 2015 where possible and, on a progressive, incremental basis at the latest by 2020 for all fish stocks. Achieving MSY will ensure that stocks will be fished at sustainable levels for the long term and the setting of quotas in future will be in line with achieving MSY targets.

The fishing fleets ability to fully take sustainable fishing opportunities depend on a range of factors that include, prevailing economic conditions in the industry, and adapting to restrictions on fisheries, such as the new landing obligation.

In the small Irish Sea whitefish fishery, where selectivity is difficult, some stocks such as haddock are likely to be underexploited because it is not possible to fully target haddock without further damaging vulnerable stocks such as cod, and whiting.

My Department will continue to offer support through marine research and the European Fisheries Fund and the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund to assist the industry where possible. This includes further research into improved highly selective fishing gear to reduce landings of unwanted fish in the prawn fishery. We will also continue to fund measures to help vessels become more cost efficient and adopt highly selective fishing gear.

Animal Welfare: Spend

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the total spend on animal welfare in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30586/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Prior to the introduction of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, the welfare of animals here was protected by the Welfare of Animals Act 1972. Under the 1972 Act, DARD, through its Veterinary

Service, had responsibility for welfare enforcement in respect of farmed animals whilst the PSNI was responsible for other animal cruelty issues.

From 2 April 2012 responsibility for enforcement of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 is as follows: Councils in respect of non-farmed animals such as domestic pets and horses; DARD Veterinary Service in respect of farmed animals; and the PSNI in respect of wild animals, animal fighting, and welfare issues where other criminal activities are involved.

My Department provides annual funding for Councils to undertake this enforcement work. The PSNI has provided details of their spend on animal welfare and this is included in the table below. The table below sets out the relevant spend by each enforcement body and includes spend on policy work including the cost of a dedicated Bill team, from September 2009 until 28 February 2013, which brought forward and implemented the new Welfare of Animals Act 2011 to replace the 1972 Act.

TABLE – SPEND ON ANIMAL WELFARE

Year	VS Enforcement	DARD Policy	Councils Enforcement	PSNI	Total
2009/10	£220k	£151k	N/A	£59k	£430k
2010/11	£231k	£283k	N/A	£100k	£614k
2011/12	£283k	£345k	£324k*	£101k	£1,053k
2012/13	£409k	£344k	£529k	£100k	£1,382k
2013/14	£329k**	£121k**	£384k**	£65k***	£899k
Overall Total	£1.472m	£1.244m	£1.237m	£0.425m	£4.378m

* Funding provided to Councils to prepare for implementation from 2/4/2012

** April 2013 to October 2013

*** April 2013 to January 2014

Ards Peninsula: Coastal Defences

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps will be taken to address the deficiencies in coastal defences underscored by recent storm damage in respect of the Ards Peninsula.

(AQW 30662/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Around the Ards Peninsula, Rivers Agency is responsible for designated sea defences at Newtownards and Greyabbey. These defences were severely tested during the recent storms and Rivers Agency's assessment is that they performed well. Inspections of the defences are well advanced, and should they identify the need for works, these will be given appropriate priority. There are also a number of other authorities who are responsible for coastal defences around the Ards Peninsula which protect property, such as roads and harbours. It is important for them to take whatever action is necessary to repair any damage caused and consider what further work is required to protect their infrastructure from future coastal storms. Rivers Agency has developed coastal flood mapping for the whole of the north of Ireland which has already been shared with a number of infrastructure owners. The Agency is available to provide its mapping expertise to assist other authorities to assess what further work is required to protect their infrastructure from future coastal storms. Where property, for which no other public body is responsible, has been significantly affected by flooding from the sea, Rivers Agency can examine options for improving the level of protection, but any works would be subject to the appropriate approvals, the need to be cost beneficial and competing priorities for available funding.

Fodder Task Force: Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Fodder Task Force will widen its remit to consider the support that could be provided to farmers who find their herds closed as a result of Bovine Tuberculosis.

(AQW 30673/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I set up the Fodder Taskforce to address problems facing livestock farmers arising from the prolonged low temperatures impacting on growth and poor ground conditions in spring 2013. This objective has largely been achieved and I have no plans to widen the group's remit.

However, to support those farmers whose herds are restricted because of bovine TB, my department, in consultation with cattle industry representatives, has developed a new Alternative Control Herd (ACH) policy. When ACHs are established they will be able to receive animals under licence from TB breakdown herds. Herd keepers have been able to apply to operate an ACH since the end of November 2013.

Bovine Tuberculosis in the North Antrim Area

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of herds closed as a result of Bovine Tuberculosis in the North Antrim area, on the 1 February in each of the last four years.

(AQW 30674/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The North Antrim area includes parts of 3 DARD Divisional areas: Ballymena, Coleraine and Mallusk. Retrospective TB herd data for point date 1 February in each of the last 4 years is not readily available. Instead, the numbers of herds in the area under restriction following the identification of TB either at a test or at routine slaughter inspection in these herds, on 31 December 2010-2013 inclusive are provided below:

Date	Number in area
31 December 2010	117
31 December 2011	103
31 December 2012	132
31 December 2013	166

Pig Farming and the Pork Sector

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the grants, finance and support available for farmers wishing to invest in pig farming and the pork sector.

(AQW 30685/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013, my Department provided financial support to the wider agricultural sector, including the pig sector, through the Processing & Marketing Grant Scheme (PMG), the Farm Modernisation Programme (FMP) and the Manure Efficiency Technology Scheme (METS). Both the PMG and FMP schemes are closed to new applications, however a further tranche of METS financial support, where the main enterprise is pig farming, is planned for 2014, subject to the funding. METS provides capital grants of up to £10,000 per farm business to enable farmers to invest in advanced slurry and manure spreading systems.

My Department's proposals for a number of new schemes to provide grant support for the agricultural sector were outlined in the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP) consultation document, with the public consultation closing on 21 October 2013. On foot of the consultation responses, my Department will be continuing to develop our plans for the next Programme in conjunction with the Stakeholder Consultation Group.

In addition to financial support, training, benchmarking and knowledge transfer support is available through the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE).

Single Farm Payments: Remote Sensing

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the process (i) used to identify the geographic areas which will be subject to remote sensing; and (ii) by which all affected Single Farm Payment recipients are notified.

(AQW 30707/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) In accordance with Commission Regulations for area based schemes a minimum of 5% inspections (on-the-spot checks) must be carried out each year. These can be carried out by farm visits or remotely using aerial imagery. To meet our target for inspections by remote sensing in 2013 two areas were identified. The location of each of the areas was selected randomly by computer and satellite imagery was requested from the European Commission.
- (ii) In December 2013, my Department issued a letter to all farmers who received a remote sensing check, to notify them that this had taken place.

Bovine Tuberculosis: Omagh and West Tyrone

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the incidences of Bovine Tuberculosis in Omagh and West Tyrone; and whether her Department will take the appropriate action to identify and eradicate the cause.

(AQW 30708/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The latest annual herd TB incidence and the annual animal TB incidence for Omagh Divisional Veterinary Office area are 6.32% and 0.482% respectively.

These measures of incidence are significantly lower than the corresponding figures in the previous 12 months (9.97% and 0.939%), indicating a marked reduction in the level of Bovine Tuberculosis in Omagh DVO since 2012. The latest figures for Omagh DVO are also lower than those corresponding to the north of Ireland as a whole (6.48% and 0.527%).

Because of the nature of the disease it is not always possible to attribute a cause to a particular outbreak with certainty. A Veterinary Officer visits every TB breakdown within 5 days of disease confirmation to investigate possible sources and to give the herd keeper advice on how to reduce the risk of further exposure to TB.

TB is a complex and multi-factorial disease and its control is a priority for DARD. Eradication of the disease is the long term goal and although it may be quite some time before this can be achieved a great deal of work is being done to progressively reduce disease levels through the application of our EU Commission approved eradication programme, research projects and partnership with industry representative organisations.

Single Farm Payment: Farmers in North Down

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

(AQW 30737/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has delivered a record payment performance in 2013 with 90% of Single Farm Payment claims finalised in December 2013. Only 8 farm businesses in the North Down constituency had not received their Single Farm Payment by 31 January 2014.

Maximising Access in Rural Areas Programme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many visits have been made to households in North Down under the Maximising Access in Rural Areas Programme.

(AQW 30806/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forty one rural households have been visited in the North Down constituency area through the Maximising Access in Rural Areas (MARA) Project.

Slurry Tanks: Financial Assistance

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what financial assistance is currently available to build slurry tanks.

(AQW 30950/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Currently no financial assistance is available from my Department to build slurry tanks.

My Department has provided some £121 million of financial assistance for building slurry tanks through the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme (FNMS), which operated from 2005 to 2008. The Scheme provided 60% capital grant support to farmers to install new or improved slurry and manure storage facilities. All slurry tanks, and middens for the storage of solid manures, funded under the FNMS are constructed to have a lifespan of at least 20 years.

The FNMS delivered a total investment of over £200m in farm infrastructure, with farmers contributing more than £80m and it was the largest capital grant scheme delivered by my Department.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Cricket Ireland: Grant Aid

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQO 2046/11-15, what proportion of the grant aid paid to Cricket Ireland by her Department was spent in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 30450/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): On 28 May 2012, I advised that Sport NI had provided £3,935,030 exchequer and lottery funding to Cricket Ireland. All of this funding was provided and spent to assist with the development of cricket in the north of Ireland.

Funding for the Promotion of Cricket

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding has been awarded for the promotion of cricket in Northern Ireland, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30451/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, is responsible for the distribution of funding for sport in the north of Ireland.

In the last three financial years to March 2013, Sport NI has provided £4,621,729 exchequer and lottery funding to Cricket Ireland, to assist with the promotion of cricket in the north of Ireland. This is broken down as follows:

Year	Exchequer	Lottery	Grand Total
2010/11	£348,014	£1,011,361	£1,359,375
2011/12	£262,007	£1,352,933	£1,614,940
2012/13	£196,082	£1,451,332	£1,647,414
Total	£806,103	£3,815,626	£4,621,729

Furthermore, Sport NI has provided support to Cricket Clubs in Governance, Club Development, High Performance, Talent Development and Coach Development.

Funding for the Promotion of Women's Cricket

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding has been provided for the promotion of women's cricket, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30452/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: During the last three years up to March 2013, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has provided funding totalling £862,456 to the sport of cricket, including women's cricket.

The details are broken down as follows:

Programme	10/11	11/12	12/13	Total
Investing in Performance Sport	£174,148	£212,007	£196,082	£582,237
Active Communities	£83,983	£99,543	£96,693	£280,219
Total	£258,131	£311,550	£292,775	£862,456
Awards for Sport	£42,234 provided for the period 2009-2012		-	

Murals: Reimaging Schemes

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQO 5287/11-15, how many of the 155 projects have reverted to sectarian murals.

(AQW 30543/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have been informed by the Arts Council that, to the best of their knowledge, none of Re-imaging Communities projects have 'reverted' to sectarian murals.

Ulster Scots

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department recognises Ulster Scots as an official language.

(AQW 30563/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Ulster-Scots is recognised and protected under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which was signed by the UK Government in March 2000 and ratified in March 2001. The Charter is an international treaty and its provisions apply to recognised languages throughout the UK, including Ulster-Scots.

Funding Allocated to Ulster Scots and Gaelic Traditions

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for a breakdown of funding allocated to (i) Ulster Scots; and (ii) Gaelic traditions, in the last three years in Upper Bann.

(AQW 30578/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The tables below show the total funding provided by my Department and its Arms Length Bodies in the Upper Bann Constituency in the last three years.

GAELIC TRADITIONS

2011	2012	2013
£77,022	£20,659	£39,464

ULSTER SCOTS TRADITIONS

2011	2012	2013
£18,679.70	£5,279.50	£20,750

Ulster Scots Public Events

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many Ulster Scots public events she has attended in her Ministerial capacity in the last twelve months.

(AQW 30656/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: None. However, I attended the Ebrington Tattoo which incorporated Ulster Scots performances.

Arts Council of Northern Ireland: Literature Strategy

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when the Arts Council of Northern Ireland will publish the Literature Strategy.

(AQW 30688/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Arts Council has advised that terms of reference have been drawn up and field work is due to commence before the end of this financial year. However the final strategy may not be published until late 2014.

Arts Council of Northern Ireland: Funding

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the steps taken by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland take to ensure that organisations in receipt of funding deliver the specific activities for which they were granted funding.

(AQW 30689/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Arts Council issues a letter of offer with each award which contains a set of conditions outlining what the organisation is expected to deliver. This is monitored in a variety of ways - through written reports, financial reports, visits by Arts Council officers to the activities and also reports by independent assessors.

Ulster Scots Agency: Highland Dancing Classes

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the change in funding by the Ulster Scots Agency for Highland Dancing classes, as delivered by community groups and associations, including the amount approved for each application, in each of the last four years.

(AQW 30693/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There has been no change in the way the Ulster Scots Agency administer funding for Highland Dancing classes.

The tables attached show the Ulster Scots Agency's expenditure on Highland Dancing classes over the last four years.

DANCE 2010

Name	Title	Amount awarded
Altnaveigh House School of Dance	Highland Dance	£5,280.00
Aughlish Ulster-Scots Group	Highland Dance	£3,360.00
Aughnagurgan Scottish Dance Association	Highland Dance	£2,813.63
Ballysillan Highland Dancers	Highland Dance	£3,090.00
Blue Thistle Highland Dancers	Highland Dance	£2,200.00
Bright Lights	Highland Dance	£2,976.50
Bright Lights	Highland Dance	£3,489.00
Cairncastle LOL 692 Community and Cultural Group	Highland Dance	£4,290.00
Closkelt Highland Dancers	Highland Dance	£2,325.00
Curley Rural Community Association	Highland Dance	£4,170.00
Dollingstown Ulster-Scots Society	Highland Dance	£2,250.00
Erne Highland Dancers	Highland Dance	£3,870.00
Finnard Rural Development Association	Highland Dance	£2,421.00
Greyabbey Junior Drumming Club	Highland Dance	£3,648.00
Heart of Down Highland Dancers	Highland Dance	£2,714.40
Irish Street Community Association	Highland Dance	£2,985.00
Kilrea and District Ulster-Scots Society	Highland Dance	£2,062.80
Kirknarra School of Dance	Highland Dance Teacher Training	£825.00
Kirknarra School of Dance	Highland Dance	£3,822.00
Magherafelt Highland and Country Dance Group	Highland Dance	£4,245.60
Magherafelt Highland and Country Dance Groupo	Highland DanceTeacher Training	£475.00
Maguiresbridge Scottish, Country & Highland Dance	Highland Dance	£6,750.00
Mourne School Of Highland Dance	Highland DanceTeacher Training	£3,576.00
Moyne Ulster-Scots Association	Highland Dance	£3,690.00
Raphoe Pipe Band	Highland Dance	£3,078.00
Sollus School Of Dance	Highland Dance	£4,140.00
Sollus School Of Dance	Highland Dance	£6,760.00
Ulster-Scots Dance Academy	Highland Dance	£3,607.50
	Total:	£94,914.43

DANCE TUITION 2011

Name	Title	Amount awarded
Aughnagurgan Scottish Dance Association	Highland Dance	£2,476.13
Ballysillan Highland Dancers	Highland Dance tuition	£2,484.00
Blue Thistle Highland Dancers	Highland Dancing	£2,025.00
Cairncastle LOL 692 Community & Cultural Group	Highland Dancing Class	£3,098.57
Closkelt Highland Dancers	Highland Dance	£1,620.00
Craiganeer Accordion Band	Highland Dance	£1,050.00
Cranfield Cultural Society	Highland Dance	£1,647.00
Curley Rural Community Association	Highland Dance	£2,565.00
Erne Highland Dancers	Highland Dance	£2,430.00
Finnard Rural Development Association	Highland Dance	£1,971.00
Greyabbey Junior Scottish Highland Dance Group	Highland Dance	£1,419.00
Heart of Down Highland Dancers	Highland Dance Workshop	£1,903.50
Kilrea District Ulster-Scots Society	Highland Dance Tuition	£1,674.00
Kirknarra School of Dance	Highland Dance	£2,362.50
Magherafelt Highland & Country Dance Group	Highland & Country Dance	£1,895.70
Maguiresbridge Highland Dance Group	Highland Dance Tuition	£3,577.50
McClintock Parents Support Group	Scottish Highland Dancing	£2,250.00
Mourne School of Dance	Highland Dance	£2,421.00
Mourne School of Dance	Highland Dance Teacher Training	£4,155.00
Moyne Ulster Scots Association	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,745.00
Shelley-Anne Campbell School of Highland Dancing	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,070.00
Sollus School of Highland Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£6,131.25
Sollus School of Highland Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,655.00
Village Maids Highland Dance Groups	Highland Dance	£2,475.00
	Total:	£59,101.15

DANCE TUITION 2012

Name	Title	Amount awarded
Moyne Ulster Scots Association	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,827.50
McClintock Parents Support Group	Seskinore Scottish Highland Dancing Group	£1,518.75
Kirknarra School of Dance	Scottish Highland Dance Tuition	£2,520.00
Craiganeer Accordion Band	2012 Dance Programme	£1,050.00
Mourne School of Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,470.50
Aughnagurgan Scottish Dance Association	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,595.00
Closkelt Highland Dancers	Closkelt Highland Dancers	£1,373.40
Blue Thistle Highland Dancers	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,725.00
Mourne School of Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£1,102.50
Banbridge Orange Hall Committee	Scottish Highland Dance Tuition	£2,430.00
Maghera Parish Caring Association	Highland & Country Dance	£367.20
Maguiresbridge Highland & Scottish Country Dancing	Highland Dance Tuition	£4,087.50
Ardstraw & Baronscourt Youth Council	Newtownstewart Highland Dancers	£2,146.50
Sollus School of Highland Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,677.50
Mourne School of Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,587.50
Cranfield Cultural Society	Highland Dance Tuition	£1,656.00
Heart of Down Highland	Highland Dance Workshops	£1,971.00
Sollus School of Highland Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£6,423.75
Cairncastle LOL 692 Community & Cultural Group (Association)	Highland Dance Classes	£3,277.50

Name	Title	Amount awarded
Erne Highland Dancers	Developing of Excellence in Highland Dance Tuition	£3,903.00
Finnard Rural Development Association	Highland Dance Tuition	£1,339.50
Greyabbey Junior Scottish Highland Dance Group	Scottish Highland Dance Tuition	£1,935.00
North West Cultural Association	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,946.00
	Total:	£55,930.60

DANCE 2013

Name	Title	Amount awarded
Bright Lights	Highland Dance Tuition	£3,262.50
Sollus School of Highland Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,525.25
McClintock Primary School	Highland Dance Tuition	£1,856.25
Closkelt Highland Dancers	Closkelt Highland Dancers	£1,373.40
Aughnagurgan Scottish Dance Association	Highland Dance Classes	£2,621.25
North West Historical & Cultural Society	Highland Dance Tuition	£3,402.00
The Blue Thistle Highland Dancers	Highland Dance	£2,081.25
Kirknarra School of Dance	Scottish Highland Dance Classes	£2,520.00
Ardstraw & Baronscourt Youth Council	Highland Dancing	£1,696.50
Sollus School of Highland Dance	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,748.38
Heart of Down Highland Dancers	Highland Dance Tuition	£1,971.00
Dromore Orange Hall Committee	Highland Dance Tuition	£1,878.75
Cranfield Cultural Society	Highland Dance Tuition	£1,656.00
Finnard Rural Development Association	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,020.50

Name	Title	Amount awarded
Cairncastle LOL 692 Community & Cultural Group (Association)	Highland Dance Tuition	£3,060.00
Sollus School of Highland Dance	Monthly Technique Workshops	£2,141.25
Maguiresbridge Highland & Scottish Country Dancing Group	Highland Dance Tuition	£4,095.00
Erne Highland Dancers	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,211.30
Clooney Hall Centre	Highland Dance Tuition	£844.50
Moyne Ulster Scots Association	Highland Dance Tuition	£2,835.00
	Total:	£46,800.08

The Odyssey Trust

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the events at the Odyssey Arena on 6 February 2014, what overview actions her Department takes in respect of The Odyssey Trust, to ensure that it is meeting its obligations on the safe operation of the complex.

(AQW 30751/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I was shocked at the reports of the ‘DJ Hardwell’ event held at the Odyssey Arena on 6th February at which scores of our young people had drunk to excess or taken drugs resulting in a ‘major incident’ being declared.

It is of great concern that the inappropriate and excessive activities of approximately 100 people tied up emergency services’ personnel unnecessarily. The misuse of alcohol led to many unpleasant and distressing scenes and I wish to commend the response of our emergency services and support volunteers in dealing with this incident.

I am pleased that the Odyssey Trust Company’s (OTC) Chief Executive is leading an investigation into the recent events both within and outside the Arena. This investigation will involve his meeting with all of the relevant stakeholders involved and is expected to be completed by 21st February.

The OTC is an independent company limited by guarantee with charitable status. As such, the safe operation of the complex is a matter for the Odyssey Arena which is ultimately the responsibility of the OTC’s Trustees. My Department does not direct, or intervene, in these operational activities; nor has it a governance or accountability role over the Trustees in such matters.

The Odyssey Trust

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what is the nature of the co-operation agreement, of 22 October 2010, between The Odyssey Trust and SMG Ltd in regard to the operation of the Odyssey Arena; and whether it establishes an effective joint venture in regard to the operation and running of the premises.

(AQW 30764/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Odyssey Trust Company Limited (OTC) is an independent company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

The 15 year 'co-operation agreement' is a commercial management arrangement between Odyssey Millennium Limited (an OTC subsidiary), SMG (NI) Limited and SMG Europe Holdings Limited. As it relates to the operational activities at the Odyssey Arena my Department had no role in its negotiation, approval or in developing measures to assess its ongoing effectiveness. This is a matter for the OTC's Trustees and Senior Management Team under that agreement's reporting and review structure .

My Department does not hold a copy of this agreement.

1000th Anniversary of the Death of Brian Boru

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans are in place to mark the 1000th anniversary of the death of Brian Boru, who died at the Battle of Clontarf on 23 April 1014.
(AQW 30778/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Armagh Library and Armagh Observatory & Planetarium are working with other local institutions and the seven primary schools in Armagh on the project, 'The Waking of Brian Boru'.

'The Waking of Brian Boru' is a community project to offer local people of all ages in Armagh an opportunity to reflect upon and engage with the one thousand year anniversary of Brian Boru's death this year. A series of music performance workshops will be held in local institutions, all of which will contribute to the project through the active involvement and knowledge-sharing by representatives from Armagh County Museum, Armagh Observatory, Armagh Public Library and No 5 (Diocesan Registry).

All of the groups will come together to create a community inspired performance on the Hill of Armagh in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral on Thursday 1 and Friday 2 May 2014.

Libraries NI will be marking the 1000th anniversary of the death of Brian Boru with a talk in the Irish and Local Studies Library in Armagh on World Book Day, Thursday, 6th March hosted by Armagh City Chapter. The speaker is Seán Duffy FTCD, Professor of Medieval History, Department of History, Trinity College, Dublin who has published a book recently on Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf in which he has written about the importance of Armagh at that time

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many times she has appeared before her Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.
(AQW 30794/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since taking up office in May 2011, I have appeared three times before my Department's Statutory Assembly Committee – once in 2011, once in 2013 and once in 2014.

Sporting Clubs: Child Protection Obligations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what monitoring takes place to ensure that sporting clubs comply with their child protection obligations.
(AQW 30803/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The governing bodies of sport in the north of Ireland have responsibility for ensuring that all affiliated sporting clubs are compliant with child protection obligations, including monitoring the compliance of these obligations.

Through its governance programme, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has introduced a process to assist all funded sport governing bodies to assess safeguarding standards. These standards are taken from guidance sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety through "Our Duty to Care".

In addition, Sport NI has processes in place to ensure that any clubs, who apply for direct funding, comply with child protection obligations.

Sport NI will continue to provide support to governing bodies on their child protection obligations.

Promotion of Social Clauses

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action her Department is taking to promote social clauses.

(AQW 30821/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: One of the key ways in which DCAL delivers on its commitment to tackle poverty and social exclusion is by using social clauses which maximise the sustainable economic, social, equality and environmental outcomes of procurement exercises.

Social clauses have been firmly embedded throughout the procurement and delivery process for the Stadium contracts. These social clauses require contractors to provide over 100 opportunities for the long term unemployed, apprenticeships and student placements.

The Music Business Support Programme launched in 2013 included social clauses committing the delivery organisation to provide work placements totalling over 156 weeks for the long term unemployed. The programme is also required to support education based initiatives targeting disadvantaged areas.

The Department has worked with the Arts Council NI to introduce social clauses into the Creative Industries Innovation Fund. Recipients of CIIF awards are contractually obliged to participate on W5s STEM Ambassadors Programme and its outreach activities to schools in disadvantaged areas. In 2014/15 this will be expanded to include the option of supporting the skills outreach activities of Creative & Cultural Skills (sectoral skills council).

I will continue to ensure that my Department includes appropriate social clauses when a tangible benefit to individuals and communities can be achieved.

Foras na Gaeilge: POBAL, Iontaobhas Ultach, Altram and Forbairt Feirste

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if she will urge Foras na Gaeilge to implement a consortia-based approach to ensure the continuance of the excellent work being carried out by POBAL, Iontaobhas Ultach, Altram and Forbairt Feirste.

(AQW 30870/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The NSMC, at its meeting on 10 July 2013 approved new funding arrangements and directed Foras na Gaeilge to proceed with the implementation of these arrangements from 1 July 2014 and agreed to extent the existing core funding arrangements to 30 June 2014.

As a result of the NSMC decision Foras na Gaeilge appointed 6 new lead organisations on 17 January 2014 to proceed under the six new funding themes from 1 July 2014.

The opportunity to be selected as a lead organisation was an open and transparent process open to all existing core funded bodies. Organisations had the opportunity then to merge to make a bid to become a lead organisation.

Foras na Gaeilge have appointed a Change Management Consultant who is available to POBAL, Iontaobhas ULTACH, Altram and Fobairt Feirste to provide them with advice and guidance in relation to their future options.

Theatre Performances

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of theatre performances which she has attended since taking up office, including the (i) date; (ii) location; and (iii) title of the performance.

(AQW 30951/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: None that have taken place specifically in theatre venues. However, I have attended a number of performances that have taken place at other venues. These are listed in the table below:

Title	Date	Location
Childrens Opera Noye's Fludde	17/08/2012	Belfast Zoo
Culture Night	20/09/2013	Black Box
Walled City Tattoo	28/08/2013	The Venue, Ebrington
Return of Colmcille	7/06/2013, 8/06/2013	Derry City
Celebration of Irish Language, Heritage and Culture	31/01/2012	City Hall Belfast
Ye Banks & Braes- A Burns Night Celebration	25/01/2012	Ulster Hall Belfast

Ulster Orchestra

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of performances by the Ulster Orchestra she has attended since taking up office.

(AQW 30952/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have not attended any performances by the Ulster Orchestra since taking up office. However, I have met with representatives of the orchestra on two occasions to discuss the role it plays in providing employment to musicians, contributing to the local economy, promoting the north of Ireland abroad and the education and outreach programmes it undertakes.

Departmental Bank Accounts

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) any departmental bank accounts that have been inactive for twelve months or more; (ii) the reason they are inactive; and (iii) the balance of each account.

(AQW 30982/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are no departmental bank accounts that have been inactive for twelve months or more.

Department of Education

Requests for Reduction in Admission or Enrolment Numbers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many requests have been received for a reduction in admission or enrolment numbers in each of the last five years; and how many were approved.

(AQW 30501/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): Information about requests from schools for temporary (for one-year) reductions to admissions and enrolment numbers, is not held by the Department of Education in the format you have requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Development Proposals (DPs) relating to requests to permanently reduce admissions and/or enrolment numbers have been considered for the following schools in the period in question:

School	ELB Area	Date Published	Reason For DP	Decision
Braniel PS	SEELB	26/01/2010	Decrease enrolment in nursery unit	Not Approved
Good Shepherd PS	SEELB	11/06/2013	Decrease enrolment	Approved
St Kieran's PS	SEELB	11/06/2013	Decrease enrolment	Approved
Holy Cross Boys PS	BELB	13/06/2013	Decrease enrolment	Approved
Kilccoley PS	SEELB	12/09/2013	Decrease enrolment	Under consideration
Clandeboyne PS	SEELB	12/09/2013	Decrease enrolment	Under consideration

Schools in the Mid Ulster Area: Asbestos

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Education to detail the schools in the Mid Ulster area that currently have some form of asbestos in their buildings.

(AQW 30686/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Every school in the schools' estate, where asbestos is present, has an asbestos register that gives detail of any asbestos containing materials known to be present in the school. The information to populate these registers was obtained from asbestos surveys of the schools' estate. Following the surveys any asbestos that was deemed to pose a high risk was removed by an asbestos licensed company.

Current Government policy states that if asbestos containing materials are in good condition and are unlikely to be damaged or disturbed then they should be left in place and a system of management introduced. The system of management includes monitoring the condition of and keeping up to date records of the condition and location of any known asbestos containing materials in the school, assessing risks from the materials and making plans to manage those risks. These plans must be put into action and should any deterioration of the materials occur and based on the assessed risk, removal, repair or encapsulation must be carried out by a licensed asbestos company.

It must also be ensured that anyone who is likely to work on, or disturb, the asbestos is provided with information about its location and condition.

The school sectors follow these recommendations and manage the asbestos in the estate rather than remove it unless deemed necessary.

The table below details the current list of schools within the mid Ulster area that currently contain asbestos. This information was provided by the North Eastern Education and Library Board and the Southern Education and Library Board. It has not been possible to provide information on voluntary grammar or grant maintained integrated schools as this information is held by the individual schools.

Board Area	Name of Property
NEELB	Amptertaine Primary School
NEELB	Anahorish Primary School
NEELB	Bellaghy Primary School
NEELB	Castledawson Primary School

Board Area	Name of Property
NEELB	Culnady Primary School
NEELB	Greenlough Primary School (St Mary's)
NEELB	Holy family Primary School, Magherafelt
NEELB	Kilross Primary School
NEELB	Knockloughrim Primary School
NEELB	Knocknagin Primary School
NEELB	Maghera Primary School
NEELB	New Row Primary School
NEELB	St Brigid's Primary School, Knockloughrim
NEELB	St Brigid's Primary School, Tirkane
NEELB	St Columba's Primary School
NEELB	St Columb's Primary School
NEELB	St Eoghan's Primary School
NEELB	St John Bosco Primary School
NEELB	St John's Primary School, Swatragh
NEELB	St Mary's College
NEELB	St Mary's Primary School, Draperstown
NEELB	St Mary's Primary School, Bellaghy
NEELB	St Mary's Primary School, Glenview
NEELB	St Patrick's Co-ed Comprehensive College
NEELB	St Trea's Primary School
NEELB	Tobermore Primary School
NEELB	St Colm's HS
NEELB	St Patricks HS Maghera
SELB	Aughamullan Primary School
SELB	Ballylifford Primary School
SELB	Ballytrea Primary School
SELB	Churchtown Primary School
SELB	Coagh Primary School
SELB	Cookstown High School
SELB	Cookstown Nursery School
SELB	Cookstown Primary School
SELB	Crievagh Primary School
SELB	Derrychrin Primary School

Board Area	Name of Property
SELB	Donaghmore (Dungannon) Primary School
SELB	Edendork Primary School
SELB	Holy Trinity College
SELB	Holy Trinity Primary School
SELB	Lissan Primary School
SELB	Moneymore Primary School
SELB	Newmills Primary School
SELB	Orritor Primary School
SELB	Primate Dixon Primary School
SELB	Queen Elizabeth II Primary School
SELB	Sacred Heart (Rock) Primary School
SELB	St Brigid's Primary School
SELB	St Joseph's High School
SELB	St Joseph's Primary School Galbally
SELB	St Joseph's Primary School, Cookstown
SELB	St Malachy's Primary School
SELB	St Mary's Primary School, Dungannon
SELB	St Mary's Primary School, Stewartstown
SELB	St Mary's Primary School, Cookstown
SELB	St Mary's Primary School, Pomeroy
SELB	St Patrick's Primary School, Moneymore
SELB	St Patrick's Primary School, Mullanahoe
SELB	St Patrick's Primary School, Loup
SELB	St Peter's Primary School
SELB	Stewartstown Primary School

North Down Schools: Minor Works

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what minor works are scheduled for North Down schools in 2014/15.

(AQW 30717/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has confirmed that they have not yet concluded the process of setting a minor works programme for the controlled sector in 2014/15.

The closing date for receipt of minor works applications in the non-controlled sector for 2014/15 and beyond is 28 February 2014.

Bangor Central Integrated Primary

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what efforts are being made to secure the land at the old Bangor leisure centre from North Down Borough Council, to ensure that Bangor Central Integrated Primary has sufficient space for a new build to accommodate its pupils.

(AQW 30771/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Following an open call for expressions of interest from North Down Borough Council on 26 April 2013, the South Eastern Education and Library Board made a formal written offer to secure part of the former leisure centre site for use by Bangor Central Integrated Primary School.

To date, the Board has not been made aware of any decision by the Council.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Education how many times he has appeared before his Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30795/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since May 2011, I have appeared before the Education Committee a total of 6 times, twice in each calendar year 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Year of Code Campaign

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education whether his Department is participating in the Year of Code campaign to raise awareness and interest in computer programming across the United Kingdom.

(AQW 30797/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not been made aware of the Year of Code initiative however, I understand it is an independent campaign launched in schools in England to coincide with the introduction of computer coding in their curriculum from September 2014. It is not yet clear if this initiative is to be extended beyond England and therefore my Department will follow how this develops.

The revised curriculum has been designed to provide flexibility for schools to develop experiences that suit the needs of their pupils. Embedding mandatory, cross curricular skills and keeping prescribed content to a minimum, allows schools to choose the most appropriate approach to take to ensure that pupils are engaged and challenged, to reach their full potential.

Computer Science, which includes computer coding, is a specialised field and the flexibility already in place within the revised curriculum, enables schools to teach Computer Science in any Key Stage, including at primary school level, if they feel it appropriate.

My Department is a member of the ICT Working Group established in response to the ICT sector's concerns about skills shortages and mismatches here. As a member of this group, we have been exploring ways to increase pupil awareness of potential career opportunities in the ICT sector (particularly computer programming) with the aim of increasing the numbers of pupils studying computer science at GCSE and GCE. I have commissioned the development and delivery of a bespoke computer programme of practical pupil engagement activity covering Key Stage 2 – Post 16. The programme, 'IT's Your Choice – A Computer Programming Continuum for Schools', has been designed with the assistance of the sector, will engage approximately 10,000 pupils annually, and was launched into schools in September 2013.

The Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has also developed a new GCE qualification in 'Software and Systems Development' as part of its expanded portfolio of 'Applied' qualifications. This qualification has been developed after comprehensive research with stakeholders including employers, Invest NI and the relevant sector skills bodies. CCEA are also currently reviewing the need to develop a progression route from GCSE to the new GCE in Software and Systems Development.

Computer Programming in the School Curriculum

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education what progress has been made in developing computer programming in the school curriculum.

(AQW 30799/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not been made aware of the Year of Code initiative however, I understand it is an independent campaign launched in schools in England to coincide with the introduction of computer coding in their curriculum from September 2014. It is not yet clear if this initiative is to be extended beyond England and therefore my Department will follow how this develops.

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Teachers Currently Suspended from Schools

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of teachers currently suspended from (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools; and the cumulative cost in salaries and contributions.

(AQW 30826/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of teachers currently suspended from both primary and post primary schools and the cumulative costs are detailed in the table below:

	Number of Teachers Currently Suspended*	Cumulative Cost in Salaries & Contributions
Primary	8	£508,655
Post Primary	7	£399,181

* Voluntary Grammar Schools are not included, as the Department does not process payment of these salaries.

Limavady Grammar School: 3G Pitch

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of Education what is the current state of the 3G pitch at Limavady Grammar School.

(AQW 30839/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As Limavady Grammar School is a controlled school, the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) is responsible for the maintenance of the school pitch, which they have advised is a 2G rather than 3G.

The WELB has advised that the pitch is in a good condition due to it being maintained on a regular basis by WELB staff in the Limavady Grounds Maintenance Team. The pitch has been in use since 2007 and will be due a "half-life evaluation" within the next couple of years, when the top layer of sand may be due for replacement.

Education and Library Boards: Local Authorities in the EU

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline any formal links that exist between the Education and Library Boards and local authorities in other parts of the European Union.

(AQW 30869/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that there are no formal links that exist between them and local authorities in other parts of the European Union.

Public Event in Parliament Buildings: Science of Behaviour Analysis

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education whether he intends hosting a public event in Parliament Buildings to hear presentations by professionals trained in the science of behaviour analysis, similar to an all-party briefing in Leinster House, Dublin in June 2013.

(AQW 30892/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not advocate exclusive adherence to any specific single intervention or theoretical perspective in relation to autism.

I have, therefore, no plans to host a public event in Parliament Buildings to hear presentations by professionals trained in the science of behaviour analysis.

School Curriculum: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Subjects

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of how schools and the curriculum are enabling pupils to understand the practical application in the workplace of science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects.

(AQW 30896/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The revised curriculum has been designed to provide flexibility for schools to develop experiences that suit the needs of their pupils and provide opportunities for teaching Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects as part of a balanced curriculum, and it is the responsibility of schools to ensure this breadth and balance.

The promotion of STEM subjects is one of my Department's priorities and we have been taking significant action on a number of fronts to ensure that STEM subjects are seen as exciting, stimulating and fulfilling by our young people. This includes sponsoring annual competitions and exhibitions such as the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition and Stock Market Challenge.

To support the regional delivery of STEM enhancement and enrichment activity my Department also funds Sentinus to work with pupils across the north of Ireland. They deliver a portfolio of 19 STEM core programmes across all Key Stages, engaging approximately 60,000 pupils each year. My department also allocates additional funding to a number of other delivery partners and initiatives, to enable pupils

to gain an enriched world of work experience through practical engagement, to assist in embedding STEM within schools, and to develop STEM teacher continuous professional development.

During 2011 the north of Ireland participated for the first time in TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) a large international comparative study of achievement, which examined the mathematics and science ability of pupils ages 9-10 (equivalent to our P6 year). The survey results published last year, showed that our primary school pupils are performing well above the international averages ranking our primary school performance in mathematics (6th out of 50 countries surveyed) and in science (21st out of the 50 countries surveyed).

PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) provides an international benchmark in mathematics, reading and science literacy for 15 year olds. Results from the 2012 survey show that our pupils' performance is similar to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average in science. There are only 17 countries outperforming the north of Ireland.

Our performance in mathematics has remained stable. However, I am aware that we need to do more in post-primary schools and therefore I will consider carefully the findings of PISA 2012 alongside the OECD review to determine where standards can be improved.

Uptake of STEM Subjects

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education how many pupils chose (i) GCSE; and (ii) A-level STEM subjects, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30897/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The answer is contained in the table below.

NUMBER OF PUPILS WITH EXAMINATION ENTRIES IN STEM SUBJECTS, 2009/10 – 2011/12

		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of pupils with 1 or more examination entry in STEM subjects	GCSE	27,104	27,024	27,683
	A-Level	6,783	7,017	7,198

Source: RM Data Solutions

Success Through STEM Strategy: Update

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Success Through STEM strategy.

(AQW 30898/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department's commitments arising from the STEM Strategy fall into two broad areas; delivery of direct pupil STEM enhancement and enrichment activity, and school structural (including teacher continuous professional development) and curricular resource developments in STEM.

My Department and its delivery partners, have made good progress to date in delivering on a number of the commitments contained in the STEM Strategy. There has been an upward trend in the number of A-Level STEM examination entries since 2007/08 rising from 38.2% to 40.9% in 2011/12.

My Department will continue to deliver on DE's STEM commitments within available resources.

A review of the STEM Strategy 'Success Through STEM' is planned to commence later this year.

New School Builds for Hollywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new school builds for Hollywood.

(AQW 30902/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education & Library Board identified a multi-schools project for Holywood as one of its top three priorities for major capital investment. However the project was not included in my January 2013 announcement due to the need for clarity on enrolments at Priory Integrated College and the potential to increase these above sustainable schools thresholds, as well as the potential for alliances with other secondary schools in relation to 6th form provision.

On 16 April 2013, the South Eastern Education and Library Board published a Development Proposal (238), proposing that the approved enrolment at Priory College, Holywood, should increase from 450 to 600 with effect from 31 August 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter. The two month objection period ended on 16 June 2013.

I announced my decision on the proposal for Priory Integrated College in my statement to the Assembly on 14 January 2014. I approved a modified enrolment number of 500 with a Year 8 admissions number of 100 with effect from 31 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter.

I stated that I wanted to see a managed increase from Year 8 and that if I saw a marked increase in the lower school within 3 years, and should the demand for places require any further increase, I would happily consider a further Development Proposal from the Board at that stage. It is for the SEELB to keep the situation under review to ensure the enrolment numbers are managed within its area plan.

In my January statement I advised that the next stage of planning for East Belfast will be led by the BELB and SEELB, working closely with all the other sectors and the Department to ensure adequate places for the area at years 8-12 and at post 16.

While Holywood Primary / Holywood Nursery / Priory Integrated College will be disappointed that they were not included in the capital investment announcement in January 2013, this in no way implies that they will not be considered for funding at a later stage within the on-going area planning process.

Positive Mental Health Among Pupils

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Education how his Department is working to encourage positive mental health among pupils from an early age; and what action is being taken to improve school counselling services.

(AQW 30923/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education (DE) promotes positive mental health and well-being of pupils in schools through a range of developments.

The Revised Curriculum for primary and post-primary schools has elements designed to develop the young person as an individual and to enhance young people's own awareness of the stressors in their lives and their capacity to deal with them.

The "iMatter" Programme is intended to support the entire school community to be engaged in promoting resilient emotional health for all pupils. Under the programme a suite of homework diary inserts and posters on topics of concern to young people such as self esteem and coping with stress, worry and anxiety, and outlining sources of help are prepared and distributed annually.

Pupils are also alerted to a topical "Message of the Month" each time they access the C2K system.

The Department issued a "Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools" along with a supporting DVD on 10 February. The Guide, commissioned by DE as part of the 'iMatter' Programme, is aimed at ensuring a regional approach to dealing with critical incidents and is designed to help schools be prepared for a critical incident and to ensure effective management before, during and after the event. The Guide is available on the DE website.

DE is a member of and funds the local Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) which brings together local statutory and voluntary organisations to help schools and organisations working with young people to develop appropriate strategies to prevent and deal with bullying behaviours. In August 2013 the Forum published "Effective Responses to Bullying" to support schools in the management of alleged bullying incidents. Further information is available at www.niabf.org.uk.

The Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS) has been accessible to young people of postprimary age in mainstream schools since September 2007. This service was extended to postprimary aged pupils in special schools from January 2011 and has been widely welcomed by the schools involved. An average of 1432 pupils per month use the ICSS Service. As part of the current arrangements for support following a critical incident, pupils in primary schools have access to counselling support. Work will take place later this year on how access to the counselling service might be extended to primary aged pupils.

In October 2012 the Delivering Social Change programme provided funding for a series of six Signature projects, involving the establishment of 20 new nurture units to be rolled out in Primary Schools across the north of Ireland. Nurture Units offer a short term, focussed intervention strategy which addresses barriers to learning arising from social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, aiming to develop and improve the child's behaviour enabling them, after a short time in the nurture unit, to participate effectively within their mainstream class. DE provided financial assistance to a further 10 schools with existing

nurture provision for the lifetime of the Signature Project (June 2015). Latest figures indicate that a total of 116 children, 75 boys and 41 girls, are currently attending the units.

Common Funding Formula: Schools in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of how revised draft proposals on the Common Funding Formula would impact on each school in North Down in (i) 2014/15; and (ii) 2015/16.

(AQW 30927/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have not yet made my final decisions on the proposed changes to the Common Funding Scheme (CFS).

Once I decide on the way forward for the CFS, my officials will carry out the normal processes for budget allocation, using the latest schools' census data, and schools will be advised as soon as possible of their Common Funding Formula (CFF) budget allocation for the 2014-15 year.

Departmental budgets beyond 2014-15 have not yet been agreed by the Executive and so information on school budgets for 2015-16 is not yet available.

Asbestos Removal from Schools

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what strategy his Department pursuing to ensure asbestos is removed from schools.

(AQW 30928/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Current Government policy states that if asbestos containing materials are in good condition and are unlikely to be damaged or disturbed then they should be left in place for the remaining life of the school and a system of management introduced.

The system of management includes monitoring the condition of and keeping up to date records of the condition and location of any known asbestos containing materials in the school, assessing risks from the materials and making plans to manage those risks. These plans must be put into action and should any deterioration of the materials occur and based on the assessed risk, removal, repair or encapsulation must be carried out by a licensed asbestos company.

Every school in the schools' estate, where asbestos is present, has an asbestos register that gives detail of any asbestos containing materials known to be present in the school. The information to populate these registers was obtained from asbestos surveys of the schools' estate. Following the surveys any asbestos that was deemed to pose a 'high risk' was removed by a licensed asbestos company.

It must also be ensured that anyone who is likely to work on, or disturb, the asbestos is provided with information about its location and condition.

The school sectors follow these recommendations and manage the asbestos in the estate rather than remove it unless this is deemed necessary.

Integrated Education Schools

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) how many new Integrated Education schools have opened; and (ii) how much of his budget has been used to promote integrated education, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30948/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No new integrated schools have opened in the last five years, nor have any Development Proposals, seeking to open new integrated schools, been published during that period.

However, during the last five years, a Development Proposal to allow a school to transform from 'controlled' status to 'controlled integrated' was published and approved, as were three Development Proposals to increase enrolment numbers; two at integrated post Primary schools, and one at an integrated nursery school.

In relation to the amount of funding used to promote integrated education, Article 64 (2) of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 allows the Department to pay grants to a body, which has as an objective, the encouragement or promotion of integrated education. In fulfilment of this legislation, my Department provides funding annually to the Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). The amount of funding made available to NICIE during the last five years to promote and encourage integrated education is as follows:

2009/10	£579K
2010/11	£597K
2011/12	£613K
2012/13	£628K
2013/14	£646k

Development of Integrated Education

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how he plans to promote and develop integrated education.

(AQW 30949/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under Article 64 (1) of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, my Department has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education (i.e. the education together, at school, of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils). I take this duty very seriously, and will continue to do so.

To help encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, the Department of Education provides annual funding to help schools with the process of transformation to integrated status. This supports schools in the initial stages of the transformation process and with the employment of a teacher, from the minority community in the school, to assist with religious education. The budget available for 2013/14 is £185k.

In addition, Article 64 (2) of the 1989 Order allows the Department to pay grants to a body which has as an objective the encouragement or promotion of integrated education. In fulfilment of this legislation, my Department provides funding annually to the NI Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). Funding of £646k has been allocated for 2013/14.

I have met with officials from NICIE twice in recent months, to discuss proposals to further promote and facilitate the development and growth of integrated education. I remain willing to consider further innovative approaches which will facilitate the development of the sector.

I recognise the vital and valuable contribution that integrated education, together with all other types of education, makes to building a peaceful and stable future for our children.

Going forward, the Department of Education will ensure that it continues to have a rigorous approach to its duty to integrated education.

Public Event in Parliament Buildings: Science of Behaviour Analysis

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education whether he intends hosting a public event in Parliament Buildings to hear presentations by professionals trained in the science of behaviour analysis, similar to an all-party briefing in Leinster House, Dublin in June 2013.

(AQW 30956/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not advocate exclusive adherence to any specific single intervention or theoretical perspective in relation to autism.

I have, therefore, no plans to host a public event in Parliament Buildings to hear presentations by professionals trained in the science of behaviour analysis.

European Programme FP7

Mr Attwood asked the Minister of Education to detail the funding under European Programme FP7 which was drawn down by (i) his Department; (ii) its arm's-length bodies; or (iii) any third party in the (a) 2010-11; (b) 2011-12; and (c) 2012-13 financial years.

(AQW 30966/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department, its arm's-length bodies or third parties have not drawn down funding under the European Programme FP7 in the 2010-11, 2011-12 or 2012-13 financial years.

Department for Employment and Learning

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning on how many occasions his Department not accepted the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding, since May 2007.

(AQW 30614/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Since May 2007, there have been no occasions where my Department did not accept the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding.

University of Ulster: Resource and Capital Bids

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the resource and capital bids for funding his Department have received from the University of Ulster in the last two years; and (ii) which of these have been approved.

(AQW 30641/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster has not made any bids for resource funding to my Department in either the 2012/13 or 2013/14 years.

The University of Ulster has made bids for capital funding for a number of projects. These are detailed in the table overleaf.

Project	Request	Outcome
Greater Belfast Development 1	£35m	Approved
Coleraine campus - Phase 3	£6.075m	Under consideration.
Coleraine campus – Sports provision	£4.05m	Not approved
Coleraine campus – Wind Turbine	£2.7m	Not approved
Magee campus – new teaching block.	£10.125m	Not approved

1. The funding is to be provided under the Ring – Fenced Financial Transactions Funding and is a loan which is repayable. It will be routed through OFMDFM and the Strategic Investment Board.

Cap on Maximum Student Numbers

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any plans to review or remove the cap on Maximum Student Numbers.

(AQW 30728/11-15)

Dr Farry: As outlined in my Department's Higher Education Strategy, Graduating to Success, I am committed to undertaking a review of the current Maximum Student Numbers formula by 2016. This is a medium term target and my officials are currently assessing the options for the review.

North West Regional College: McConnell Action Plan

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any problems that he is aware of at the North West Regional College regarding the implementation of the McConnell action plan, as the staff are not involved in the implementation of the action plan; or in a review of the implementation of the action plan.

(AQW 30768/11-15)

Dr Farry: North West Regional College is currently implementing an action plan based on the recommendations of a review of industrial relations at the college. The Governing Body had initially decided that the implementation of the action plan would be in the context of a wider process of change and improvement, which would involve participation from all internal stakeholders in the college. It subsequently prioritised implementing the review's recommendations and had to delay the formal establishment of the project team for the wider improvement programme.

This has meant that the Governing Body has performed the oversight role in respect of the action plan but it has not reduced the role of staff in the implementation process. The action plan requires the involvement of staff because individual actions relate to their specific role or require consultation about policy or strategic initiatives. For example, the college has provided training to middle management and has involved Curriculum Managers in discussions about the development of their role. The college has also negotiated changes to the course review process with trades unions in the college and is consulting on a new human resources strategy. On this basis, I am satisfied that staff are involved in the implementation of the action plan.

There are items in the action plan which are currently behind schedule relating to the training of the Governing Body and the implementation of a new human resources strategy. I am content that these are not problematic, given the workload of the Governing Body and the fact that it has decided to extend the consultation around the HR strategy.

I am also aware that the local branch of the University and College Union (UCU) has not participated in the Joint Consultative Committee and is not currently engaging with the Change Manager in the college. The review of industrial relations clearly stated that the local UCU branch should re-engage with the industrial relations machinery in the college as a quid pro quo for a commitment from management to begin the process of developing a strategy to rebuild trust. The college has clearly demonstrated that commitment and, indeed, agreed a reformed structure with regional officials of UCU. Therefore,

it is disappointing that the local UCU branch remains outside the reformed local industrial relations machinery.

The rebuilding of trust between management and unions at the college requires reciprocity. The review made it clear that all parties in the college bore responsibility for the industrial relations difficulties and required everyone to take actions to work within the college to change the patterns of relationships. The Governing Body and senior management team have invested considerable time and energy in implementing the report's recommendations. In particular, the chair and temporary chair of the Governing Body have shown a commitment to the process which is far in excess of what could be expected of a voluntary role. Therefore, at this stage, the lack of engagement by the local UCU branch and its unwillingness to demonstrate its commitment to rebuilding trust is the major difficulty in progressing the programme of change at the college.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Compensation Scheme for Householders Living Close to New Pylons

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assurances she can give that the decision by Eirgrid to launch a compensation scheme for householders living close to new pylons will not be funded directly, indirectly or partly by any increase in charges to electricity consumers in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 30424/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The Community Gain Fund announced by Eirgrid will be funded through network charges paid by customers in the Republic of Ireland. It will not be funded by any increase in charges to electricity consumers in Northern Ireland.

Wind Farm Developers: Carbon Payback

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department (i) commissions independent verification of the carbon payback claims of wind farm developers; and (ii) reviews the carbon balances of these developments.

(AQW 30453/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not commission independent verification of the carbon payback of wind farm developers or carry out reviews of carbon balances of wind farms.

Farm Accidents

Mr Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of farm accidents in the last three years, broken down by type of accident.

(AQW 30505/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

	Fatality	Major injury*	Over 3-day injury**	Injury involving a member of the public	Total
2013/14 (to date)	3	9	9	1	22
2012/13	10	10	10	2	32
2011/12	8	13	11	1	33

- * The definition of a major injury includes fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes, amputations, any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight, any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs etc
- ** The definition of an over 3-day injury is where an employee is away from work, or unable to perform their normal work duties, for more than three consecutive days as the result of their injury.

A summary of the main causes of these injuries is:

28 Incidents involving machinery/equipment

22 incidents caused by falls from a height/struck by falling objects

8 incidents caused by an animal

6 incidents involving drowning and asphyxia

10 incidents caused by slips, trips and falls

8 incidents caused by sprains and strains

5 incidents caused by other factors

The number of accidents reported to HSENI by the farming industry is low due to a combination of under-reporting and the fact that self-employed persons are not required to report incidents where they are the only person injured and the incident occurs on their own property.

Housing Executive Properties: Renewable Energy Uptake

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how her departmental forecast that 100 percent of Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties will be consuming gas by 2035 is in line with targets to increase renewable energy uptake and reduce carbon emissions.

(AQW 30556/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive's (NIHE) current heating policy is to install natural gas heating to their properties, where gas is available. This policy would mean that as natural gas is provided to new areas, most NIHE properties would be converted to gas over time.

As gas is the least polluting fossil fuel, switching NIHE properties from oil or coal to natural gas will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions. Greater provision of natural gas does not preclude domestic consumers from utilising renewable heating technologies, and my Department currently incentivises the deployment of renewable heat in the domestic sector.

Farm Safety Programmes and Equipment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 29949/11-15, to detail the amount available in her budget that has been allocated to farm safety programmes and equipment, excluding media and awareness campaigns, in (i) 2013-14; (ii) 2014/15; and (iii) 2015/16.

(AQW 30564/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment does not provide financial support for farm safety programmes and equipment on farms – financial support for farm safety equipment on farms is provided by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) does not separately identify expenditure on agriculture activity from its DETI budget allocation. However, HSENI staff deliver 1,000 farm safety visits per annum and ensure the investigation of all work related fatal accidents. HSENI staff and resources are also used to promote farm safety at selected agricultural shows, health and safety awareness days and primary school farm safety presentations, as well as presentations to numerous farmers' groups.

Ministerial Meetings on Trade Issues

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 30056/11-15, what ministerial meetings have there been, in any forum, to discuss trade between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, since May 2007.

(AQW 30603/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The information sought is not readily available and may only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on how many occasions since May 2007 has her Department not accepted the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding.

(AQW 30605/11-15)

Mrs Foster: None.

Bankruptcy Cases

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of bankruptcy cases in the current financial year, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 30640/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In the current financial year to 31 January 2014, 1,159 bankruptcy orders have been made, 409 of which are sole trader business bankruptcies and 750 are consumer bankruptcies. A breakdown of the bankruptcy orders by type and constituency are as follows:

Constituency	Sole Trader Business Bankruptcies	Consumer Bankruptcies	Total
Belfast East	11	44	55
Belfast North	15	41	56
Belfast South	32	42	74
Belfast West	10	27	37
East Antrim	16	26	42
East Londonderry	23	40	63
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	17	25	42
Foyle	29	57	86
Lagan Valley	21	32	53
Mid Ulster	24	35	59
Newry & Armagh	35	40	75
North Antrim	19	43	62
North Down	32	49	81
South Antrim	25	59	84
South Down	37	45	82
Strangford	26	41	67
Upper Bann	19	59	78

Constituency	Sole Trader Business Bankruptcies	Consumer Bankruptcies	Total
West Tyrone	18	45	63
Total	409	750	1,159

Growth Loan Fund: Small and Medium Enterprises

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the amount of finance provided to small and medium enterprises under the Growth Loan Fund; and (ii) how many small and medium enterprises have been granted loans to date.

(AQW 30642/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The amount of loan finance approved to Small and Medium sized enterprises by the Growth Loan Fund, as at 30 September 2013, was £11.75million.
- (ii) The loan finance approved by the Growth Loan fund, as at 30 September 2013, has been provided to 45 small and medium sized enterprises.

European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages: Report

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she will complete an investigation into the findings of the report from the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, published on 15 January 2014 that there have been delays and obstructions over the provision of bilingual street signs and tourist information.

(AQW 30654/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has reviewed its obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and, in doing so, has taken into account guidance produced by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) on meeting UK government commitments contained therein.

My Department recognises its obligations under the Charter and I am satisfied that the approach adopted by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board complies with the aforementioned guidance.

Research and Development Schemes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the Research and Development schemes that receive funding from her Department.

(AQW 30677/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department, through Invest NI, is responsible for promoting business-led research and development (R&D) in Northern Ireland. Invest NI offers a wide range of R&D schemes designed specifically to help companies at each stage of the innovation escalator; that is to say, to progress from doing R&D for the first time to carrying out sophisticated higher risk R&D, most beneficially on a collaborative basis.

The schemes range from Innovation Vouchers to individual company Grants for R&D through to the multi-million pound industry-led Competence Centres which are designed to encourage collaborative and strategic research by Northern Ireland businesses. Some of the more high profile companies that we have been able to help in the North Down area include Munster Simms and Valpar Industrial.

Other schemes offered by Invest NI to encourage the undertaking of more and better R&D include Collaborative Grants for R&D; EU R&D project definition grants; the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI); Proof of Concept support to assist with the commercialization of University research and advice and guidance from a cadre of Innovation Advisers who work with businesses to identify and shape their R&D projects.

In addition to direct support to businesses through Invest NI for R&D activity, Invest NI has also established a range of venture capital loan funds including one (NISPO) which specifically provides support for early-stage research projects. Finally, Invest NI is a key sponsor of the UK wide Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) programme which seeks to stimulate R&D through collaborative projects between Northern Ireland companies and the research base.

Tourist Board: Bilingual Traffic Signs

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how many bilingual traffic signs the Tourist Board has erected; (ii) to list the councils that have approached the Tourist Board about the provision of bilingual signs; and (iii) how many applications for bilingual brown signs have been received, in each of the last eight years.

(AQW 30730/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The Northern Ireland Tourist Board does not erect traffic signs.
- (ii) The following councils have approached The Northern Ireland Tourist Board about the provision of bilingual signs:
 - Derry City Council;
 - Down District Council;
 - Limavady Borough Council; and
 - Newry and Mourne District Council.
- (iii) The information sought is not readily available and may only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Firmus Energy: Domestic Connections

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of domestic connections made by Firmus Gas in each constituency, in each of the last five years; and (ii) what criteria is in place to ensure that a natural gas provision is available to the maximum number of households.

(AQW 30760/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) firmus energy has advised that it has made the following number of domestic gas connections in each constituency within its '10 Towns' gas licensed area in each of the last five years:

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
East Londonderry	154	131	283	433	488
Foyle	464	593	1247	1355	1559
Lagan Valley	1	0	8	5	3
Newry and Armagh	96	62	311	347	528
North Antrim	74	279	496	593	625
South Antrim	555	288	359	434	476
South Down	0	4	2	103	87
Upper Bann	204	365	527	850	1073
Totals	1548	1722	3233	4120	4839

- (ii) firmus energy's connection policy is governed by licence conditions within the company's gas conveyance licence and through regulated Price Controls. firmus' last Price Control set a target of 2,000 domestic properties to be connected per annum over the five year period up to the end of 2013, and from 2011 this has been exceeded.

Agri-Food Strategy

Mr Milne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she will bring the Agri-Food Strategy to the Executive.

(AQW 30762/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A joint DARD/DETI paper on the Agri-Food Strategy Board's Strategic Action Plan for the industry remains under consideration at the Executive.

Recreational Sea Angling

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that recreational sea angling could have on the local economy and tourist industry.

(AQW 30815/11-15)

Mrs Foster: According to the recent 'A Strategic Review of Angling in Northern Ireland: Final Report – February 2014' for sea angling there were strong messages from consultees that at present the quality of the fishing is poor and could not provide the basis for a sustained promotional campaign.

However, in reality, the picture is quite uneven and there clearly are 'hot-spots' of excellent sea angling particularly in the Loughs Agency coastal areas, which could benefit the local economy and tourist industry.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many times she has appeared before her Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30873/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

2009/10 2

2010/11 1

2011/12 1

2012/13 -

2013/14 3

Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project: East Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the rural areas in East Londonderry that will benefit from the Broadband Scheme, as part of the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project.

(AQW 30973/11-15)

Mrs Foster: 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 areas or premises are likely to benefit. Further details on the roll-out will be published as they become available.

Economic Development

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the transfer of local economic development policies to local councils, what discussions she has had with the Minister of the Environment.

(AQO 5562/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have had no direct discussions with the current Minister of the Environment regarding the transfer of local economic development policies to local councils. However my officials continue to engage with DOE, Councils, Northern Ireland Local Government Association, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and other stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition of economic development functions in the lead up to April 2015.

School Leavers: Skill Sets

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has in place with the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning to ensure that pupils leaving school have the appropriate skill sets to give large local employers and manufacturers the best chance of competing in the global market.

(AQO 5563/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Economic Strategy recognises the important role careers education can play in helping our young people develop and channel those skills which will be needed in the future workforce.

The Ministers for Education and Employment and Learning are members of the Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy. At the next meeting of the Sub-Committee I will be inviting them to discuss Careers education, information, advice and guidance and outline their plans for the review of Preparing for Success, the Career's Strategy.

Project Kelvin

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what opportunities Project Kelvin offers to enhance the infrastructure services available to potential investors at Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly.

(AQO 5564/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Ballykelly is well placed to enable Project Kelvin services to be delivered from the Point of Presence at Coleraine. Hibernia Networks would be pleased to offer advice to any potential investor on the best way to connect to the Kelvin infrastructure.

A soft market testing exercise for the former Shackleton Barracks site at Ballykelly concluded on 24 January 2014. The exercise was to help gauge the interest in developing the site. This information will be used to inform the First Minister and deputy First Minister on options for the development of the site.

Rugby World Cup 2023

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, following her scheduled meeting with Irish Government Ministers Leo Varadkar and Michael Ring on 22 January 2014, for an update on the planned all-Ireland support for the Irish Rugby Football Union bid to host the Rugby World Cup in 2023.

(AQO 5565/11-15)

Mrs Foster: At the meeting with Ministers from the Republic of Ireland on 22 January 2014 it was agreed that we would undertake the preliminary work necessary to reach a position where a decision can be made whether to submit a proposal to fund a bid to host the rugby World Cup in 2023.

It was agreed that a small group will be set up to undertake this work consisting of representatives from my Department, DCAL, the Irish Department of Transport Tourism and Sport, the Irish Rugby Football Union and the Tourism Bodies, NITB, Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland.

The group will hold its first meeting on 25 February 2014.

Broadband: Commercial Premises

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the Executive's commitment that broadband services of at least 2 Mbps will be made available to all commercial premises by 2015.

(AQO 5566/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive has committed to ensuring that virtually all premises, including commercial, across Northern Ireland have access to a broadband service of at least 2 Mbps by 2015. The Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project, the contract for which was announced on 7 February 2014, will play a key part in moving us towards this target.

Renewable Energy

Mr McGlone asked Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline any recent meetings that she has had with the Irish and British Governments on the proposed Inter-Governmental Agreement on Renewable Energy.

(AQO 5567/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Intergovernmental Agreement is a matter between the UK and Irish Governments. My Department has representation on the Steering Group which has been formed by the two Governments to examine if a trading arrangement may be beneficial to both parties. This Steering Group meets on a monthly basis.

Regional Aid Guidelines

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what impact the change of regional aid guidelines will have on Invest NI's ability to support businesses.

(AQO 5568/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The European Commission finalised the revised Regional Aid Guidelines for 2014-2020 in June 2013. Of key importance for Northern Ireland was the retention of our ability to support companies through the mechanism of Regional Aid. It was welcomed therefore that, apart from a 5% reduction in maximum grant rates outside of Belfast, support for SMEs is unchanged. Support for large companies of over two hundred and fifty employees is also still permissible for initial investments in favour of new economic activities or for the diversification of existing establishments into new products and new process innovations.

However, there remains a concern regarding the possible impact of the rule changes on large company follow-on expansion projects, given the importance of such investments for job creation targets and economic growth. My officials continue to seek clarification in this regard and to ensure that action can be taken to mitigate against any potential negative impact on Invest NI support post June 2014.

Milk: Irish Origin

Mr McAleer asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on her discussions with the National Dairy Council to enable local dairy farmers to label their milk as being of Irish origin.

(AQO 5569/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have brought the National Dairy Council campaign to the attention of the North South Ministerial Council, the Irish Competition Authority and the European Commission and have raised the issue directly with major retailers in the Republic of Ireland.

I am concerned that the National Dairy Council campaign is a contravention of the principles of the single market and an abuse of Country of Origin Labelling in the Republic of Ireland. I will therefore continue to work with my ministerial colleagues in the Republic of Ireland and Europe to minimise the adverse impact which the campaign is having on local businesses.

Department of the Environment

Waste Disposal Strategy

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the waste disposal strategy.
(AQW 25835/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): The revised Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland, which sets out policies and measures to move the focus of waste management in Northern Ireland from resource management to resource efficiency, was published on the Department's website on 25 October 2013 and can be found at http://www.doeni.gov.uk/wms_2013.pdf.

Single Tier Taxi System

Mr Cree asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will reconsider the decision to have a single tier taxi system in Belfast.
(AQO 5340/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, which was passed by the Assembly without division, was designed to deliver the benefits that enhanced taxi regulation could bring to Northern Ireland – including an increased choice for consumers, greater clarity for all around what taxis are permitted to do, and an increased capacity within the industry to deal with peak demand at specific times and locations, thereby helping to address public safety concerns.

A comprehensive package of consultations and stakeholder engagement since then indicated that a majority of both the public and the taxi industry would welcome the introduction of single tier licensing. In addition to the vast majority of the taxi industry, those in favour include the Consumer Council (who stated that single tier would remove public confusion and free up enforcement resource), the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee, Disability Action, Victim Support, Women's Aid, Pubs of Ulster, the Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce, Belfast City Centre Management and Visit Belfast.

Since taking office, I have engaged in a range of stakeholder engagement, during which I have met directly with representatives from all parts of the taxi industry and representatives of taxi users, in order to listen to and understand their concerns at first hand. I have also met with Minister Kennedy, recognising that a number of issues raised by stakeholders lie within the remit of his Department. From this, I have reflected on the issues raised and have taken steps to stage and therefore ease the adjustment period for the taxi industry. These include delaying the requirement to have printers until early 2016, with the requirement to undertake periodic training not commencing until September 2015. These deferrals of dates are in addition to the deferral of the date for implementing single tier licensing, to allow the industry additional time to prepare.

I know that some Members have recently expressed reservations about the implementation of single tier licensing, but I am confident that they should be persuaded of the clear benefits there are to the wider industry and, of course, consumers as a whole. In addition to addressing these concerns my Department will, therefore, continue to work towards the implementation of a single tier taxi system from September 2014.

Councillors: Training

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment what measures are being put in place to ensure that adequate training is provided to assist councillors within the new Councils to make informed decisions on the implementation of planning policies.

(AQO 5344/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have taken significant steps to ensure that councillors will have the skills, knowledge and capability to effectively deliver local planning from 1st April 2015.

Over £3m of Executive funding has been secured to deliver a comprehensive capacity building and training programme. This programme includes workshops, seminars and role play sessions to ensure councillors are up to speed with the new planning process and fully understand their role in delivering prompt and sound planning decisions. In addition to this I have recently set up six Area Plan teams to begin preparatory work on area plans for all the new council areas. This work will involve close working and relationship building between planners and both the statutory transition committees and shadow councils. It will help to ensure that the new councils can quickly make informed decisions on the implementation of planning policies once they become the planning authorities next year.

Working in partnership with key stakeholders, this programme of measures will be rolled out during 2014 and right up to the point of transfer.

Good Beach Summit

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment to outline his plans for the next Good Beach Summit.

(AQO 5345/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My predecessor Alex Attwood called the first Good Beach Summit on 29 June 2011. The Summits bring together those from the public sector, NGO and voluntary sectors who have an interest in beach management and bathing water quality. To date seven Summits have been held.

The Group's remit falls under four areas:

- 1 Improving water quality
- 2 Improving beach cleanliness, facilities, management and signage
- 3 Keeping the public and media better informed
- 4 Supporting the Coastal Economy

The Summits have provided an extremely useful forum for raising and addressing many issues affecting our beaches and beach users. It is intended to continue to use this forum to benefit coastal communities and beach users alike.

Much of the current action plan has now been successfully delivered and I will review it at the next Summit which will be held in May 2014, just prior to the beginning of the bathing season.

Councils: Decisions

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment whether the criteria proposed in Clause 45 of the Local Government Bill will have a legislative base for decisions to be reconsidered by Councils.

(AQO 5347/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am committed to ensuring that the interests of minorities are protected in the decision-making of councils. The criteria for, and the operation of, the procedure for the reconsideration of a decision as provided for in clause 45 of the Local Government Bill will be a mandatory element of a council's standing orders and will be specified in the regulations that my Department will make using the power provided by clause 42 of the Local Government Bill.

The regulations specifying the mandatory elements of a council's standing orders will be subject to the draft affirmative procedure in the Assembly to allow members to have the opportunity to debate these important aspects of the new governance arrangements for councils.

My officials are working with senior officers from local government to develop the draft standing orders which will be subject to consultation with key stakeholders prior to them being laid in the Assembly.

Councils: Financial Provisions

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of the Environment to outline what financial provisions are available to the new Shadow Councils to cover the costs of council convergence.

(AQO 5348/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In 2013, my predecessor secured Executive agreement to provide councils with a reform funding package of £17.8 million over the 2013 to 2015 period, with a commitment to a further £30 million for rates convergence beyond 2015.

Councils will operate in shadow form from the date of the elections to the new district councils in May 2014, until they assume full powers and responsibilities in April 2015. A newly elected council, acting in shadow form, will have the statutory authority and democratic mandate to make policy decisions that will shape the direction of the new council before it becomes fully operational. The Executive has agreed to provide up to £5.2m to establish and run the councils in shadow form.

In addition, the Executive agreed a budget of £3.5m for a councillors' severance scheme. The severance scheme underwent a period of consultation before being finalised. The Executive has also committed £0.6m for staff induction and £3m for capacity building. This covers central and local government staff and elected members.

The Executive has committed up to £1m over the period 2013/14 to 2014/15 for change management. Central to this was the appointment of change managers to each council cluster. These managers are driving convergence between merging councils and preparing for the transferring and new functions. The Executive has also provided £0.5m for the winding up of the old 26 councils in 2014/15.

The Executive also provided up to £4m, over the 2013/14 to 2014/15 period, to cover the costs of borrowing for ICT system convergence.

Funding of up to £30m will be made available for managing rates convergence as a consequence of councils merging and other boundary changes arising from implementation of the local government reform. DFP and DOE continue to work on the design of a transitional rates relief scheme, within the cost envelope of £30m, which will protect those ratepayers who otherwise would face sudden and excessive increases as a direct consequence of councils merging or due to other boundary changes. The precise model for how this £30 million will be administered and over what period of time has not yet been finalised.

The £47.8 million package is a substantial contribution from the Executive, which has made it clear that all other transitional costs arising from reform, including the costs of councils operating in shadow form, should be met by councils through use of reserves, efficiencies or borrowings.

Legislation on the Protection of Trees

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he is considering bringing forward further legislation on (i) the protection of trees; and (ii) on the resolution of disputes over trees between neighbours.

(AQW 30212/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has current legislative provisions in place for the protection of trees by virtue of Articles 64 to 66B of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. These provisions cover tree preservation orders (TPOs), the protection of trees in conservation areas and penalties for related offences.

The Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act") when fully commenced will create a new two tier planning system. This will include giving councils the responsibility for tree protection and the necessary powers to make and enforce TPOs, thereby reinforcing the strong local accountability which local government reform will bring.

The 2011 Act also strengthens current tree protection powers. The existing exemption that excludes dying trees from TPOs will be removed recognising the value of dying trees as a habitat for many species. In addition, the 2011 Act has also already increased the maximum fine for the wilful destruction or damage of a tree in contravention of a TPO from £30,000 to £100,000.

I will be bringing forward future regulations to establish the procedure for making and confirming TPOs under the new two-tier planning model in advance of the transfer of powers to councils.

The above provisions relate to tree protection in relation to land use planning. However, disputes between neighbours may be regarded as a local environmental issue and work in this area has been taken forward by my Department via the High Hedges Act (NI) 2011. The Act applies to hedges consisting of lines of two or more evergreen or semi-evergreen trees or shrubs where a complainant's reasonable enjoyment of their residential property is lost because a tall hedge situated on land owned or occupied by another person is acting as a barrier to light. The Act does not cover single trees or trees within woodland of more than 0.2 hectares in area. My Department has no current plans to amend this Act or bring forward other legislation in this area.

River Faughan Anglers

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29457/11-15, given that on the 23 July 2013 his Department advised River Faughan Anglers that no action would be taken against waste disposal at the site of extant landfill permission A/1980/0782 adjacent to the River Faughan SAC, whether his Department had carried out the necessary review of that application in line with the Habitats Regulations; and if such a review was not carried out, to explain the reasons.

(AQW 30250/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am aware of the concerns relating to the Habitats Regulations with regard to this site and others. I intend to make an announcement on this matter shortly.

Special Areas of Conservation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29460/11-15, (i) whether his Department has produced any guidance on what constitutes an extant permission to be reviewed; (ii) whether his Department is aware of existing guidance produced by other jurisdictions on this subject in order to avoid violation of the Habitats Directive; and (iii) for his assessment of the thoroughness of the review carried out by his Department when compared to those carried out in other parts of the UK.

(AQW 30253/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am aware of the concerns relating to the Habitats Regulations with regard to this site and others. I intend to make an announcement on this matter shortly.

Expenditure on Departmental Ministerial Travel

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

(AQW 30358/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In the period January to June 2013 the total expenditure on departmental Ministerial travel was £10,982.

In the period July to December 2013 the total expenditure on departmental Ministerial travel was £11,460.23.

Climate Change Adaptation Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment what are the costs associated with and arising from his Department's Climate Change Adaptation Programme.

(AQW 30422/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme contains a number of actions and activities that all Government Departments have committed to, that address the most important risks to Northern Ireland from climate change.

It is not possible to provide an exact measurement of costs associated with and arising from the Adaptation Programme. Adaptation costs are difficult to estimate because of uncertainty about the precise impacts of climate change and its multiple effects.

Adaptation needs to be embedded into a wide range of relevant key policy areas, as highlighted in the Adaptation Programme. It is at the policy appraisal stage that costs associated with adaptation action can be best considered.

The Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change highlights that adaptation costs are hard to estimate, due to uncertainty about the precise impacts of climate change and its multiple effects. The Report indicates that early adaptation action will reduce costs and disruption caused by climate change. It concludes that the costs of adaptation will rise exponentially if efforts to mitigate emissions are not successful.

Hydroelectric Schemes: Planning Applications

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether his Department considers it appropriate to allow applicants to exclude the dewatered stretch of a river affected by small hydroelectric schemes from the red line of the application; (ii) whether hydroelectric planning applications can propose in-river works and riverbed re-profiling which fall outside of the red line of the application site and; and (iii) whether such works would fall within the definition of development as set out in Article 11 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

(AQW 30446/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In the submission of an application, the applicant can choose to indicate within the red line of a site boundary all lands they feel are relevant to the proposal. The onus is on the applicant to identify the application site which they wish to develop, but the Department may seek amendments if considered necessary which may include amending the red line to encompass all of the proposed development.

In the submission of an application all proposed works must fall within the red line of the application unless those works do not require permission by virtue of permitted development or if they do not constitute development.

Considering the Article 11 definition of development it would appear that the operations referred to in the question above would constitute development. However depending on the exact nature of them and the status of the developer, they may not all require planning permission as they may fall within the remit of permitted development.

Improving Planning: Preparing for 2015

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of his recent statement on Improving Planning - Preparing for 2015, how will any change in consultee performance be measured.

(AQW 30466/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Currently, consultation responses are made on an administrative basis, governed by individual Service Level Agreements (SLAs) agreed between Departmental planning staff and the various consultee bodies.

As a key element of the transfer of planning powers to the new local councils I intend exercising powers under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 in order to provide greater clarity and certainty in the consultation process. For the first time, identified consultees will be statutorily required to provide a substantive response to a consultation request within a specified timeframe and to report on their performance in meeting their duty to respond.

The Department views this reporting requirement as an important element of the new system as it should not only expose difficulties, such as any possible bottle necks in the system, but also highlight examples of good practice.

Subordinate legislation will specify the time limits in which consultees must respond, define the criteria as to what will constitute a substantive response and outline the form, content and timing of performance reports. These proposals will be the subject of public consultation commencing in April 2014.

In advance of these changes in 2015 the Department is committed to leading by example, with NIEA launching a series of “backlog blitzes” to clear outstanding consultations and also developing new protocols to streamline their consultation processes.

The changes I am introducing, before and after transfer, mark a significant shift in the approach to consultation. My Department is currently considering how consultee performance will be best measured pre- and post-transfer of planning powers particularly prior to the first consultee performance reports.

I believe that the experience of NIEA in taking forward administrative changes will help inform this thinking and I will be meeting with NIEA senior management over coming months to get an assessment of their experiences.

Councillors: Redundancy Package Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many councillors have signed up for the redundancy package scheme (i) since the start of the scheme until the 31 December 2013; and (ii) from 1 January 2014 to date.

(AQW 30469/11-15)

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 Up to 31 December 2013, my Department made reimbursement payments to councils in respect of 7 councillors; and
- ii. since 1 January 2014, my Department has made reimbursement payments to councils in respect of 2 councillors.

London School of Economics Report: Wind Turbines

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment whether he is aware of the recently published report by Professor Stephen Gibbons, from the London School of Economics, ‘Gone with the wind: valuing the local impacts of wind turbines through house prices’; and what analysis of its findings has been undertaken by his Department.

(AQW 30472/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am aware of and have noted the conclusions of this draft report which are focussed around the impact of wind turbines on house prices.

However, I can advise that the planning system exists to regulate development in the public interest, which involves the consideration of a wide range of material planning considerations before decisions on planning applications are reached. It does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against the activities of another. The basic question is not whether owners of neighbouring properties

would experience financial or other loss from a particular development but whether the proposal would unacceptably affect amenities and the existing use of land and buildings that ought to be protected in the public interest.

Therefore, in relation to wind energy, planning policy (PPS 18) requires that wind energy development should not have an unacceptable impact upon visual amenity or landscape character through the number, scale, size and siting of turbines. Development must not cause significant harm to the safety or amenity of 'sensitive receptors' (including domestic residences) by reason of noise; shadow flicker; ice throw or reflected light.

Taxi Licensing Legislation

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the new taxi licensing legislation. (AQW 30493/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The first element of taxi reform flowing from the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 was the introduction of Taxi Operator Licensing in September 2012. At the request of the Environment Committee, implementation of the remaining legislation was deferred until September 2014 and involves the passage of a number of Regulations.

An SL1 for the Taxi Vehicle Licensing Regulations, which among other things will introduce a single tier system across NI, was considered and passed by the Committee on 27 June 2013.

A consultation on a new specification for wheelchair accessible taxis was published on 7 February 2014 and seeks views until 4 April 2014. The document can be found on the Department's website at the link below. <http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/foi/recent-releases/publications-details.htm?docid=9556>

On 16 January 2014 the Committee considered an SL1 for the Taximeter and Maximum Fare Regulations, but opted to defer this for further consideration. It remains the Department's intention that the relevant regulations will come into place in September 2014 and require a taximeter to be fitted by March 2015.

You may also be interested to note that on 12 December 2013 the Committee considered and approved the SL1 relating to the reintroduction of a Taxi Driver Test and for new drivers and periodic training for all. The test is due to come into effect in September 2014 with the periodic training requirement beginning in September 2015.

My Department is maintaining close engagement with all sectors of the taxi industry to advise them of the programme of legislation and assist them in preparing for its implementation.

Planning Applications Made on Medical Grounds

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment how many domestic planning applications to the Planning Service were made on medical grounds; and how many of these applications required medical consultations.

(AQW 30497/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department does not have a central record of how many domestic planning applications were made on medical grounds, or how many required medical consultations. Any medical evidence submitted as part or in support of a planning application is treated in accordance with Data Protection legislation and is not logged or stored on the publically accessible Planning Portal.

To provide the number of applications where this is the case would require a manual search of all planning application files and would result in the diversion of staff from normal duties for an unreasonable period of time which would have an adverse impact on the Department's ability to provide the statutory public service for which it is obligated.

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

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

(AQW 30526/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There has been no occasion since May 2007 when my department has not accepted the recommendations contained in an Ombudsman's finding.

Cruise Ship Docking Planning Application in Belfast

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the cruise ship docking planning application in Belfast.

(AQW 30536/11-15)

Mr Durkan: A planning application has not been submitted for a new cruise ship docking facility at Belfast Harbour.

Officials from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Natural Heritage section are presently liaising with representatives of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners to determine whether a proposed cruise ship docking facility is likely to have significant environmental effects. It is necessary to consider potential environmental effects as the site for the facility is located within an area of archaeological interest (Alexandra Dry Dock, a scheduled monument) and adjacent to 'European Sites' (Belfast Lough Ramsar Site and Belfast Lough Special Protection Area - Special Areas of Conservation designated under the European Union Habitats Directive).

If the proposal is likely to have significant environmental effects then an application for planning permission accompanied by an Environmental Statement will be required.

Retrospective Planning Application A/2010/0596/F

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether retrospective planning application A/2010/0596/F to retain illegal land filling (i) forms part of the illegal landfill site at Mabuoy Road; (ii) currently remains in situ; and (iii) lies on the line of the proposed A6 dual carriageway.

(AQW 30557/11-15)

Mr Durkan:

- (i) Planning application A/2010/0596/F forms part of the site known as City Industrial Waste at 60 Mobuoy Road, Campsie, Derry, BT47 3JQ.
- (ii) The retrospective development currently remains in situ. Pending the outcome of the Chris Mills report and ongoing Environmental Crime Unit investigations the planning applications were placed on hold. The Department has now reviewed all planning applications on the site and is proceeding to process the remaining applications to a conclusion.
- (iii) Roads Service has advised that the application lies partially underneath the footprint of the proposed A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dual carriageway.

Radioactive and/or Toxic Waste Disposal

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 29550/11-15, (i) whether any other sites were identified for special precaution burials; (ii) whether any specified Certificates of Authorisations were issued to premises; and (iii) how much radioactivity has been disposed of to landfill over the last 15 years.

(AQW 30558/11-15)

Mr Durkan:

- (i) In addition to Duncrue and Culmore, other landfill sites named in Certificates of Authorisation issued to premises for the disposal of low level solid radioactive waste by controlled burial are:
- Newtownabbey (Bruslee Quarry)
 - Coleraine (Ballywillan Bog or Carthall Road or Letterloan Road)
 - Garvagh (Mayboy Road)

None of the above landfills were used. The practice of controlled burial stopped in Northern Ireland in 2006.

- (ii) Since 1998, 15 premises comprising hospitals, research facilities and universities, had Certificates of Authorisation allowing the disposal of low level solid radioactive waste by controlled burial.

All Certificates of Authorisation contain conditions (relating to radionuclide content and concentration) permitting the disposal of very low level solid radioactive waste to local refuse sites together with substantial quantities of non radioactive waste. The total number comprise an additional 9 premises to the 15 identified above.

- (iii) Our records show that a total of 6.9 Giga Becquerels of radioactive waste have been disposed of to landfill since 1998.

For further information relating to controlled burial of low level solid radioactive waste please refer to AQW 29550/11-15.

Motorway Service Stations at Browns Road on the M2 in Newtownabbey

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment (i) to outline the reasons for the delay in the planning applications for motorway service stations at Browns Road on the M2 in Newtownabbey; (ii) what action he is taking to ensure the developments proceed; and (iii) to outline the proposed timescale.

(AQW 30561/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The planning applications were received on the 18th November 2013 and are being prioritised by officials as they are of locally significant importance. The first round of consultations is complete and some additional information is being sought to support the application.

Departmental officials are working closely with the agent to resolve any outstanding issues and bring a decision before Newtownabbey Borough Council at the earliest opportunity.

Driver and Vehicle Agency Enforcement Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment whether any of the current Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement staff have been investigated, suspended, reported or disciplined for either an internal or external complaint.

(AQW 30579/11-15)

Mr Durkan: All complaints received about Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) enforcement staff, whether internal or external, are investigated under Departmental procedures. A number of such complaints against current DVA enforcement staff have been investigated.

The Department does not comment about disciplinary action which may have been taken against any member of staff, but I can assure you that all complaints are properly investigated and any appropriate action will be taken. I can, however, state that no DVA enforcement staff member has been suspended as a result of an internal or external complaint.

Tyre Recycling

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what methods of tyre recycling are currently licensed.
(AQW 30678/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Methods of tyre recycling currently licensed in Northern Ireland are a mixture of shredding, crumbing and retreading.

There are currently 6 licences dealing primarily with waste tyres as a waste stream, three of these have been suspended. Three are currently operating.

WML	04/35	PPP: Shredding
WML	10/24	Entyre: Baling for onward recovery (Suspended)
WML	12/25	R4: Shredding and Crumbing
WML	13/70	Ken Ferguson: Baling for onward recovery
WML	14/37	Crane Tyres: Baling for onward recovery (Suspended)
WML	25/13	Tyre Recycling: (Suspended)

There are currently 2 exemptions for recycling tyres.

WMEX02/93 AC Tyres: Crumbing Tyres for the manufacture of finished goods from waste rubber into equestrian soft surface for outdoor and indoor riding arenas.

WMEX11/54 EKS Tyres: Retreading of Tyres

All of the sites listed above have been given site specific licence conditions. A copy of the above authorisations has been placed in the Assembly Library.

The most recent available figures on the quantity of waste tyres come from a survey commissioned by the Department in March 2012 in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland. This used the latest available figures (the 2010/11 financial year) in the report dated January 2013 subsequently published on the Department's web site in March 2013.

The report states that of the 18,597 tonnes of waste tyres generated in Northern Ireland in 2010/11 13,370 tonnes (or 72%) were sent to recycling / reprocessing facilities. Of this tonnage 7,761 were exported outside of Northern Ireland which leaves 5,609 tonnes (or 58%) sent to recycling / reprocessing facilities inside Northern Ireland.

The report provides further break-down in terms of management routes and tonnages for used tyres and can be viewed at the following web address:

www.doeni.gov.uk/all_island_used_tyre_survey_report.pdf

Tyre Recycling

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) how many waste management licences have been issued for tyre recycling; and (ii) the conditions of the licences.
(AQW 30679/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Methods of tyre recycling currently licensed in Northern Ireland are a mixture of shredding, crumbing and retreading.

There are currently 6 licences dealing primarily with waste tyres as a waste stream, three of these have been suspended. Three are currently operating.

WML	04/35	PPP: Shredding
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www.doeni.gov.uk/all_island_used_tyre_survey_report.pdf

Tyre Recycling

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what proportion of tyres are recycled.
(AQW 30680/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Methods of tyre recycling currently licensed in Northern Ireland are a mixture of shredding, crumbing and retreading.

There are currently 6 licences dealing primarily with waste tyres as a waste stream, three of these have been suspended. Three are currently operating.

WML	04/35	PPP: Shredding
WML	10/24	Entyre: Baling for onward recovery (Suspended)
WML	12/25	R4: Shredding and Crumbing
WML	13/70	Ken Ferguson: Baling for onward recovery
WML	14/37	Crane Tyres: Baling for onward recovery (Suspended)
WML	25/13	Tyre Recycling: (Suspended)

There are currently 2 exemptions for recycling tyres.

WMEX02/93 AC Tyres: Crumbing Tyres for the manufacture of finished goods from waste rubber into equestrian soft surface for outdoor and indoor riding arenas.

WMEX11/54 EKS Tyres: Retreading of Tyres

All of the sites listed above have been given site specific licence conditions. A copy of the above authorisations has been placed in the Assembly Library.

The most recent available figures on the quantity of waste tyres come from a survey commissioned by the Department in March 2012 in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland. This used the latest available figures (the 2010/11 financial year) in the report dated January 2013 subsequently published on the Department's web site in March 2013.

The report states that of the 18,597 tonnes of waste tyres generated in Northern Ireland in 2010/11 13,370 tonnes (or 72%) were sent to recycling / reprocessing facilities. Of this tonnage 7,761 were exported outside of Northern Ireland which leaves 5,609 tonnes (or 58%) sent to recycling / reprocessing facilities inside Northern Ireland.

The report provides further break-down in terms of management routes and tonnages for used tyres and can be viewed at the following web address:

www.doeni.gov.uk/all_island_used_tyre_survey_report.pdf

Tyre Recycling

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what proportion of tyres are recycled locally.
(AQW 30681/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Methods of tyre recycling currently licensed in Northern Ireland are a mixture of shredding, crumbing and retreading.

There are currently 6 licences dealing primarily with waste tyres as a waste stream, three of these have been suspended. Three are currently operating.

WML	04/35	PPP: Shredding
WML	10/24	Entyre: Baling for onward recovery (Suspended)
WML	12/25	R4: Shredding and Crumbing
WML	13/70	Ken Ferguson: Baling for onward recovery
WML	14/37	Crane Tyres: Baling for onward recovery (Suspended)
WML	25/13	Tyre Recycling: (Suspended)

There are currently 2 exemptions for recycling tyres.

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The most recent available figures on the quantity of waste tyres come from a survey commissioned by the Department in March 2012 in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland. This used the latest available figures (the 2010/11 financial year) in the report dated January 2013 subsequently published on the Department's web site in March 2013.

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The report provides further break-down in terms of management routes and tonnages for used tyres and can be viewed at the following web address:

www.doeni.gov.uk/all_island_used_tyre_survey_report.pdf

Supplementary Planning Documents: Objectives

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment what measures are in place locally to achieve the same objectives provided by Supplementary Planning Documents in England.

(AQW 30697/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department currently delivers a broad range of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in order to supplement, elucidate and exemplify the Department's planning policy documents and area plans. This includes Development Control Advice Notes, Regional Design Guidance, Conservation Area Design Guidance, Best Practice Guidance and other Supplementary Guidance for example linked to specific Planning Policy Statements. Where relevant to a particular development proposal SPG will be taken into account as a material consideration in making decisions.

Whilst the arrangements for the delivery of national planning guidance in England are undergoing change at present through their emerging National Planning Practice Guidance, a comparable range of local guidance continues to be delivered by local councils. As with SPG in Northern Ireland, this guidance is largely topic based (for example rural housing) or area specific (for example to promote the regeneration of an area). The broad aim of this guidance is to underpin and supplement the policies contained within the Council's Development Plan and its status is akin to that of SPG in Northern Ireland. In both jurisdictions, the common, ultimate aim of planning guidance is to elucidate existing planning policy in order to provide additional clarity for the developer, decision taker and other interested parties.

Under the reformed two-tier planning system to be introduced next year the arrangements for the delivery of SPG in Northern Ireland will be more closely aligned with the English model. The Department will retain responsibility for the production of regional SPG to sit under the emerging Strategic Planning Policy Statement and which would be comparable to the emerging National Planning Practice Guidance in England. Following the transfer of planning functions to local government, Councils will also have powers to prepare their own SPG to build upon or give support to their Local Development Plans. As part of the work to prepare for the transfer of planning powers to councils, the Department is considering the need to revoke, revise or produce entirely new Departmental Guidance. This work is being informed by practice in other jurisdictions and any lessons for the Northern Ireland planning system

Ravenhill Rugby Grounds: Taxi Operators

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 28378/11-15 and AQW 27856/11-15, whether the report that his officials made reference to at the Committee for the Environment on 6 February 2014 has been supplied to the Committee and confirmed as received by the Chairperson; and whether this report is the final determination of the legal position on the provision of private hire taxis at Ravenhill Rugby Grounds.

(AQW 30747/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The document that was referred to by officials at the Committee for the Environment on 6 February was provided to you in response to AQW 27856/11-15. This outlined the Department's final interpretation of the legal position as regards the provision of taxis at Ravenhill Rugby grounds, Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast. This document has not been supplied directly to the Committee or the Committee Chairperson.

Road Safety: Rural Areas

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made on increasing road safety in rural areas.

(AQO 5532/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Rural roads present a particular road safety challenge and this is recognised within the Road Safety Strategy. In addition to the principal casualty reduction targets, the Strategy contains a number of key performance indicators to monitor and assist in better understanding progress in improving road safety. One of these key performance indicators tracks the number of people killed in collisions on rural roads.

All indicators are measured against the appropriate average figures for 2004-2008. In 2012, the most recent year for which we have published data, 35 people were killed in collisions on rural roads. This is 62 per cent below the baseline level of 92 deaths and five per cent less than the number recorded in 2011.

While these figures show improvements on our rural roads, I am very aware of an overall increase in fatalities in 2013 and in the first month of 2014. I can assure you that my Department continues to monitor casualty data and will work in partnership with stakeholders to understand better the reasons for collisions and changes in the numbers. This will allow us to continue to improve our interventions and to target them more effectively, not least in rural areas.

Exploris: Financial Assistance

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his offer of financial assistance to Ards Borough Council to meet the running costs of the Seal Sanctuary at Exploris.

(AQO 5533/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have given a commitment to fund all reasonable costs associated with running the seal sanctuary at Exploris.

At its meeting on 29th January, Ards Borough Council approved an outline business plan for Exploris which included the seal sanctuary.

The Council has not yet considered or approved a business case with the necessary detailed costings and assumptions supporting the options under consideration. It is this detailed business case on which I and the Executive must make our decisions. A business case has been prepared by the consultant who also prepared the business plan, and my officials, including the Department's economist are currently scrutinising the case. They are in discussion with the consultant and Council officials and they will report back to me on the outcome of these discussions.

The Council will have to agree the business case and it must also be approved by DFP.

I remain committed to my Department funding all reasonable costs associated with running the seal sanctuary, and to bringing an agreed business case to the Executive at the earliest opportunity.

PPS 7: Addendum

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment whether the Addendum to PPS 7, passed by a former Minister, is being adhered to by his Department.

(AQO 5534/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Planning Policy Statement 7: Quality Residential Environments (published June 2001), sets out the Department's planning policies for achieving quality in new residential development. The policy promotes a sustainable form of development by encouraging more compact urban form and promoting housing within existing urban areas. The policy also seeks to ensure that the design and layout of new developments do not result in unacceptable damage to local character, environmental quality or the residential amenity of those living within the area.

Two addendums have subsequently been published to provide additional policy and guidance when assessing residential development. These additional addendums are:

Addendum to PPS 7: Residential Extensions and Alterations. Published March 2008.

Addendum to PPS 7: Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas. Published August 2010.

The addendums are relevant material considerations in the processing of planning applications for residential development.

I am conscious that planning applications for residential developments within established areas are often contentious and attract objections, however I am satisfied that the policies contained within PPS7 and the subsequent Addendums are adhered to and provide sufficient protection to ensure that new residential schemes are sensitive in design terms to the local character of the area and to the people living in existing neighbourhoods.

Taxis Act

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the progress his Department has made since September 2013 in resolving the outstanding issues impeding the implementation of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

(AQO 5535/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, which was passed by this Assembly without division, was designed to deliver the benefits which enhanced taxi regulation could bring to Northern Ireland – including an increased choice for consumers, greater clarity for all around what taxis are permitted to do, and an increased capacity within the industry to deal with peak demand at specific times and locations, thereby helping to address public and personal safety concerns.

Since September 2013, progress has been made on a number of fronts, including gaining Environment Committee approval for the SL1 for driver testing and periodic training. A consultation will issue this month on a proposed new wheelchair accessible vehicle specification, which has been the subject of research commissioned by my Department.

Operational work to implement the remaining reforms in September 2014 remains challenging but achievable, with steady progress being made on all streams of work.

However, I am aware that some Members have expressed reservations about the implementation of single tier licensing, something the Department have been working towards for some time. I have listened carefully to their concerns and am considering what – if any – changes might be appropriate to the plans which have been approved by the Environment Committee, and could address those concerns whilst still delivering the benefits flowing from the Act.

Councils: Qualified Majority Voting

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment whether he would consider including in regulations, as part of the Local Government Bill, a list of the types of council decisions that could be subject to qualified majority voting.

(AQO 5536/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am committed to ensuring that the interests of minorities are protected in the decision-making of councils. The list of decisions that must be taken by qualified majority will be a mandatory element of a council's standing orders and will be specified in the regulations that my Department will make using the power provided by clause 42 of the Local Government Bill.

The regulations specifying the mandatory elements of a council's standing orders will be subject to the draft affirmative procedure in the Assembly, to allow members to have the opportunity to debate this important aspect of the new governance arrangements for councils.

My officials are working with senior officers from local government to develop the draft standing orders which will be subject to consultation with key stakeholders prior to them being laid in the Assembly.

Heavy Goods Vehicle Levy

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of the Environment to outline any discussions he has had with the British Government on the proposed introduction of a Heavy Goods Vehicle levy for cross-border travel.
(AQO 5537/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The HGV Road User Levy is being introduced by the UK's Coalition Government and, as a UK-wide taxation, is an excepted matter. The Levy seeks to ensure a fairer arrangement for UK hauliers who face road charges or tolls in most other European countries.

Minister Attwood met with and exchanged correspondence with Stephen Hammond MP, Under Secretary of State for the Department for Transport, and his predecessor Mike Penning to consider the practical implications of enforcing the Levy in Northern Ireland not least due to the unique challenges faced in respect of the land border.

The Department for Transport (DfT) consulted on the legislative amendments to give full effect to the Levy from 26 September until 8 November 2013 and continues to take forward key stakeholder engagement in advance of the 'go live' date.

DfT plan to amend the GB fixed penalty notice and fixed penalty deposit schemes to allow the offence of not paying the Levy to be discharged by way of a £300 fixed penalty rather than through prosecution in court. The Department has recently consulted on similar proposals which will allow a consistent and proportionate enforcement approach to be adopted in Northern Ireland.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency will enforce the Levy in Britain and the Driver and Vehicle Agency will be the enforcement authority in Northern Ireland.

Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment when he will introduce the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill.
(AQO 5538/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill is drafted and now awaits Executive approval to allow its introduction to the Assembly. As you are aware there are competing demands for Executive time but I hope we can introduce this important Bill very soon.

Councils: Transfer of Responsibilities

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the preparedness of local authorities to transfer responsibilities to the new councils.
(AQO 5539/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I am confident that the implementation structures established by my Department will ensure that all local authorities involved in the reform of local government are fully prepared for the transfer of responsibilities to the new councils in 2015.

All the necessary legislative issues relating to the transferring functions will be in place prior to 1st April 2015 and in the Transfer of Functions working group, officials from transferring departments have been working closely with senior council officials to facilitate the smooth transfer of the functions agreed by the Executive from central government departments.

Each department with a transferring function has now submitted baseline information on the resources (budget, staff and assets) attached to their package of functions transferring.

A detailed due diligence review of this baseline information is underway and will be made available to the Regional Transitional Operational Board and the Regional Transitional Committee in March 2014.

The review seeks to validate the information and give necessary assurances to local government on the functions to transfer.

Work is also underway to develop a suite of organisational design principles and a support toolkit. This will help inform Statutory Transition Committees and the new councils during the shadow period in relation to organisation design, including the integration of new functions and powers. It should be noted, however, that any decisions relating to future organisational design or service delivery models will ultimately be the responsibility of individual councils.

In addition DOE Planning and DSD officials have been engaging directly with the council clusters which will form the new councils, to ensure continuity of planning, regeneration and community development services and to assist with the future planning and integration of those functions with the new council's community plans.

Where issues relating to the transfer remain to be resolved by either local or central government I will ensure that these are brought to a conclusion as quickly as possible.

Based on robust programme reporting arrangements, my assessment is that councils are in a good state of preparedness for the transfer of responsibilities from the existing councils to the new councils. Since August 2013, Statutory Transition Committees have been driving convergence between merging councils and undertaking preparatory work for the new successor councils. The Committees have been tasked with ensuring a seamless transition from 26 to 11 councils, that service delivery is maintained and that the new councils are in a position to discharge their new functions and deliver on their vision for the new districts from 1 April 2015. Through the Regional Transition Committee and through local meetings of the STCs, I have been able to monitor their preparatory duties, some of which are now beginning to materialise with the recent appointments of a few of the new council Chief Executives.

Fuel Laundering

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the level of prosecutions in respect of illegal fuel laundering.

(AQO 5540/11-15)

Mr Durkan: HMRC are the body responsible for prosecuting what are normally termed “fuel laundering offences”.

NIEA investigates environmental offences which result from the fuel laundering process. These relate to the treating, keeping or disposing of the waste (which is often hazardous waste). The NIEA Environmental Crime Unit is presently investigating a number of such cases and works closely with HMRC to attempt to identify those responsible and bring them before the courts.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Common Agricultural Policy: Rural Development Programme Funding

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, following the debate in the Assembly on 20 January 2014, to make available correspondence between himself and the Minister of Agricultural and Rural Development in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy: Rural Development Programme Funding.

(AQW 30333/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Normally Ministerial correspondence, in common with all aspects of Executive business, is treated as confidential. However, correspondence on the Common Agricultural Policy: Rural Development Programme funding has been put before the court in the judicial review proceedings. A full judgement is awaited and it would not be appropriate before a final judgement has been given to disclose aspects of the evidence before the court.

Young People Currently Unemployed

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many young people are currently unemployed between the ages of 16 to 21 in the Bangor area.

(AQW 30430/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland (NI) Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS is a sample survey and estimates of unemployment, at sub-NI geographies, are not sourced to the LFS because of the relatively large confidence intervals around such estimates. This is due to sample size constraints in the LFS.

The following tables are sourced instead to the claimant count measure of unemployment. Claimant count data is collated at District Council Area (DCA) and Ward level, therefore statistics for Bangor, Holywood, Donaghadee and Millisle are not available. Instead these tables show the number of persons age 16 to 21 claiming unemployment related benefits at December 2013, in all wards in the two relevant District Council Areas - North Down and Ards.

TABLE 1

CLAIMANT COUNT FOR 16-21 YEAR OLDS AT DECEMBER 2013 FOR ARDS DCA BY WARD

Ards Wards	Number*
Ballygowan	15
Ballyrainey	20
Ballywalter	20
Bradshaws Brae	5
Carrowdore	15
Central	20
Comber East	10
Comber North	15
Comber West	10
Donaghadee North	10
Donaghadee South	25
Glen	15
Gregstown	20
Killinchy	5
Kircubbin	10
Lisbane	5
Loughries	15
Millisle	20
Movilla	15
Portaferry	15
Portavogie	30
Scrabo	30

Ards Wards	Number*
Whitespots	10
Ards DCA	355

* Data rounded to nearest 5

TABLE 2

CLAIMANT COUNT FOR 16-21 YEAR OLDS AT DECEMBER 2013 FOR NORTH DOWN DCA BY WARD

North Down Wards	Number*
Ballycrochan	10
Ballyholme	5
Ballymaconnell	10
Ballymagee	5
Bangor Castle	5
Bloomfield	10
Broadway	5
Bryansburn	10
Churchill	5
Clandeboyne	20
Conlig	20
Craigavad	0
Crawfordsburn	5
Cultra	0
Dufferin	10
Groomsport	5
Harbour	25
Hollywood Demesne	10
Hollywood Priory	5
Loughview	15
Princetown	5
Rathgael	10
Silverstream	10
Spring Hill	5
Whitehill	5
North Down DCA	215

* Data rounded to nearest 5

Young People Currently Unemployed

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many young people are currently unemployed between the ages of 16 to 21 in the Holywood area.

(AQW 30431/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland (NI) Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS is a sample survey and estimates of unemployment, at sub-NI geographies, are not sourced to the LFS because of the relatively large confidence intervals around such estimates. This is due to sample size constraints in the LFS.

The following tables are sourced instead to the claimant count measure of unemployment. Claimant count data is collated at District Council Area (DCA) and Ward level, therefore statistics for Bangor, Holywood, Donaghadee and Millisle are not available. Instead these tables show the number of persons age 16 to 21 claiming unemployment related benefits at December 2013, in all wards in the two relevant District Council Areas - North Down and Ards.

TABLE 1

CLAIMANT COUNT FOR 16-21 YEAR OLDS AT DECEMBER 2013 FOR ARDS DCA BY WARD

Ards Wards	Number*
Ballygowan	15
Ballyrainey	20
Ballywalter	20
Bradshaws Brae	5
Carrowdore	15
Central	20
Comber East	10
Comber North	15
Comber West	10
Donaghadee North	10
Donaghadee South	25
Glen	15
Gregstown	20
Killinchy	5
Kircubbin	10
Lisbane	5
Loughries	15
Millisle	20
Movilla	15
Portaferry	15
Portavogie	30
Scrabo	30

Ards Wards	Number*
Whitespots	10
Ards DCA	355

*Data rounded to nearest 5

TABLE 2

CLAIMANT COUNT FOR 16-21 YEAR OLDS AT DECEMBER 2013 FOR NORTH DOWN DCA BY WARD

North Down Wards	Number*
Ballycrochan	10
Ballyholme	5
Ballymaconnell	10
Ballymagee	5
Bangor Castle	5
Bloomfield	10
Broadway	5
Bryansburn	10
Churchill	5
Clandeboyne	20
Conlig	20
Craigavad	0
Crawfordsburn	5
Cultra	0
Dufferin	10
Groomsport	5
Harbour	25
Hollywood Demesne	10
Hollywood Priory	5
Loughview	15
Princetown	5
Rathgael	10
Silverstream	10
Spring Hill	5
Whitehill	5
North Down DCA	215

*Data rounded to nearest 5

Young People Currently Unemployed

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many young people are currently unemployed between the ages of 16 to 21 in the Donaghadee & Millisle area.

(AQW 30432/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland (NI) Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS is a sample survey and estimates of unemployment, at sub-NI geographies, are not sourced to the LFS because of the relatively large confidence intervals around such estimates. This is due to sample size constraints in the LFS.

The following tables are sourced instead to the claimant count measure of unemployment. Claimant count data is collated at District Council Area (DCA) and Ward level, therefore statistics for Bangor, Holywood, Donaghadee and Millisle are not available. Instead these tables show the number of persons age 16 to 21 claiming unemployment related benefits at December 2013, in all wards in the two relevant District Council Areas - North Down and Ards.

TABLE 1 – CLAIMANT COUNT FOR 16-21 YEAR OLDS AT DECEMBER 2013 FOR ARDS DCA BY WARD

Ards Wards	Number*
Ballygowan	15
Ballyrainey	20
Ballywalter	20
Bradshaws Brae	5
Carrowdore	15
Central	20
Comber East	10
Comber North	15
Comber West	10
Donaghadee North	10
Donaghadee South	25
Glen	15
Gregstown	20
Killinchy	5
Kircubbin	10
Lisbane	5
Loughries	15
Millisle	20
Movilla	15
Portaferry	15
Portavogie	30
Scrabo	30

Ards Wards	Number*
Whitespots	10
Ards DCA	355

*Data rounded to nearest 5

TABLE 2

CLAIMANT COUNT FOR 16-21 YEAR OLDS AT DECEMBER 2013 FOR NORTH DOWN DCA BY WARD

North Down Wards	Number*
Ballycrochan	10
Ballyholme	5
Ballymaconnell	10
Ballymagee	5
Bangor Castle	5
Bloomfield	10
Broadway	5
Bryansburn	10
Churchill	5
Clandeboyne	20
Conlig	20
Craigavad	0
Crawfordsburn	5
Cultra	0
Dufferin	10
Groomsport	5
Harbour	25
Hollywood Demesne	10
Hollywood Priory	5
Loughview	15
Princetown	5
Rathgael	10
Silverstream	10
Spring Hill	5
Whitehill	5
North Down DCA	215

*Data rounded to nearest 5

Domestic and Residential Rate Payers

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 30143/11-15, why information relating to the number of (i) domestic; and (ii) residential rate payers who have had their rates payments returned is not collected by his Department.

(AQW 30596/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: As LPS does not and cannot accept payment for rates in advance, it does not hold information relating to the number of domestic and residential rate payers who have tried to avail of making advanced payments.

EU Funds Obtained for Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the total EU funds obtained for Northern Ireland in 2012/13.

(AQW 30613/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: EU Structural Funds received in 2012/2013 were £93,690,979.35

This figure includes:

*2000-2006 PROGRAMMES

INTERREG IIIA Programme	£ 13,598.67
PEACE II Programme	£ 7,321,840.83

2007-2013 PROGRAMMES

EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme	£42,098,057.70
EU Northern Ireland ESF Programme	£ 6,790,561.51
PEACE III Programme	£21,609,523.63
INTERREG IVA Programme	£15,857,397.01

Receipts from the EU for Agricultural, Rural and Fisheries Funds and competitive programmes administered by the European Commission are not recorded in my department.

* Funds related to 2000-2006 are final payments following closure process.

Pension Legislation: Life Expectancy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether any consideration was given to actuarial differences in life expectancy between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom when drawing up pension legislation.

(AQW 30644/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel did not consider regional variation in life expectancy within the United Kingdom for the purpose of the drafting of the Public Service Pensions Bill.

Public Sector Loan Board

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the links between his Department and the Public Sector Loan Board.

(AQW 30653/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department has no knowledge of the Public Sector Loan Board.

Ordnance Survey and the Department of Agriculture: Farm Mapping

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) to detail the working arrangements between Ordnance Survey and the Department of Agriculture in regard to farm mapping, in each of the last 3 years; and (ii) for a breakdown of the costs associated with this collaboration, in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 30699/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Land & Property Services (LPS), which is responsible for Ordnance Survey mapping in Northern Ireland, has a Service Level Agreement with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to provide a range of mapping and related services in connection with the DARD Land Parcel Identification System. DARD meets all costs associated with this work (including overheads).

The total LPS cost associated with the work is as follows:

Year	Amount (£k)
2011/12	4,623
2012/13	4,902
2013/14 (at Jan 14)	2,052

Traders in Lisburn: Rates Re-Bate

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the traders in Lisburn that have benefited, or will benefit from (i) a rates rebate; and (ii) property de-rating, for each of the fiscal years (a) 2011/12; (b) 2012/13; and (c) 2013/14.

(AQW 30801/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Under the Data Protection Act we cannot release details of the individual traders in Lisburn who have benefited, or will benefit, from a rates rebate or property de-rating.

Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any plans to allocate funding to rural communities for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme, 2014-2020.

(AQW 30814/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department does not have responsibility for the delivery of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme. Policy responsibility for the Programme rests with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and, that being the case, it is for the Agriculture Minister to develop plans to allocate funding to rural communities.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many times he has appeared before his Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30875/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I have appeared before the Finance and Personnel Committee on one occasion during the 2013/14 session.

Ulster Bank: Meetings

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) any meetings recently held with Ulster Bank; and (ii) the issues discussed.

(AQW 30912/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Together with the First and deputy First Ministers, I met with the RBS Chief Executive Ross McEwan on 11th February. At that meeting we discussed a number of strategically important issues including the current RBS review of Ulster Bank, the operation of the RBS 'Bad Bank', how Ulster Bank will continue to meet customers' requirements, and the evidence on banking practices presented in the Tomlinson Report. Mr McEwan was accompanied by Jim Brown, the Ulster Bank Chief Executive and Ellvena Graham, Head of Ulster Bank NI.

Public Sector Reform

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any discussions he has had with his Dublin government counterpart in regard to public sector reform.

(AQW 30913/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I met with Brendan Howlin (Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform) on 8 November and the meeting included a discussion on public sector reform.

We agreed that our senior officials should meet to explore areas of mutual interest in more detail. This is being progressed.

Budget: Central Retention

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much money is being retained at the centre.

(AQO 5547/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I presume the member has asked the question with reference to this 2013-14 financial year.

You will of course be aware from my recent Statement that the Executive left the January Monitoring round with an overcommitment of £24.8 million on the non-ringfenced Resource DEL side. In addition, there is funding earmarked for specific purposes, which also remains held at the 'Centre'. This includes the £15 million set aside to meet the cost of Welfare Reform penalties. I want to reiterate that this is inexcusable since this money could have been used to deliver essential public services here. There is also £47.4 million held at the 'Centre' to cover the cost of interest payments associated with RRI borrowing.

There is also £23.4 million of Ringfenced Resource DEL budget held at the 'Centre'. It is important to recognise that this is non-cash budget that is ringfenced by HM Treasury and can only be used to cover depreciation and impairment costs.

There is also £0.3 million of Capital DEL and £5.9 million of ring-fenced Financial Transactions Capital remaining unallocated at the 'Centre'. The Executive has agreed to carry forward this funding into the next financial year.

Social Clauses

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the implementation of the Programme for Government 2011-15 target for all public contracts to contain social clauses.

(AQO 5548/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Both of the key milestones in this Programme for Government (PfG) target have been achieved. The Procurement Board Strategic Plan for 2012 -2015 has been modified to include the need for departments to set targets for the inclusion of social clauses in contracts. Those departments which have set targets are reporting against them and progress in respect of 2013-2014 will be presented to the Procurement Board at its next meeting in June 2014. Initial progress has been slow but is improving.

A Procurement Guidance Note 'Integrating Social Considerations into Contracts' was published in November 2013. The publication of this guidance will assist both departments and practitioners

working to meet the PfG commitment. Delivery of this milestone was delayed significantly and only progressed when I intervened personally and wrote to Ministers. Whilst the guidance received majority support some departments chose not to endorse it.

The Procurement Board has also looked at the approach on social clauses adopted in Scotland and Wales. As a result it has now broadened its definition to include wider community benefits, all of which have a positive impact on local people and communities. Community benefits include items such as prompt payment, fair dealing, recycling and reuse of materials and facilities, all of which have a positive social impact.

Public Sector Reform

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the timeline for public sector reform.

(AQO 5549/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Public Sector Reform Division (PSRD) which is embedded within the newly established Strategic Policy and Reform (SPAR) Directorate has been building the essential capacity to progress public sector reform.

PSRD includes the work activity of PEDU, Performance and Efficiency Unit but it is also developing a range of reform tools to support Departments in different and more diverse roles.

The initial team comprises staff from several departments, including economists, statisticians, programme managers, policy designers and those with operational delivery expertise

To ensure a joined-up approach across the civil service, I have also amalgamated DFP's Business Consultancy Services (BCS) to sit within the PSRD management structure

I have recently written to Ministerial colleagues setting out at high level how the new PSRD has the potential to assist the work of Ministers across the Executive and I have a series of bilateral meetings starting shortly to discuss with my Ministerial colleagues how to maximise the value of this important resource.

European Structural Funds

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions he has had with the European Commission on maximising the drawdown of European Structural funds.

(AQO 5551/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I have not had discussions with the European Commission on this subject.

Public Sector Reform

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on his public sector reform programme.

(AQO 5552/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Public Sector Reform Division (PSRD) which is embedded within the newly established Strategic Policy and Reform (SPAR) Directorate has been building the essential capacity to progress public sector reform.

PSRD includes the work activity of PEDU, Performance and Efficiency Unit but it is also developing a range of reform tools to support Departments in different and more diverse roles.

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To ensure a joined-up approach across the civil service, I have also amalgamated DFP's Business Consultancy Services (BCS) to sit within the PSRD management structure

I have recently written to Ministerial colleagues setting out at high level how the new PSRD has the potential to assist the work of Ministers across the Executive and I have a series of bilateral meetings starting shortly to discuss with my Ministerial colleagues how to maximise the value of this important resource.

Infrastructure Investment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how his Department can work with HM Treasury to increase investment in infrastructure.

(AQO 5553/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I recently hosted a seminar with Lord Deighton, the Commercial Secretary to the Treasury, in the Titanic Quarter to promote UK Government support for increasing private sector investment in local infrastructure.

One of the key issues highlighted at this seminar was the opportunity for local business to access UK wide initiatives, such as the Infrastructure Guarantee Scheme. This scheme can assist where projects are stalled due to a lack of private finance.

It is critically important that all sectors within Northern Ireland make full use of this scheme, if at all feasible. There may be opportunities within our private sector companies, our utilities or local government to access the Infrastructure Guarantee Scheme to unblock key infrastructure projects.

In addition I am working with HM Treasury to ensure that the capital available to us can be maximised through Financial Transactions Capital to our private sector and RRI Borrowing schemes including maximising the additional borrowing available under the "Together: Building a United Community" banner.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the impact of the elimination of Air Passenger Duty on long haul flights since 1 January 2013.

(AQO 5554/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Executive's decision to devolve and eliminate Air Passenger Duty on long haul flights effective from 1st January 2013 has enabled Northern Ireland to secure our only transatlantic air service between Belfast and New York.

Furthermore I believe the elimination of this tax will also make Northern Ireland more attractive to those airlines who may be considering the development of additional long haul routes.

Measurement of Well-Being

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what measures his Department is taking in relation to the measurement of wellbeing.

(AQO 5555/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: As an initial step, I have asked NISRA officials to draw together the Northern Ireland data which has been input to the UK Measuring National Wellbeing Wheel of measures. This work has been progressing well and will be a useful addition in assessing the outcomes of public policy.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Neuromuscular Nurse for Adults

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the business case for a neuromuscular nurse for adults.

(AQW 30086/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): I am advised that the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust was unable to identify the necessary resources to recruit a neuromuscular nurse specialist post for adults.

My officials will raise this matter directly with the Health and Social Care Board.

Prisoners: Medication

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why prisoners are permitted to be in charge of controlled prescribed drugs when patients in hospitals are not.

(AQW 30384/11-15)

Mr Poots: Medicines are prescribed by GPs or other medical practitioners in line with national guidelines on prescribing and based on the practitioner's clinical judgement.

Prisoners are not permitted to be in charge of controlled prescribed drugs. All controlled drugs are held centrally in the healthcare department of each prison and administered as supervised swallow by healthcare staff.

Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland: Report on a Death

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the report by the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland on the death of Mr D, given the circumstances of his condition and the high level of medication identified, including controlled drugs, and being assessed as vulnerable, why he was not immediately placed in healthcare, where he may have been monitored more closely in respect of his condition, his medication and medical treatment, including changing a dressing within the stipulated time frame.

(AQW 30385/11-15)

Mr Poots: When in prison, Mr D was not located in the healthcare department as he was offered a cell in Braid House used to accommodate people with disabilities which was deemed suitable to meet his needs. The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust) are able to offer a nursing and medical service on a daily basis in each house location (in this case Braid House) which can comprehensively facilitate the complex needs of patients, including health issues similar to those of Mr D.

The Trust wholly accepts that it has learned lessons in relation to the care afforded to Mr D and can confirm that robust action has been taken to address the short-comings identified. Steps have been taken in relation to information gathering and accessing community equipment so that care can be delivered in a more timely way in future. For example, full access to the electronic care record (ECR) has been implemented and the process of managing, dispensing and assessing the suitability for in-possession medication has changed. Also in respect of wound management, training and access to specialist nursing staff has now been made available to all staff undertaking this programme of care. These system changes are designed to deliver safe and effective care and are subject to ongoing audit to monitor compliance with agreed standards.

Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland: Report on a Death

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the Prisoner Ombudsman report into the death of Mr D, specifically page 37 and referring to comments made by the

nurse who carried out the risk assessment on permitting him to be in charge of his own medication, whether it is standard procedure to take prisoners replies in such assessments at face value.

(AQW 30420/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust accepts the Prisoner Ombudsman's findings that some care fell below an acceptable standard on this occasion due to lack of community GP medical information and because of this there may have been a reliance on the information provided by Mr D.

However, since the death of Mr D, significant improvements have been made in relation to accessing prisoners' medical information. Healthcare staff now have access to community electronic care records (ECRs) which greatly minimises the risk of missing important information held by GPs. Where a prisoner is not registered with a GP, present symptoms on committal are managed immediately and a comprehensive health assessment follows at the next GP committal clinic.

Medicines are prescribed by GPs or other medical practitioners in line with national guidelines on prescribing and based on the practitioner's clinical judgement. The Trust has made significant efforts to improve medicines management through:

- the appointment of a lead pharmacist for prison healthcare;
- the appointment of a clinical lead for primary care issues, including medicines management;
- having trained existing staff in a wider range of pharmacy duties;
- having appointed specialist addiction nurses;
- putting in place specialist substance misuse programmes; and
- having developed a substitute prescribing programme.

Businesses and Agencies for Locum Doctors and Nurses

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many small businesses and agencies for locum doctors and nurses have had to wait more than the recommended 10 days for payment from each Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30442/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is not possible to provide this information as it could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

International Review of Children's Heart Surgery

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the personnel appointed to the International Review of Children's Heart Surgery.

(AQW 30470/11-15)

Mr Poots: Three experts have been appointed to the Expert Group 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 i.e. Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. They are:

- Dr John Mayer, Chair in Cardiovascular Studies at the Children's Hospital, Boston (to chair the Expert Group);
- Dr Adrian Moran, Consultant Cardiologist from the Maine Medical Centre, USA, and fellow of the American Academy of Paediatrics and the American College of Cardiology;
- Dr John Sinclair, Consultant Paediatric Cardiac Anaesthetist and Intensivist at Yorkhill Children's Hospital, Glasgow.

The Expert Group will be supported by specialist professional nursing representation and other expertise as required.

Private Law Family Cases

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost to each Health and Social Care Trust for their involvement in Private Law family cases, over the last three years.
(AQW 30476/11-15)

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

Western Health and Social Care Trust: Spending on 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 doctors' and consultants' fees and salaries in the Trust in each of those three years.

(AQW 30477/11-15)

Mr Poots: Western Health and Social Care Trust has provided the following table to illustrate the spend on locum 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 medical spend	9,343	7,288	7,028	5,948
Total medical Costs	56,215	56,763	51,698	42,104
Percentage	16.62%	12.84%	13.59%	14.13%

Charitable Donations

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the charitable donations received by each Health and Social Care Trust over the last five years; (ii) the specific area for which the donations have been made; and (iii) whether the funds have been allocated to the specified area and not used by the Trust for any other purpose other than that intended by the benefactor.

(AQW 30482/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- i Charitable donations received by each Health and Social Care Trust for the last 5 years are provided in the following table.

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
Trust	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Ambulance Service	1	2	-	1	3	0	2	0	1	0

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
Trust	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Western ⁽¹⁾	34	391	21	327	13	464	8	652	7	481
Southern	-	677	-	857	-	641	-	586	384	-
Northern	485	139	392	126	318	169	339	86	1,042	53
Sth Eastern	258	273	35	199	26	660	28	352	17	365
Belfast	203	1,655	154	1,528	191	900	131	1,179	259	1,509
	981	3,137	602	3,038	551	2,834	508	2,855	1,710	2,408

Notes: U: Unrestricted Funds; R: Restricted Funds; (1) Includes endowment

- ii. This information can only be provided at disproportionate cost.
- iii. All funds have been used by each Health and Social Care Trust as intended by the benefactor.

Finance Directors of the Health and Social Care Trusts do not have sole discretion in the use of charitable donations. It is for the Gifts and Endowments/Charitable Trust Fund Committee within Trusts to manage the internal disbursements. The committee ensures that charitable donations received by the Trust are appropriately managed, invested, expended and controlled, in a manner that is consistent with the purposes for which they were given and with the Trust's Standing Financial Instructions, Departmental guidance and legislation.

Neither the committee nor Finance Directors have discretion in the use of charitable donations that are gifted with conditions or for a specific purpose. All such funds are allocated to the area specified by the benefactor and are not used for any other purpose than that intended by the benefactor.

Charitable Donations

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Finance Directors of the Health and Social Care Trusts have any discretion in the use of charitable donations that are donated for a specific cause.

(AQW 30483/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- iv. Charitable donations received by each Health and Social Care Trust for the last 5 years are provided in the following table.

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
Trust	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Ambulance Service	1	2	-	1	3	0	2	0	1	0
Western ⁽¹⁾	34	391	21	327	13	464	8	652	7	481
Southern	-	677	-	857	-	641	-	586	384	-
Northern	485	139	392	126	318	169	339	86	1,042	53

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
Trust	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sth Eastern	258	273	35	199	26	660	28	352	17	365
Belfast	203	1,655	154	1,528	191	900	131	1,179	259	1,509
	981	3,137	602	3,038	551	2,834	508	2,855	1,710	2,408

Notes: U: Unrestricted Funds; R: Restricted Funds; (1) Includes endowment

v This information can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

vi. All funds have been used by each Health and Social Care Trust as intended by the benefactor.

Finance Directors of the Health and Social Care Trusts do not have sole discretion in the use of charitable donations. It is for the Gifts and Endowments/Charitable Trust Fund Committee within Trusts to manage the internal disbursements. The committee ensures that charitable donations received by the Trust are appropriately managed, invested, expended and controlled, in a manner that is consistent with the purposes for which they were given and with the Trust's Standing Financial Instructions, Departmental guidance and legislation.

Neither the committee nor Finance Directors have discretion in the use of charitable donations that are gifted with conditions or for a specific purpose. All such funds are allocated to the area specified by the benefactor and are not used for any other purpose than that intended by the benefactor.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Specialists

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) specialists are currently employed by the Health Service; (ii) how many people with ME travel outside Northern Ireland to receive treatment; and (iii) what proportion of patients travel outside Northern Ireland for treatment.

(AQW 30550/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board that while there are currently no designated specialists in ME/CFS in the HSC in Northern Ireland, it is working with HSC Trusts to establish a regional network of professionals with experience of working with ME/CFS patients.

The Health and Social Care Board has no record of any applications or approvals for patients with ME/CFS to travel outside NI for treatment.

Chronic Fatigue Clinic

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the care provided to patients by the Chronic Fatigue Clinic at the Belfast City Hospital.

(AQW 30551/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is currently no Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)/ME clinic in Belfast City Hospital, this ceased when the consultant who provided this on a special interest basis, retired.

The occupational therapy service is presently working through the treatment programmes for those patients previously referred. No new referrals have been received.

The Belfast Trust and the Health and Social Care Board are currently discussing how best to accommodate the demand for services.

STORM Assessments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what benefits are derived from STORM assessments.

(AQW 30581/11-15)

Mr Poots: Through delivery of its Training Action Plan (2012-2015), the Public Health Agency is supporting the capacity building elements of the Suicide Prevention and Promoting Mental Health Strategies. Courses are offered in a range of evidenced-based training programmes which include STORM assessment training.

Evidence shows that effective risk assessment is vitally important in caring for a person with suicidal ideation and /or displaying suicidal behavior. STORM training helps participants to develop the skills needed to effectively assess and manage a person at risk of suicide. This type of training is crucial for staff who deliver suicide prevention services.

Level 3 Fertility Treatment Services

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of couples, with at least one dependent child, who were referred to Level 3 Fertility Treatment Services since access criteria were adjusted in 2006; and what this number represents as a percentage of the total referrals.

(AQW 30595/11-15)

Mr Poots: Revised access criteria for publicly funded fertility treatment were introduced in 2006. The new criteria expanded the number of people eligible to access publicly funded services.

I have been advised by the Belfast HSC Trust that as access to fertility services is not determined by the number of dependent children a patient has, this information is not formally recorded, and, thus, cannot be provided.

Level 3 Fertility Treatment Services

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of women aged 38-39 years who were referred to Level 3 Fertility Treatment Services since access criteria were adjusted in 2006; and what this number represents as a percentage of the total referrals.

(AQW 30597/11-15)

Mr Poots: Revised access criteria for publicly funded fertility treatment were introduced in 2006. The new criteria expanded the number of people eligible to access publicly funded services, including increasing the upper age limit for female partners from 37 to 39.

The number of women aged 38-39 who were referred to level 3 Fertility Treatment Services, from October 2006 to the end of January 2014, was 552. This number represents 8.6% of the total referrals.

Radiology Services at the Downe Hospital

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 29545/11-15, whether the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, or his Department, has any plans to reduce radiology services at the Downe Hospital.

(AQW 30622/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised that the position remains the same as my previous answer and that no significant changes to other services in the Downe Hospital have resulted from the recent weekend closures of the Emergency Department. The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust will keep the impact of the changes on other services under regular review.

Bangor Minor Injuries Unit

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the reasons for the staff shortages at the Bangor Minor Injuries Unit; and when the Unit will re-open at weekends.
(AQW 30624/11-15)

Mr Poots: Due to the small number of staff working in the Bangor Community Hospital minor injuries unit and the potential for personal identification, it is not appropriate to detail the reasons, but they relate to vacancies and long term illness. The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is working to address the matter but is unable to confirm a date for resuming weekend opening at this time.

Royal Victoria Hospital Accident and Emergency Department

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of patients that attended the Royal Victoria Hospital Accident and Emergency Department, broken down by residents in each local council area, on each day from 22 to 27 November 2013.
(AQW 30626/11-15)

Mr Poots: Between 22nd and 27th November 2013, there were 1,254 attendances at the Royal Victoria emergency care department, similar to the number who attended during the same period in 2012 (1,287). Information on the number of attendances at the Royal Victoria emergency care department, during each period is detailed in Table 1 (22nd – 27th November 2013) and Table 2 (22nd – 27th November 2012) for each day by local council area.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF ATTENDANCES AT THE ROYAL VICTORIA EMERGENCY CARE DEPARTMENT, DURING EACH DAY BY LOCAL COUNCIL AREA (22ND – 27TH NOVEMBER 2013)

Local Council Area ¹	22/11/2013	23/11/2013	24/11/2013	25/11/2013	26/11/2013	27/11/2013	Total
Antrim	2	4	1	5	1	4	17
Ards	1	3		1	3	1	9
Armagh	1	1		1	1	1	5
Ballymena	2			3	1	3	9
Ballymoney							0
Banbridge	1	1	1	3	2	1	9
Belfast	115	110	109	124	141	118	717
Carrickfergus	8	7	5	12	13	6	51
Castlereagh	12	13	14	18	15	19	91
Coleraine				1			1
Cookstown		1					1
Craigavon		2	1	2		1	6
Derry		1		1		1	3
Down	4	2	3	7	5	5	26
Dungannon			1			1	2

Local Council Area¹	22/11/2013	23/11/2013	24/11/2013	25/11/2013	26/11/2013	27/11/2013	Total
Fermanagh	1	3		3	1		8
Larne	2	3	4	2	6	1	18
Limavady			1	1			2
Lisburn	37	23	33	40	29	26	188
Magherafelt	1	1	1				3
Moyle		1		1			2
Newry & Mourne	1	3				2	6
Newtownabbey	7	8	11	17	12	7	62
North Down		2	4		5	4	15
Omagh		1			2		3
Strabane							0
Northern Ireland	195	190	189	242	237	201	1,254

Source: Symphony

1 Local Council Area has been derived from the patients home postcode.

Table 2: Number of Attendances at the Royal Victoria Emergency Care Department, during each Day by Local Council Area (22nd – 27th November 2012)

Local Council Area¹	22/11/2012	23/11/2012	24/11/2012	25/11/2012	26/11/2012	27/11/2012	Total
Antrim	2	4	5	7	3	2	23
Ards				2		1	3
Armagh	1			1	1		3
Ballymena	1	1	2		5	4	13
Ballymoney					4		4
Banbridge		3	4	3	2		12
Belfast	109	146	96	110	146	124	731
Carrickfergus	5	5	6	1	5	3	25
Castlereagh	9	9	14	2	15	11	60
Coleraine						2	2
Cookstown		3				2	5

Local Council Area¹	22/11/2012	23/11/2012	24/11/2012	25/11/2012	26/11/2012	27/11/2012	Total
Craigavon	2	3	1			2	8
Derry		1			1		2
Down	4	4	1	6	7	6	28
Dungannon	3	1		1	3	2	10
Fermanagh	1	2	1	1		1	6
Larne	3		1	4	4	5	17
Limavady		1		1	1	1	4
Lisburn	30	27	33	33	45	44	212
Magherafelt	2		1			2	5
Moyle		1				2	3
Newry & Mourne	2	2	2	2	4	6	18
Newtownabbey	15	16	9	6	16	14	76
North Down	2	3	2	2	3	2	14
Omagh	1					1	2
Strabane		1					1
Northern Ireland	192	233	178	182	265	237	1,287

Source: Symphony

1 Local Council Area has been derived from the patients home postcode.

People Treated for Drug Abuse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people were treated for drug abuse, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30639/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available. The following table provides information on the number of people presenting to services with problem drug misuse for the first time or the first time in six months.

Number of people presenting to services with problem drug misuse 2008/09-2012/13

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
1,755	2,008	2,593	2,999	2,824

Note: A small number of clients may be included more than once in any year.

Private and Public Nursing Home Provision in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust Area

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the geographical spread for private and public nursing home provision in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area.
(AQW 30648/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no statutory nursing homes and 68 independent nursing homes located across the Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust area. Further information on exact location of these homes can be accessed on the RQIA website via the link below link:

http://www.rqia.org.uk/what_we_do/registration__inspection_and_reviews/service_provider_directory.cfm

Residents in Private and Public Nursing Homes

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of residents in (i) private; and (ii) public nursing homes in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area.
(AQW 30649/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available centrally and was therefore requested from the Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. The information provided can be found in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF RESIDENTS AS AT 7TH FEBRUARY 2014, BY TYPE OF NURSING HOME.

Northern HSC Trust	Private Nursing Homes	Public Nursing Homes
No. of Residents	2,070	0

Mechanism for Allocating Care Home Places

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the mechanism for allocating care home places in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area.
(AQW 30650/11-15)

Mr Poots: The allocation of care home placements is based on individual choice and decided on a case by case basis. The Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust assesses an individual's care needs and identifies the level of care and support required to suitably meet their needs. The individual and their families are then given a list of appropriate homes with current vacancy levels from which, the individual makes their preferred choice. The Trust then makes arrangements for the individual to be placed in the home of their choice.

Mechanism for Allocating Care Home Places

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether care home places are allocated on an equitable basis between those providing residential care in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area.
(AQW 30651/11-15)

Mr Poots: The allocation of care home placements is based on individual choice and decided on a case by case basis. The Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust assesses an individual's care needs and identifies the level of care and support required to suitably meet their needs. The individual and their families are then given a list of appropriate homes with current vacancy levels from which, the individual makes their preferred choice. The Trust then makes arrangements for the individual to be placed in the home of their choice.

Recently Marketed Product for Arthritis: Research

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether research has been completed on the benefits of a recently marketed over the counter product for arthritis that includes phospholipid gel.

(AQW 30655/11-15)

Mr Poots: Over the counter medical devices that include phospholipid must meet the essential requirements of the Medical Device Regulations (2002) which include clinical trials as appropriate. These trials are used to confirm its effectiveness, monitor side effects, compare it to commonly used treatments, and collect information that will allow the drug or treatment to be used safely. The published clinical data from the trials indicated that the product is effective in the treatment of osteoarthritis with a favourable safety profile.

Adults Diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the support services to be put in place for adults with an autistic spectrum disorder diagnosis; and (ii) who will deliver these services; and (iii) what funding will be made available to each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 30663/11-15)

Mr Poots: Each Health and Social Care Trust is in the process of developing autism-specific services for adults. This follows on from the considerable investment provided to develop child and adolescent autism services following the Independent Review of Autism Services in 2008.

- (i) Services for adults with an autism diagnosis are based on individual assessed needs. Support services for adults can be provided on a one-to-one basis and / or within a group format. A pilot Adult Autism Advice Service was launched in the Northern HSC Trust area in January 2014.
- (ii) Trusts directly provide these intervention and support services alongside specific voluntary sector providers (i.e. arranged/delivered as part of service level agreements). The Adult Autism Advice Service is a cross-sectoral multi-agency initiative.
- (iii) Additional funding is being provided to Trusts to develop adult-specific services over the 2013/14 to 2014/15 period. In 2013/14, £250k was provided to HSC Trusts. While still to be confirmed, an identical amount is scheduled to be allocated in 2014/15, making a total allocation of £500k, recurrent.

Adults Diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why all Health and Social Care Trusts are reassessing adults who have already been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder, given the current situation whereby different Trusts are at different stages of programme development.

(AQW 30664/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts are not reassessing adults who have accessed the Adult Autism Service with a diagnosis that is in line with the Adult Autism Care Pathway.

Reassessment of diagnosis is not a frequent occurrence whereas re-appraisal of an individual's unique needs is a continuing process, as the needs of an individual with an autism spectrum condition can change over time. Young people moving from children's to adult services may require a re-assessment of needs to determine the most appropriate services within an 'adult services' context.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder: Second Appointments

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how long it takes each Health and Social Care Trust area for a second appointment following an initial assessment for autistic spectrum disorder, which will have taken place within thirteen weeks under the children's care pathway.
(AQW 30665/11-15)

Mr Poots: In line with Ministerial access standards, HSCB currently monitors the waiting times from the point that a child/young person is referred for assessment to the commencement of the first assessment – this should occur within thirteen weeks. The HSCB does not currently monitor the time from the first appointment to second stage appointments.

Following initial appointment, the HSCB expects Trusts to ensure clear explanations are given to children and their families about the subsequent steps in their care.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis: Further Services

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in instances where children and adults use a private clinician for initial Autistic Spectrum Disorder diagnosis, whether they will be offered further services within their local Health and Social Care Trust area.
(AQW 30666/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given the potential complexities involved, it is incumbent upon HSC Trusts to ensure that an apparent diagnosis of autism made within the independent sector has followed a high standard of practice. It is therefore appropriate for Trust diagnosticians to assure themselves that the diagnostic process reflects best practice.

The regional 'Six Steps of Autism Care' Childrens Pathway and the 'Adult Autism Care Pathway' notes that where a person presents with a diagnosis from an independent sector diagnostician or has a historic diagnosis, the diagnosis should be in keeping with the regional autism care pathway diagnostic standards as set out in the care pathways. Where this is not the case a referral to the specialist diagnostic team will follow. Any services offered will be based upon an assessment of need.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder: Understanding the Needs of Children Northern Ireland Assessment

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether each child who is diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder also has an Understanding the Needs of Children Northern Ireland assessment; and to detail give the number who have received each, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.
(AQW 30667/11-15)

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

Bills: Consultancy Fees

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the consultancy fees associated with the development of the (i) Tobacco Retailers Bill; (ii) Food Hygiene Rating Bill; and (iii) Mental Capacity (Health, Welfare and Finance) Bill.
(AQW 30669/11-15)

Mr Poots: Consultancy fees have not been incurred in relation to the development of the (i) Tobacco Retailers Bill; (ii) Food Hygiene Rating Bill; and (iii) Mental Capacity (Health, Welfare and Finance) Bill.

Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Sufferers

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total number of diagnosed complex post-traumatic stress disorder sufferers in 2013.

(AQW 30670/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not collected centrally and was requested from the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. The response from each HSC Trust is listed below:

Belfast HSC Trust:

During 2013, 11 patients were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. Complex cases cannot be identified.

Northern HSC Trust:

The number of patients diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder is not available. However, in 2013, 341 referrals were accepted into the Psychological Therapy Service which related to post traumatic stress disorder, trauma and childhood trauma, some of which may be complex cases.

South Eastern HSC Trust:

In 2013, 5 patients were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, 4 of which had a primary diagnosis and 1 had a secondary diagnosis. Information on complex cases could not be provided.

Southern HSC Trust:

Information on the number of patients diagnosed with complex post traumatic stress disorder cannot be obtained from Trust information systems.

Western HSC Trust:

During 2013, 3 patients were discharged from acute wards with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, 1 of which had a primary diagnosis and 2 had a secondary diagnosis. The provision of information on complex cases would require a manual trawl through individual patient records.

Nurses: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any training will be provided to frontline nurses to equip them to identify post-traumatic stress disorder.

(AQW 30672/11-15)

Mr Poots: Qualified nursing staff in all settings apply holistic approaches to assessment of need, including psychological and emotional need, and where signs and symptoms are suggestive of any psychological/anxiety/emotional disorder, nursing staff will refer to more specialist services for diagnosis and intervention.

If specific training is required for nursing staff on any issue, in any setting, there is a very clear and robust process of education commissioning in place in Northern Ireland to identify such training needs and to ensure its delivery.

Services: Addiction, Mental Health and Death by Suicide

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the services available in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area that specifically deal with addiction, mental health and death by suicide; and (ii) the groups dealing with these issues that are funded by his Department.

(AQW 30687/11-15)

Mr Poots:

Details on alcohol and drug early intervention and treatment services commissioned by the Western Trust and the Public Health Agency (PHA) are available through the weblink: http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/DrugsAlcohol_Directory_Western_12_12.pdf

(i) [//www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/DrugsAlcohol_Directory_Western_12_12.pdf](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/DrugsAlcohol_Directory_Western_12_12.pdf)

The following mental health services are available in the WHSCT area: the primary mental health care service; multi-disciplinary community-based mental health and home treatment services for adults, and for children and adolescents; psychological therapies; emergency psychiatric support for people in crisis; inpatient treatment for people who are acutely unwell; specialist help for people with eating disorders; and specialist help for people with significant mental health problems within criminal justice.

Suicide prevention and mental health promotion services include: Lifeline; Card Before You Leave; bereavement support; self-harm counselling and support; training for “community gatekeepers” and for HSC staff; counselling and complementary therapies; crisis response; the community grants programme; and self-help materials.

(ii) The attached tables list the groups dealing with these issues, in the WHSCT area, which receive funding from my Department.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL SERVICES FUNDED THROUGH THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY AND DELIVERED BY EXTERNAL PROVIDERS:

Organisation	Programme
Breakthru	Breakthru Project
Divert- Dove House	DIVERT Project
Divert- Dove House	DIVERT Hidden Harm Project
Daisy West	11-17 Youth Counselling/Support
Daisy West	18-25 Youth Counselling/Support
Foyle Haven	Chronic Drinkers Support
Arc Healthy Living Centre	Chronic Drinkers Support - Solace
Derry Healthy Cities	CLEAR Standards D+A Element
Arc Healthy Living Centre	Support Legacy Project-ARC The Edge
Ferm New Horizons	Lifeskills Project-Fermanagh New Horizons
Divert- Dove House	Alcohol + Pregnancy leaflets
Divert- Dove House	Divert / Hidden Harm Training
FASA	FASA Leaflets - Alcohol and You
Arc Healthy Living Centre	Hidden Harm Service Omagh / Fermanagh
Derry Healthy Cities	Strengthening Families

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL SERVICES FUNDED THROUGH THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY AND DELIVERED BY THE WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST:

Organisation	Programme
Western HSCT	CAMHS Service
Western HSCT	Drugs & Alcohol Community Support

Organisation	Programme
Western HSCT	Drugs & Alcohol Training Programme

MENTAL HEALTH VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FUNDED BY DHSSPS AND WHICH DELIVER SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITHIN THE WHSCT AREA

Organisation	Organisation
Action Mental Health	Lighthouse Ltd
ADD-NI	MindWise
Aware Defeat Depression	NIAMH
CAUSE for Mental Health	The Samaritans
Cruse in Northern Ireland	Threshold
Eating Disorders Association	

SUICIDE PREVENTION/MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION GROUPS FUNDED THROUGH THE PHA

Organisation	Programme
Youthlife	Castlederg Outreach Support Service
Derry Healthy Cities	CLEAR Core Costs + Gatekeeper Training
Derry Healthy Cities	CLEAR Small Grants ** See Full List below
Foyle Search and Rescue	Crisis Response + Postvention Foyle Search & Rescue
Limavady Borough Council	Limavady Neighbourhood Support Programme Signed
Derry Healthy Cities	CLEAR Standards Toolkit
Zest	SHINE Project
AWARE	Lifeskills + Mood Matters
Derry Healthy Cities	CLEAR Process Outcome Evaluation Pilot + Hands that Talk
Dry Arch Centre	Self Harm Training DVD
Youth Action NI	Right Here Fermanagh
Youthlife	Youthlife Headstart
Foyle Search + Rescue	Foyle Search + Rescue Equipment
Dennett Interchange	Dennett Interchange Health & Wellbeing Plans
Aware Defeat Depression	Aware Defeat Depression Additional Courses

**** CLEAR SMALL GRANTS FUNDED THROUGH THE PHA IN 2013/2014**

Delivery Organisation	Project
Aisling Centre	Pilot therapy group for those experiencing emotional or mental health problems

Delivery Organisation	Project
ARC Healthy Living Centre	SOLACE Creative Crafts Programme for 18-75 year old heavy drinkers and substance abusers
Aurora	Caring Together and Making a Difference - Counselling and complementary therapies
Beam Creative Network	Impact of Cyber Bullying - Play entitled the "Impact of Bullying" to raise young people's awareness of the impact that bullying can have on mental health and emotional wellbeing
C.A.L.M.S.	L.E.A.P.S. - Stress Awareness Clinics for 15 to 26 year olds. Counselling, life coaching, complementary therapy, creative workshops, & physical activity workshops
Clooney Estates Residents Association	Positive parenting, complimentary therapy, stress management, "Mood Matters" programme, "Drink Think" workshops, "Grow Your Own" workshops, healthy eating, & welfare rights.
Cunamh	Strong communities – counselling & complementary therapies for people with depression
Derg Valley Care & Healthy Living Centre	Working Together for Mental Health Gains (18-30 year olds) - mental health awareness raising, physical exercise, education and coping mechanisms, Safetalk
Derry Well Women	Complimentary therapy, CBT, & group therapy for: women living with eating disorders; LGBT women; & women experiencing post natal depression.
Erne East Community Partnership Ltd	Limiting Alcohol Consequences - drop-in centre activities & diversionary programme for young people.
EYEspeak	There IS Light - Creative writing & activity workshops for adults who are blind or partially sighted
Fermanagh CAB	Advice for Health - mental health advice & advocacy, including representation at Disability Appeal Tribunals, representation at Social Security appeals, & information seminars
Fermanagh Women's Aid	Journey to Freedom and My Life, My Choice
Hands that Talk	Keep fit, Keep Well Project – Exercise, social activities, relaxation therapy, life coaching, and mental health awareness for deaf people aged from 30 to 60.
Infertility Network UK	Think Positive - depression awareness, positive relationships workshops, yoga, nutrition awareness for people of child bearing age (usually 18-45).

Delivery Organisation	Project
Koram Centre	Mind Fitness – mental fitness; therapy; and counselling for males.
LAST Sure Start	Emotional health & wellbeing training, awareness & self help for expecting parents and parents of children up to the age of 4.
L'Derry Citizen's Advice Bureau	Advice For Health - Routes out of financial stress
Limavady Active Living Partnership	Limavady Adrenaline Dudes Project. Information session on coping mechanisms and stress management techniques; awareness raising for economically inactive young males (with mental health problems) on drugs, alcohol nutrition and healthy lifestyles, outdoor pursuits activities.
Lincoln Courts Youth & Community Association	Training for young people in alcohol & drug awareness, depression awareness, suicide awareness, and lifeskills.
Men's Action Network	Mental fitness and emotional resilience counselling for "hard to reach" males aged 18 to 45.
Nexus	Emotional health and wellbeing counselling - specialist sexual violence counselling sessions for over 16s who have been traumatised by sexual abuse or violence
Northwest Counselling	Beyond Depression – Provision of volunteer counselling for clients referred by local GPs in Limavady, Claudy & Eglinton.
Roe Valley Residents Assoc. & Bovalley Com Assoc.	The Mindfulness Project
Rosewood Beacon Day Support	Wellbeing in the West - Mental Health and Wellbeing information sessions & positive steps training for adults aged 18 to 65 who have severe and enduring mental ill health.
Strathfoyle Women's Activity Group Ltd	Promoting Positive Mental Health - courses for young women aged 16 to 30
SureStart Edenballymore	Food & Mood Training Programme for parents/ carers
The Conservation Volunteers	Dig-'in' - Derry City - task days for men aged 18 to 35.
The Old Library Trust	Step Up to Life - physical activity, lifestyle coaching and mentoring programme for: adults living in areas of high deprivation who are living with self-harm, suicide, poor mental and emotional health, and drug and alcohol addictions.
The Playhouse	Recovery through Creativity project for adults with severe and enduring mental illness.

Delivery Organisation	Project
The Rainbow Project	Personal development programme for transgender people; production of guide for health professionals in the Western Trust on meeting the needs of LGB&T people, alcohol and drug misuse workshops and group work, counselling sessions for gay and bisexual men.
The Villages Together	Mind Fitness - Mind fitness workshops, wellbeing therapy, & counselling for males.
Youthlife	Generic counselling service to children and young people who are experiencing mental health difficulties and are engaging in self-harm.

PHA FUNDED RESOURCES, PROGRAMMES, AND SERVICES DELIVERED BY THE WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST:

Resource / Programme / Service

- Suicide Strategy Liaison Officer
- Self Harm Acute Support Staff
- SP Health Improvement Training, Resources & Bereavement Support
- Training & Advisory Group (TAG)
- Koram Centre / Ashling Centre In-Year Pressures
- WHSCT Mental Health Training + Support
- WHSCT Lifeskills Programme
- North West Counselling Service Pressures
- Living Sculpture Scoping Paper

Autism: Applied Behaviour Analysis Based Treatment

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether (i) his Department has met with, and is communicating with, Autism Speaks in the United States; and (ii) is aware of the evidence for Applied Behaviour Analysis based interventions that has resulted in the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care) endorsing and covering behavioural health treatments and 34 States mandating health insurance companies to pay for Applied Behaviour Analysis based treatment.

(AQW 30710/11-15)

Mr Poots: I accepted an invitation to attend an informal visit at Autism Speaks headquarters in New York in November 2013, as it coincided with a planned conference I was attending. Autism Speaks have since initiated contact with my officials to arrange a further meeting to learn more about the recently launched Autism Strategy and explore potential opportunities for collaboration moving forward. My officials were unable to facilitate such a meeting but forwarded a copy of the Autism Strategy (2013 – 2020) and Action Plan (2013 – 2016) for information.

I am aware of the Affordable Care Act in the United States, however in Northern Ireland we provide free healthcare to service users which is based on their individual assessed needs.

January Monitoring Round: Hospital Funding

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the £30m allocated to his Department in the January Monitoring Round, to detail (i) the hospitals that received funding from the allocation; (ii) the amount of funding each hospital received; and (iii) the purpose for which the funding was awarded.

(AQW 30711/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) All of the HSC Trusts, with the exception of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Trust, will receive funding from the allocation.
- (ii) As the extent of the pressures facing each Trust is different, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and Local Commissioning Groups (LCGs) have been working with Trusts to ensure that the amount of funding each Trust receives will be focused on helping to meet local priorities and service demands in each of the Trust areas.
- (iii) Trusts have been experiencing increasing pressures and demands across a number of areas. As a result of these pressures, £7m will be allocated to fund Safety and Quality of Services, £5m will be allocated to Domiciliary Care, £5m will be allocated to Children's Services, £7m will be directed to fund Unscheduled Care/winter pressures and £6m will be allocated towards funding Elective Care.

Minor Injuries Units in Armagh and Dungannon

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients attended the minor injuries units in (i) Armagh; and (ii) Dungannon, in each month of the last two years. (AQW 30712/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the number of attendances (new and unplanned reviews) at (i) Armagh and (ii) South Tyrone Minor Injury Units.

Information on the number of new and unplanned review attendances at emergency care departments is published on a monthly basis, and is available view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-monthly_waiting_times.htm

GP Surgeries in the Lurgan Area

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the suitability of GP surgeries in the Lurgan area. (AQW 30713/11-15)

Mr Poots: I cannot provide an assessment of the suitability of GP surgeries in the Lurgan area as they have not been subject to any recent assessment by the HSCB.

However, work is underway as part of a regional programme to develop a 'hub' and 'spoke' model to facilitate the implementation of Transforming Your Care. I understand that HSCB officers have met with GP practices from the Lurgan locality to discuss the Primary Care Infrastructure Development programme and seek their initial views on the service model and associated infrastructure requirements to deliver the challenges set out in TYC. The HSCB and the Local Commissioning Group will engage further with the GP practices in the Lurgan locality in due course in relation to the potential development of a 'hub' in Lurgan.

The priorities identified under the infrastructure programme will have to be considered together with the overall regional priorities within the capital programme and the availability of both capital and revenue funding.

Family of Registered Organ Donor: Veto

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the next of kin or family of a registered organ donor can veto the organ donation. (AQW 30715/11-15)

Mr Poots: Families and next of kin do not have the legal right to veto or overrule the wishes of a patient who is known to have expressed a wish to donate, for example if they were registered on the organ donor register or expressed a wish to donate verbally or in writing and the patient's wish was known at the time of potential donation; however, in practice, donation is unlikely to proceed against the family's wishes.

In most cases, families will agree to donation if they know that was their loved one's wish; the consent rate is 88% compared with 46%, where the deceased wishes were unknown. It is therefore vitally important that those who wish to donate their organs tell their family about their wishes.

Prisoners: Medication

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant AQW 30298/11-15, given there has been a lack of personal responsibility in multiple instances, whether forced or deliberate, and that one of the main purposes of imprisonment is to remove people from the

community, if there any justification for allowing prisoners to be in charge of their own medication in light of the drugs circumstances which exists in prisons.

(AQW 30721/11-15)

Mr Poots: Many people committed to prison have ongoing health needs and chronic conditions which require them to receive medication.

All those committed to prison who require medicine are subject to an in-possession medication assessment. This assessment considers the person's ability to manage their own medication, their past medical history and the type of medication being prescribed. This assessment will consider whether or not they are able to manage their own medication.

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is aware that, unfortunately, as is the case in the wider community, there is the potential for abuse of prescribed medication. Where an individual is assessed as not being able to manage their medicine safely, they do not receive it in-possession.

In order to address the problem of medication being traded or abused, the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is rolling out arrangements for issuing a high risk group of medications on a "supervised swallow" basis. This is already in place in Magilligan and Hydebank Wood and progress towards the target is ongoing in Maghaberry.

One of the objectives in providing healthcare within prisons is to assist people in custody to be independent in all aspects of daily living so that a successful reintegration to the community may be achieved. There is therefore a fine balance between promoting independence and deskillling individuals by issuing all of their medication on a supervised basis.

Pulse Oximetry Screening for New Born Babies

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce Pulse Oximetry screening for new born babies in maternity hospitals.

(AQW 30732/11-15)

Mr Poots: In 2013, the National Screening Committee (NSC) issued for consultation a review of the evidence on adding pulse oximetry to the screening pathway to detect congenital heart disease (CHD) in newborns. The consultation closed in December 2013. It is anticipated that the outcome of the consultation will be discussed at the next NSC meeting to be held on 12th March 2014 and a way forward agreed.

No policy decision will be taken on whether to introduce pulse oximetry screening for new born babies in maternity hospitals until the advice from the NSC is considered carefully.

Pinewood Residential Care Home: No Admissions Policy

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the Northern Health and Social Care Trust will lift its no admissions policy for Pinewood Residential Care Home.

(AQW 30754/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 29th November 2013, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) launched the consultation document "Making Choices: Meeting the Current and Future Needs of Older People". The consultation, which will run until 7th March 2014, seeks views on draft criteria which, it is proposed, will be used by Trusts to assess statutory residential homes for older people.

The Regional Residential Home Planning Group was asked by the HSCB to carry out a review of the non-admissions policies across a number of Health and Social Care Trusts in January 2014. A report on this Review is expected to be considered at a public meeting of the Health and Social Care Board in March 2014. It is unlikely, however, that the admissions policy will be formally revisited until the first stage of the consultation process has concluded and the findings analysed.

Pinewood Residential Care Home

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently residing in Pinewood Residential Care Home in (i) residential; (ii) respite; and (iii) rehabilitation care; and how many showers and baths are fit for use.

(AQW 30755/11-15)

Mr Poots: Currently there are 9 permanent residents in Pinewood with a further 2 receiving respite care and 12 clients receiving rehabilitation.

There are 2 shower facilities at present, one for residents requiring assistance from staff while the other is being adapted for the same purpose. There is one bath which is presently being adapted to facilitate residents who require assistance.

Health Authorities: Information on Hospital Delays

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, when asked in an oral enquiry in the Assembly on 10 February 2014, why he did not convey the information held by the health authorities on whether hospital delays had contributed to any deaths; and for how long he has held the information relating to this situation.

(AQW 30787/11-15)

Mr Poots: When I made my oral statement in the Assembly on 10 February 2014 concerning the review by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority of the Royal Victoria Hospital's emergency department I was not aware of the information held by the health authorities on whether hospital delays had contributed to any deaths.

The information about these five possible cases only became available to my Department on Tuesday 11 February.

Royal Army Medical Corps: Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will consider requesting support from the Royal Army Medical Corps based in Belfast to help alleviate shortages in staffing levels in hospital Accident and Emergency Departments.

(AQW 30812/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland have emergency and business continuity plans in place which can be put into operation if required. If I considered the situation in Accident and Emergency Departments required support from organisations outside the health and social care sector I would make the necessary approaches.

A request for RAMC support would only be made in the case of a national disaster.

Causeway Hospital: Urology Department

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to outline the reasons for the eight month waiting list at the urology department of the Causeway Hospital; (ii) how many people are currently on the waiting list; and (iii) whether he will provide the additional resources needed to meet demand.

(AQW 30818/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has been experiencing difficulty in meeting demand for urological services at the Causeway Hospital. This has been due to the inability to fill a vacancy and long term sick leave within the surgical team. I am advised that due to confidentiality reasons, numbers of those patients waiting over eight months cannot be disclosed because of the small number, less than five, involved.

- (ii) The latest validated figures indicate that in the Northern HSC Trust at 30th September 2013, 31.3% (187 out of 598) of patients were waiting over 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in the urology specialty, with 64 (10.7%) waiting over 18 weeks. At 30th September 2013, 34.6% (214 out of 619) of patients were waiting over 13 weeks for inpatient admission in the urology specialty, with 36 (5.8%) waiting over 30 weeks.
- (iii) In recent weeks the position regarding the staff complement at the Northern HSC Trust has improved though full capacity has not yet been achieved. The HSC Board and the Trust are working closely together to resolve any difficulties in ensuring prompt access to urology services at the Causeway Hospital.

Free Eye Tests for People Diagnosed with Sarcoidosis

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any plans to provide free eye tests for people diagnosed with sarcoidosis.

(AQW 30834/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department has no plans to provide free eye tests for people diagnosed with sarcoidosis. Since the ocular complications of sarcoidosis are symptomatic, no preventative medications are indicated and, because effective treatments can be readily accessed in either primary or secondary care, the merit of extending a clinical exemption for free sight tests to this group could not be justified.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how (i) post-traumatic stress disorder; and (ii) complex post-traumatic stress disorder are currently diagnosed.

(AQW 30835/11-15)

Mr Poots: The diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a clinical decision and, like any clinical diagnosis, depends on certain symptoms/diagnostic criteria being present and clinicians would have various diagnostic guidelines.

In the case of PTSD generally there should be a history of significant trauma preceding the presence of typical symptoms such as:

- Re-experiencing flashbacks, nightmares, distressing intrusive images
- Emotional numbing and feeling detached from other people, lack ability to experience feelings.
- Avoidance of people, situations or circumstances that are associated with the trauma
- Hyperarousal with hypervigilance for threats, easily startled, irritable, lack sleep, poor concentration
- Associated depression, drug or alcohol misuse, unexplained physical symptoms.

PTSD can be viewed as complex where the symptoms are severe, long lasting, resistant to interventions and difficult to manage.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy Training Places

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total number of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy training places that were funded by his Department in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30836/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety does not directly fund any eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy training places. The Health and Social Care Trusts identify the need for EMDR training and secure its provision when required.

College of Emergency Medicine: Meetings

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 30391/11-15, to list the date of each meeting he has had with the College of Emergency Medicine since May 2011 on addressing staff shortages in emergency departments.

(AQW 30847/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have had one formal meeting with the College of Emergency Medicine on 4th February 2014 on addressing staff shortages in emergency departments. I have regular informal discussions with members and office bearers of the College to discuss all matters relating to emergency medicine.

People Living with a Diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are living with a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.

(AQW 30855/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of people living with a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis is not available. It is however well established that Northern Ireland has one of the highest incidences of MS in the world.

Admissions and individuals admitted to HSC Hospitals in Northern Ireland in 2012/13 where a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis was recorded are shown in the table below.

HSC Trust	Admissions	Individuals
Belfast	832	352
South Eastern	375	183
Northern	421	191
Southern	479	216
Western	397	162
Total	2,504	1,104

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

People with Multiple Sclerosis: Gilenya (Fingolimod) Treatment

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people with Multiple Sclerosis are receiving Gilenya (Fingolimod) treatment.

(AQW 30856/11-15)

Mr Poots: At 31st January 2014, there were 1,424 patients receiving treatment for Multiple Sclerosis, of which 12 patients were receiving Fingolimod treatment.

Royal Victoria Hospital: Deaths due to Serious Adverse Incidents

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how many deaths were referred to the coroner as a result of serious adverse incidents at the Royal Victoria Hospital, during 2012-2013.

(AQW 30858/11-15)

Mr Poots: The duty to report deaths to the Coroner is set out in Section 7 of The Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959. This puts a statutory requirement on every medical practitioner, registrar of deaths or funeral director and every occupier of a house or mobile dwelling and every person in charge of an institution or premises in which a deceased person died, to report a death to the Coroner if it resulted, directly or indirectly, as a result of violence or misadventure by unfair means, or as a result of

negligence or malpractice on the part of others, or from any cause other than natural illness or disease for which the deceased had been seen and treated within 28 days of death.

There is no requirement under the Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) procedure to inform the Coroner of a death resulting from a SAI. The principle aim of the SAI system is to identify and promote learning.

Families of Individuals who Died as a Result of a Suspected Serious Adverse Incident

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all the families of individuals who died as a result of a suspected serious adverse incident, in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area have been informed.

(AQW 30859/11-15)

Mr Poots: In respect of the five cases in the RVH, I can confirm that in all of the five cases the families have been advised of the situation.

Deaths Involving Serious Adverse Incidents in Hospitals

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many deaths resulting from serious adverse incidents are the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust accepting liability for, over the last five years.

(AQW 30860/11-15)

Mr Poots: The purpose of the Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) system is to identify and promote learning. The investigation of an SAI identifies the root causes with a view to supporting this learning. The SAI system does not record information on liability.

Protocol: 'Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of 16-21 Year Olds'

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail when the protocol 'Meeting the accommodation and support needs of 16-21 year olds' (i) is to be formally released; and (ii) will become operational.

(AQW 30871/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are several documents under development relating to this subject. It is assumed that the document referred to in this question relates to "Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of 16-21 year olds: Regional Good Practice Guidance Agreed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Health and Social Care Trusts."

This good practice Guidance is jointly owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the five Health and Social Care Trusts (Trusts). Its development has been facilitated by the Regional Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) with assistance from the Department of Justice and the Youth Justice Agency and is currently in the final drafting stage. It should be noted that the draft Guidance, whilst not formally released, has been a focus of recent workshops. I have been advised that the lead agencies, which have been fully involved in its development, are currently working to the spirit, intent and requirements of the Guidance.

- (i) The Guidance will be issued before the 30 April 2014. Prior to its release, the document will require formal endorsement and dissemination by the Trust Directors and the NIHE Chief Executive within their respective organisations for implementation. At the same time, the HSCB will formally issue the document to relevant voluntary and community organisations for information.
- (ii) The Guidance will be operational from the point of issue and dissemination by the lead agencies.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times he has appeared before his Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30876/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since May 2011, I have appeared before the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on 15 occasions, 4 times in 2011, 7 times in 2012, 3 times in 2013 and once so far in 2014.

My predecessor attended the statutory Committee on five occasions between February 2009 and 2011.

Skeagh House, Dromore

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the future of Skeagh House, Dromore.

(AQW 30879/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust have advised a report was received from the independent Geotechnical Consulting Engineers in November 2013 and has been forwarded to the Trusts solicitors who are currently reviewing the case and will consult with the Trust as to what actions should be taken.

Serious Adverse Incidents in Hospitals

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the practice in regard to informing the Department and the Minister of Serious Adverse Incidents in hospitals; and how many such incidents have been reported in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30888/11-15)

Mr Poots: An Early Alert System is in place and its primary function is one of rapid notification of events to the Department. It provides a channel to enable Chief Executives and their senior staff (Director level or higher) in Health and Social Care (HSC) organisations to notify the Department in a prompt and timely way of events or incidents which have occurred in the services provided or commissioned by their organisations, and which may require immediate attention by Minister, Chief Professional Officers or policy leads, and/or require urgent regional action by the Department. A copy of the guidance is available at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hsc_sqsd__10-10.pdf

Whilst an event notified as an Early Alert could be an SAI, this will not always be the case as different criteria are used to determine which system events fall under. This also means that not every SAI will be reported through the Early Alert System. Serious Adverse Incidents are reported to the Health and Social care Board, not to the Department.

Information on the number of Serious Adverse Incidents cannot be provided by hospital because in some cases the numbers are so small (i.e. less than five). The Department will not publish numbers less than 5 in order to protect patient confidentiality. Information on the total number of SAIs reported by Trusts in the last three years is outlined below.

Figures for 2013 are not completely comparable with previous years as the definition of an SAI and the associated guidance was changed in October 2013 to encompass a wider range of incidents.

NO OF SAIs	2011	2012	2013	Total
BHSCT	79	77	85	241
NHSCT	49	63	131	243
SEHSCT	37	47	57	141
SHSCT	49	41	57	147

NO OF SAIs	2011	2012	2013	Total
WHSCT	28	37	53	118
Total	242	265	383	890

Oral Treatments for Multiple Sclerosis

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the process and timeline for making new oral treatments for Multiple Sclerosis available following his Department's endorsement of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines.

(AQW 30894/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department endorsed NICE Technology Appraisal TA303 on teriflunomide for treating relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis as applicable in Northern Ireland on 17 February 2014. As per Circular (SQSD) 2/13, my Department issued the guidance to the HSC Board on this date requesting that they prepare a Service Notification within no more than 15 weeks of confirmed receipt. The HSC Board is expected to issue the Service Notification to the HSC Trusts and other relevant providers and stakeholders setting out the routine commissioning arrangements.

It is expected that HSC Trusts will have plans in place to implement Technology Appraisals within 3 months of receiving the Service Notification from the HSC Board and that these plans are fully implemented within a further 6 months in the vast majority of cases. The precise timescale, which may be shorter, or longer in exceptional cases, will be specified in the Service Notification. This process does not prevent individual requests from an HSC Trust to the HSC Board being met in the interim.

Transforming Your Care: Older People

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances he can give that older people who have to move from a statutory residential care home as a result of Transforming Your Care will carry protected rights through the Health and Social Care system for the rest of their lives.

(AQW 30910/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have already given an assurance that, should a resident living in a statutory residential home move to a different residential home as a result of decisions made in this process, they will not be financially disadvantaged by any such move. The relevant HSC Trust will fund any difference in the charges accruing to the resident.

More widely, residents of statutory residential homes who move to alternative accommodation will continue to avail of the support provided through the care management process.

Mental Health in Newry and Armagh

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what investment has been made in mental health in Newry and Armagh in the last three years; and what plans his Department has to improve mental health services in the area over the next three years.

(AQW 30920/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has received £1.7M of recurring investment in the last 3 years from Commissioners for Mental Health Services. The Trust received a further investment of £1.2M on a non-recurrent basis for 2013/14. This investment has allowed the development of:

- Primary Mental Health Care Service (for short term intervention for mid-moderate mental health problems with an outreach clinic in Kilkeel)
- Support & Recovery Teams providing longer term support and recovery for people with mental health problems

- Addiction Clinics in all localities
- Eating Disorder Clinics in all localities.

The Trust plans to enhance Mental Health Services in the following areas:

- Liaison Psychiatry services to Acute Hospitals
- Further development of community addiction services including alcohol liaison services
- Further enhancement of eating disorder services to mainstream early intervention and treatment services
- Centralisation of Psychiatric Intensive Care beds on the Acute Hospital site.

Progress against any of the above Trust plans will be dependent on the allocation of investment funds agreed by the Health and Social Care Board.

Ambulance Service Pay Band/Grade Review

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a timeframe for the implementation of the Ambulance Service Pay Band/Grade Review; and to detail the reasons for the delay in implementing this review.

(AQW 30921/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Regional Quality Assurance Job Evaluation Panel met on 6th and 7th February 2014 to progress the job evaluation of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust's (NIASST) Paramedics, Rapid Response Vehicle Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians posts. The panel have requested additional information and therefore the outcome has yet to be agreed. Consideration of the timeframe for implementation will be given when the outcome is known.

In my response to AQW 24023/11-15, I have outlined the reasons for the delay in this process.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust: Step Down Beds

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) number; (ii) location; and (iii) availability of step down beds in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 30925/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not available centrally and was therefore requested from the Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. They provided information on intermediate care beds, which are used for step down, as detailed below:

Parts (i) and (ii)

TABLE 1: LOCATION AND NUMBER OF INTERMEDIATE CARE BEDS IN NORTHERN HSC TRUST

Facility	Location	Number of Beds
Inver Community Hospital	Larne	16
Dalriada Community Hospital	Ballycastle	20
Robinson Community Hospital	Ballymoney	21
Brooklands PNH	Antrim	15
Whiteabbey Hospital	Whiteabbey	4
Mid Ulster Hospital	Magherafelt	3
Clonmore Residential Home	Rathcoole	7
Joymount Residential Home	Carrickfergus	3

Facility	Location	Number of Beds
Westlands Residential Home	Cookstown	4
Pinewood Residential Home	Ballymena	15
Rosedale Residential Home	Antrim	4
Roddens Residential Home	Ballymoney	3
Lisgarrel Residential Home	Larne	4
Total		119

Part (iii)

The availability of beds is monitored on a daily basis.

Guidance on Reporting Deaths to the Coroner

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what guidance exists on reporting deaths to the coroner which occur in local hospitals in connection with a serious adverse incident; and whether such guidance has been consistently followed.

(AQW 30943/11-15)

Mr Poots: The duty to report deaths to the Coroner is set out in Section 7 of The Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959. This places a statutory requirement on every medical practitioner, registrar of deaths or funeral director and every occupier of a house or mobile dwelling and every person in charge of an institution or premises in which a deceased person died, to report a death to the Coroner if it resulted, directly or indirectly, as a result of violence or misadventure by unfair means, or as a result of negligence or malpractice on the part of others, or from any cause other than natural illness or disease for which the deceased had been seen and treated within 28 days of death, or in such circumstances as may require investigation.

Specific reference to reporting deaths to the coroner has been made in various documentation issued by the Department. These include guidance on Death, Stillbirth and Cremation Certification issued in September 2008 and Memorandum of Understanding for Investigating Patient Safety Incidents in 2006 and revised in 2013.

In April 2012 the Department issued a letter to HSC organisations re-iterating the guidance on Death, Stillbirth and Cremation Certification, drawing particular attention to the section on reporting deaths to the Coroner. HSC organisations were also reminded of their responsibility to promote good practice and governance by ensuring compliance with the guidance.

It is not possible to confirm at this point if all of the statutory requirements to notify the Coroner have been consistently followed across all Trusts. This is currently being considered. In the five cases highlighted in the media, the statutory requirements to report the death to the Coroner have been complied with.

Deaths Involving Serious Adverse Incidents in Hospitals

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what guidance exists on the information to be conveyed to relatives of patients in hospitals who die arising from a serious adverse incident; and whether such guidance has been consistently followed.

(AQW 30944/11-15)

Mr Poots: Guidance on investigating Serious Adverse Incidents stresses the importance of teams involved in investigating the incident ensuring sensitivity to the needs of the service user/relatives/carers involved in the incident and agreeing appropriate communication arrangements, where appropriate. The guidance also states that the Investigation Team should provide an opportunity for

the service user / relatives / carers to contribute to the investigation, as is felt necessary. The level of involvement clearly depends on the nature of the incident and the service users/relatives/carers wishes to be involved.

It is important, as part of the serious adverse incident investigation process, that regular and meaningful contact is maintained with all those concerned. If the patient or relative wishes to contribute to an investigation, this should be welcomed as a valuable and key part of the process.

Whether a case is reported as an SAI or not, if the cause of death falls under one of the categories requiring reporting to the Coroner, the family will have this explained to them. If the call to the Coroner is made during office hours the family should know before they leave the hospital whether a post-mortem examination is required. In some cases a pro-forma can be sent to the Coroner's Office and the Coroner will register the death. The family will be informed that they do not have to attend the Registrar's Office

If the death has suspicious/forensic causes, or the patient is a child, the Coroner is contacted day or night using the on-call mobile number and the family and staff will be interviewed by PSNI acting as Coroner's officers. The family should be informed that a Coroners Liaison Officer or Family Liaison Officer will be in contact with them depending on the circumstances.

In all of the above scenarios the family should be given the Trust bereavement booklet and at times other relevant booklets, to support the information that is verbally communicated to them.

In particular wards there may be follow-up contact with the family in the form of a card, letter or phone call providing bereavement support and inviting the family to seek clarification about anything around the death.

It is not possible to determine at this point if all of this guidance has been consistently followed. This is currently being considered across all Trusts. In the case of five cases highlighted in the media, the statutory requirements to report the death to the Coroner have been complied with and in three of the five cases Serious Adverse Incident Guidance on involving families in investigations does not appear to have been adhered to.

South West Acute Hospital: Angiograms

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the South West Acute Hospital has the facility to carry out an angiogram; and if not, to outline the reasons for this.
(AQW 30953/11-15)

Mr Poots: The question is assumed to refer to coronary angiograms. There are no invasive cardiological procedures performed in the South West Acute Hospital (SWAH). Professional guidelines set out where invasive or interventional cardiology can be performed; these are laid down by professional groups including the British Cardiovascular Intervention Society and European Society of Cardiology and include guidance on issues such as size of unit, available back up staff and specialities, and number of procedures performed.

Patients from the SWAH are transferred to Altnagelvin Hospital for angiography, both elective and emergency.

A new cardiology consultant has been appointed to the SWAH to enhance the interventional cardiology service within the Western Trust and to enhance the non-invasive service in the SWAH, specifically to allow the SWAH to become the cardiac MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) centre for the Trust.

Deaths Involving Serious Adverse Incidents

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) when; and (ii) how he learned that five deaths in the Royal Victoria Hospital related to serious adverse incidents.
(AQW 30957/11-15)

Mr Poots: I learned that there were five deaths in the Royal Victoria Hospital related to serious adverse incidents where waiting times were a consideration on Tuesday 11 February 2014 following a radio interview by Dr Tony Stevens, Medical Director of the Belfast Trust.

People with Diabetes

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people in each council area with diabetes, for each of the last five years.

(AQW 31050/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF) of the General Medical Services contract, the total number of GP-registered patients aged 17 and over diagnosed with diabetes mellitus (both type 1 and type 2) is recorded.

The number of patients, aged 17 and over, on the QOF diabetes register in each Local Government District (LGD) for each of the last five years is shown in table 1 below. The number of patients on the diabetes register in each Local Government District has been derived based on the location of the practice; it should be noted that patients may not reside in the same LGD in which their practice is located.

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

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

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PATIENTS AGED 17 AND OVER DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES IN EACH LGD, 2009 - 2013.

LGD	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Antrim	1780	1912	2042	2142	2252
Ards	2979	3128	3277	3409	3599
Armagh	1760	1864	1938	1965	2096
Ballymena	2549	2691	2824	2918	3059
Ballymoney	859	925	972	1038	1108
Banbridge	1757	1915	2004	2139	2255
Belfast	12932	13691	14562	15147	15674
Carrickfergus	1731	1814	1915	2032	2124
Castlereagh	1815	1882	1987	2069	2129
Coleraine	2142	2286	2450	2577	2682
Cookstown	1097	1158	1231	1302	1399
Craigavon	3206	3395	3612	3729	3881
Derry	3658	3945	4154	4362	4566
Down	2598	2557	2839	3006	3132
Dungannon	1930	2036	2172	2231	2313
Fermanagh	2464	2616	2727	2788	2859

LGD	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Larne	1092	1165	1230	1269	1340
Limavady	1266	1368	1469	1526	1584
Lisburn	3395	3589	3805	3990	4148
Magherafelt	1151	1244	1355	1437	1511
Moyle	876	955	1040	1087	1133
Newry and Mourne	2921	3126	3317	3483	3618
Newtownabbey	3003	3220	2975	3104	3220
North Down	2693	2860	2965	3101	3231
Omagh	1729	1852	1945	2046	2127
Strabane	1683	1786	1886	1940	2032
Northern Ireland	65066	68980	72693	75837	79072

This information is published on the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) website <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/> under Statistics > Health and Social Care > Health of the Population > Disease Prevalence (administrative geographies).

Family Fund for 2014-2015

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will consider raising the funding allocation for the Family Fund for 2014-2015, in light of the 11.25 percent cut in allocation from 2012-2013 onwards and the current situation of the Family Fund not accepting applications due to lack of funds.

(AQW 31056/11-15)

Mr Poots: Through funding support of £1.57m provided by my Department to the Family Fund in the current year, 2870 families in Northern Ireland with disabled children have been helped.

I am aware that the Family Fund has recently announced that, due to a significant increase in demand for support, all funding received from my Department for the current financial year has been allocated and it is unable to process any further applications from families in Northern Ireland.

I regret this position but due to the ongoing financial challenges facing my Department I am currently unable to increase their funding provision.

I am hopeful of being able to maintain the same level of contribution to the Family Fund again in 2014-15.

Family Fund: Families Unable to get Help

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the number of families that will be not be able to avail of help from the Family Fund due to the funding not being available.

(AQW 31057/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not made an estimate of this nature.

Despite the difficult financial climate, my Department again provided funding of £1.57m during this financial year for the Family Fund helped 2870 families in Northern Ireland with disabled children.

I understand that the Family Fund has stated approximately 1,100 other families were also eligible to benefit from the fund.

I am hopeful of being able to maintain the same level of contribution to the Family fund again in 2014-15.

People with Acquired Brain Injuries

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances he can give that any new location for the provision of services for people with Acquired Brain Injuries will not duplicate existing services.

(AQW 31068/11-15)

Mr Poots: In July 2010, my Department published an Acquired Brain Injury Action Plan which sought to coordinate actions in order to improve outcomes for patients, their families and carers.

This established clear, time-bound goals aimed at driving forward improvements in brain injury services regionally and significant progress has been made in implementing the various actions contained in the Action Plan.

A few resource-dependent actions such as accommodation needs provision remain to be finally resolved and the HSC Board is reviewing how it might take these forward. However, the HSC Board have advised that at present it is unable to provide funding for any such specialist units due to financial constraints.

Department of Justice

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service: Non-Registered Interpreter

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29940/11-15, in relation to the non-registered interpreter to clarify (i) whether they have been involved in any other court cases, and if so, to detail the year and court division; (ii) the total payment expended on behalf of the Northern Ireland Courts And Tribunals Service or any other departmental agency.

(AQW 30509/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): An investigation into the matter has been launched by the DOJ under the terms of the Interpretation Service Contract. The investigation is still ongoing. Once I have received a report on the matter I will write to the member with further details.

Family Court System: Penal Notices

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many applications have been made within the Family Court system for Penal Notices over the last twelve months; (ii) if all such applications have been heard; and (iii) to detail the reasons for any applications that have not been heard.

(AQW 30510/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible to identify the number of applications in the Family Court over which include a penal clause over the past twelve months without incurring disproportionate cost.

The Family Court system has been interpreted as proceedings brought under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Information on the number of Personal Litigants who are either the father or mother in a family case is not routinely recorded. However, the following table provides details of the number of Personal Litigants involved in Children Order cases currently before the court, by gender, as at 6 February 2014.

TABLE 1 - NUMBER OF PERSONAL LITIGANTS BY GENDER IN CHILDREN ORDER CASES

Court	Number of Personal Litigants (Moving Party)		Number of Personal Litigants (Responding Party)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
High Court	6	2	21	27
Family Care Centre (County Court)	0	1	7	6
Family Proceedings Court (Magistrates' Court)	2	13	497	335
Total	8	16	525	368

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

The identification of successful transfer of residency applications made over the last three years would require a review of all Family Court Orders and incur disproportionate cost. However, the following table shows the total number of applications for a Residence Order and the number of orders made for the period 2011-2013.

TABLE 2 - CHILDREN ORDER APPLICATIONS FOR A RESIDENCE ORDER: 2011 TO 2013^P

Court Tier	Year					
	2011		2012		2013 ^P	
	Applications Received	Orders Made	Applications Received	Orders Made	Applications Received	Orders Made
High Court	47	48	33	41	26	36
Family Care Centre (County Court)	27	103	18	89	25	59
Family Proceedings Court (Magistrates' Court)	1,148	1,103	1,345	1,144	1,148	1,153
Total	1,222	1,254	1,396	1,274	1,199	1,248

Source: ICOS

^P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Orders may not be granted in the year the application is received.

Family Courts System: Litigants in Person

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice how many Litigants in Person presently within the Family Courts system are (i) fathers; and (ii) mothers.

(AQW 30511/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible to identify the number of applications in the Family Court over which include a penal clause over the past twelve months without incurring disproportionate cost.

The Family Court system has been interpreted as proceedings brought under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Information on the number of Personal Litigants who are either the father or

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Source: ICOS

PData is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Orders may not be granted in the year the application is received.

Family Court System: Transfer of Residency

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how many applications, made within the Family Court system for Transfer of Residency, have been successful over the last three years; and (ii) the level of Court that made such determinations.

(AQW 30512/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible to identify the number of applications in the Family Court over which include a penal clause over the past twelve months without incurring disproportionate cost.

The Family Court system has been interpreted as proceedings brought under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Information on the number of Personal Litigants who are either the father or mother in a family case is not routinely recorded. However, the following table provides details of the number of Personal Litigants involved in Children Order cases currently before the court, by gender, as at 6 February 2014.

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PData is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

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Interpreter Services

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to provide a copy of the procedures used by his Department and/or any departmental agencies in respect of using and booking interpreter services.

(AQW 30522/11-15)

Mr Ford: The procedure for criminal justice organisation to book a foreign language interpreter using the Department of Justice managed contract with Connect NICEM, the current service provider, is as follows.

The requesting organisation completes a booking form specifying their interpretation requirements. The booking form has provision for a range of details such as: Where, when and for how long the interpreter will be needed; the gender of the interpreter required; details of the case or session; victim and witness details; country of origin, language required and dialect; whether the interpreter is required for a trial or consultation; or whether or not a National Registered Interpreter with trial experience, is required. Any additional specific requests would be highlighted on the booking form; for example any particular needs of a witness or victim.

The booking form is then emailed to Connect NICEM who then confirm receipt and liaise with the Criminal Justice Organisation with regard to the allocation of an interpreter.

Craigavon Crown Court: Case Number 13/056715

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29940/11-15, whether costs associated with interpreter services or from any other source have been expended to the non-registered interpreter at the centre of this case.

(AQW 30524/11-15)

Mr Ford: The interpreter in this case was engaged by the Public Prosecution Service, which is a non-Ministerial Department in its own right and does not fall within my responsibilities. However, I understand that to date the PPS has not been invoiced for any costs associated with the interpretation services provided by Connect NICEM on the 13 January 2014 by the interpreter in question.

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

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

(AQW 30528/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Ombudsman makes recommendations in respect of investigations into prisoner complaints, deaths in custody and near deaths in custody. The table below outlines how many recommendations the Prisoner Ombudsman has made to the Prison Service since April 2010 to January 2014 and those that were not accepted.

Type of report	Recommendations made	Recommendations not accepted
Complaints	1015	123
Deaths in Custody*	63	8

* The information provided relates only to the recommendations the Prison Service has responsibility for. Other recommendations may have been made which fall under the responsibility of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

Policing and Community Safety Partnership: Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the current level of funding provided to each Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

(AQW 30534/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) provided joint funding totalling £5,107,549.99 to Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) for the 2013/2014 period.

During this period, PCSPs also accessed additional funding from my Department for projects aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime, and tackling anti-social behaviour.

A breakdown of the total funding made available by DoJ and NIPB to PCSPs in 2013/14 is provided in the table below.

PCSP	DoJ/NIPB PSCP Programme Funding (excluding members' expenses)	DoJ Community Safety Warden	DoJ Priority Youth Intervention	DoJ Assets Recovery Community Scheme	DoJ Offenders Levy	Total
Antrim	£162,711.75	£20,000.00	£29,375.00			£212,086.75
Ards	£181,768.75	£20,000.00				£201,768.75
Armagh	£168,857.75		£3,000.00	£5,700.00		£177,557.75
Ballymena	£174,806.75	£20,000.00		£438.00		£195,244.75
Ballymoney	£133,648.00		£10,000.00	£35,000.00		£178,648.00
Banbridge	£157,549.25	£20,000.00		£6,340.00		£183,889.25
Belfast	£775,000.00		£15,000.00			£790,000.00
Carrick	£152,318.00		£15,000.00			£167,318.00
Castlereagh	£169,488.25		£5,000.00	£3,155.00		£177,643.25
Coleraine	£183,945.75			£12,210.00		£196,155.75
Cookstown	£150,003.50					£150,003.50
Craigavon	£203,789.25		£7,000.00		£8,000.00	£218,789.25
Derry	£253,167.50	£20,000.00	£14,920.00	£27,500.00		£315,587.50
Down	£179,883.50	£20,000.00				£199,883.50
Dungannon	£164,197.64	£20,000.00		£3,500.00		£187,697.64
Fermanagh	£164,670.75			£20,000.00		£184,670.75
Larne	£143,205.85					£143,205.85

PCSP	DoJ/NIPB PSCP Programme Funding (excluding members' expenses)	DoJ Community Safety Warden	DoJ Priority Youth Intervention	DoJ Assets Recovery Community Scheme	DoJ Offenders Levy	Total
Limavady	£158,674.00	£20,000.00				£178,674.00
Lisburn	£241,634.00		£9,000.00	£68,763.00		£319,397.00
Magherafelt	£130,319.00		£1,500.00	£15,000.00		£146,819.00
Moyle	£133,291.75	£20,000.00	£3,000.00			£156,291.75
Newtownabbey	£188,885.75		£6,000.00			£194,885.75
Newry & Mourne	£213,599.50			£12,197.00		£225,796.50
North Down	£191,666.50	£20,000.00				£211,666.50
Omagh	£164,434.00	£20,000.00	£4,500.00	£7,500.00		£196,434.00
Strabane	£166,033.25	£20,000.00	£3,500.00	£3,050.00		£192,583.25
Total	£5,107,549.99	£260,000.00	£126,795.00	£220,353.00	£8,000.00	£5,722,697.99

Chief Constable of the PSNI

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the groups and individuals that made representations on the criteria for the post of Chief Constable of the PSNI, prior to his recent announcement on the eligibility criteria.

(AQW 30535/11-15)

Mr Ford: Of those approached by the Department to offer their views on potential criteria, the Chief Constable, Superintendents' Association and Police Federation along with the Equality Commission made representations.

In addition, before making my announcement on the eligibility criteria, the Department noted the views expressed by individual members of the Justice Committee on behalf of their parties, and correspondence from the Policing Board.

Legal Aid: Proceedings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29980/11-15, to detail (i) the rationale for this given the use of public money and that an anonymity order has been overruled; and (ii) whether this was taken as a civil action.

(AQW 30573/11-15)

Mr Ford: The reply I gave to AQW 29980/11-15 4 February 2014 assumed that the Member's question related only to Judicial Review proceedings launched on behalf of Ryan McGreechan, which is a civil action.

I can confirm that Criminal Legal Aid was granted by the Court of Appeal in relation to proceedings launched on behalf of the appellant. Judgment in these proceedings was handed down on 17 January 2014 and the final bill has not yet been received.

Judicial Reviews Currently in the Court System

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29941/11-15, from the figures provided, how many of these cases are Legally Aided, broken down per category.

(AQW 30575/11-15)

Mr Ford: Of the 107 Judicial Reviews listed for hearing at 17 January 2014, 50 cases have been granted legal aid. The table below details the breakdown of the legally aided cases by category:

Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	17
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review under appeal	1
Applications for Judicial Review	28
Judicial Reviews under appeal	4
Total	50

Cost Projections: Flag Protests and Civil Unrest

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQO 5402/11-15, whether these costs will rise and if his Department has completed cost projections in case of further flag protests and civil unrest.

(AQW 30576/11-15)

Mr Ford: In recent months there has been a reduction in the number of flag protests and the number of those attending.

The deployment of police officers is a matter for the Chief Constable, but I have been informed that the number of public order units deployed for the ongoing nightly protests at Twaddell/Woodvale has also reduced over recent months, and therefore the cost of policing each event has steadily fallen. It is hoped that these costs can be further scaled back in the weeks and months ahead.

Cost projections in respect of flag protests and civil disorder are an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

Flag Protests: Costs

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQO 5402/11-15, to outline what work he has done to tackle the underlying issues and try to build a truly shared society.

(AQW 30577/11-15)

Mr Ford: Success in building safer and shared communities extends beyond the remit of the Department of Justice, or indeed, the justice system. It requires a partnership approach across government and outside government.

The Department of Justice recognises its role and is leading, or is involved in, a range of important initiatives. At the heart of these is the Department's Community Safety Strategy. This was published in July 2012 and sets out eight strands of work which will assist in building safer, shared and confident communities.

Two areas of particular note at present in this Strategy are those of interfaces and hate crime.

On the former we are working closely with local communities as well as across government and with agencies to address community safety and other issues at interfaces. One aim of that work is to seek agreement with communities to reduce the number of interface structures. It is apparent to us that there is an increasing appetite for change. In working in partnership with the International Fund for Ireland, Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, we have been able to reduce the number of Department of Justice interface structures from 59 to 53. In addition, in association with our partners, we are engaging with communities on a further 38 of the Department's interface structures.

We have also set out steps in the Strategy to tackle hate crime through prevention, awareness and education and supporting victims and communities.

I have recently presented a report to the Justice Committee outlining progress against the strands of the Community Safety Strategy. The report, which will be made available on the Department's website, contains many examples of the good work being taken forward across the justice family, supported by many other organisations, to build a shared society.

So I can assure the Member that I am not only committed to a shared society but we are taking significant steps within the Department of Justice's remit to advance that objective.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice when he intends to initiate the process of the reconstitution of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships in the eleven new councils.

(AQW 30636/11-15)

Mr Ford: Paragraph 4(4) of Schedule 1 to the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 provides for the Policing Board, following a local general election, and once it has completed the arrangements for the appointment of the independent members of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) for a district, to publish notice of the reconstitution date in relation to the PCSP for that district.

The Policing Board intends to begin the recruitment process for independent members in autumn 2014, with a view to having all independent members appointed by 1 April 2015, so that the reconstitution of the new PCSPs will coincide with that of the new councils.

Persons Convicted of Domestic Violence Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what plans he has in relation to the introduction of (i) a register for persons convicted of domestic violence offences; and (ii) post-conviction monitoring with an appointed designated risk manager to whom any new relationship or change in domestic arrangements/circumstances must be communicated and approved.

(AQW 30646/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) In the forthcoming Justice Bill there will be legislative proposals to introduce violent offences prevention orders (VOPO). These civil orders will be available to the court in respect of offenders who pose a risk of serious violent harm, that is, a risk of serious physical or psychological harm caused by that person committing one or more specified offences. Those offences are as listed in Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008. Although the proposals exclude the lesser offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH) from the list of offences which may attract a VOPO, there is an exemption from this exclusion for cases of AOABH in domestic circumstances. Offenders who receive a VOPO would also be subject to notification requirements similar to those under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- (ii) Under risk assessment and management arrangements, set out in the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008, criminal justice agencies, social services and others, already work together and share information to more effectively assess and manage the risk posed by certain sexual and violent offenders in the community. Cases assessed under these arrangements include persons who, from 1st April 2010, have been convicted of a serious violent offence (including homicide) in domestic or family circumstances; or who have a previous conviction for a violent offence in domestic or family circumstances and about whom there are significant concerns.

Serious Case Reviews

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30164/11-15, given there were ten Serious Case Reviews completed in the last ten years, to detail (i) why only three have been released, of which only one appears on the public protection arrangements in Northern Ireland website; (ii) why two cases are awaiting release and the cause of the delay; (iii) why the remainder have not been released; and (iv) whether he will provide copies of all reports with exception of that on the public protection arrangements in Northern Ireland website, and ensure all past, current and future reports are routinely published online.

(AQW 30647/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 contained provisions which created the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI). They place a duty on agencies within the criminal justice sector, in other Government Departments, Health Trusts, Education & Library Boards, the Housing Executive and NSPCC, to cooperate in the interests of assessing and managing the risks posed by serious sexual and violent offenders.

The Department of Justice has published statutory guidance in relation to the discharge of PPANI functions contributing to risk assessment which includes establishing the criteria for a serious case review. Any report produced following a serious case review under the PPANI arrangements is jointly owned by the agencies represented on the PPANI Strategic Management Board who, as data controllers, have responsibility for decisions about their publication.

Since the introduction of the current statutory PPANI in October 2008, seven serious case reviews have been undertaken. One review has been published on the PPANI website, two reviews are awaiting publication and one review is ongoing and will be published in due course. Three reviews were not published, for reasons of data protection, as the individuals in those cases were not convicted of the alleged offence which gave rise to the review.

Of the completed reviews awaiting publication, one will be published once the individual's avenue of appeal against conviction has been exhausted and the other has only recently been completed and is being considered by the PPANI Strategic Management Board prior to publication.

Reports on case reviews completed prior to October 2008 were commissioned by the Northern Ireland Sex Offender Strategic Management Committee (NISOSMC) under the Multi Agency Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (MASRAM) Arrangements which were in effect at that time. Two independent case reviews completed under the MASRAM arrangements were published on the NISOSMC website in 2006 and 2008. Two further MASRAM reviews were not placed on the website. The first was not published for data protection reasons as the individual was not convicted of the alleged offence. The second was an internal review and it was not NISOSMC practice at that time to publish them.

The PPANI Strategic Management Board is committed to publishing summary reports of serious case reviews it has undertaken and the first of these, which is available for publication, is already on the PPANI website. Subject to any data protection restrictions, future reports on serious case reviews will also be routinely published on that website.

Policing Costs Relating to Loyalist Protests

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to recent figures on policing costs relating to loyalist protests, to clarify if the figures quoted are wholly additional costs, none of which would have arisen in the absence of protests, or do they include the policing costs which would have arisen anyhow by reasons of officers being deployed on other duties; and if so, to provide a resultant breakdown.
(AQW 30661/11-15)

Mr Ford: The recent figures quoted for policing flag protests and related civil unrest relate to both additional and opportunity costs. As quoted previously the estimated cost incurred from 3 December 2012 to 31 March 2013 is £21.9m (this includes £12.15m additional costs and £9.76m opportunity costs.) The cost to police the parades and protests, which are linked to the Twaddell protest from 20 August 2013 to 31 January 2014 is estimated at £6.25m (this includes £4.34m additional costs and £1.91m opportunity costs).

Additional costs are mainly made up of police overtime and employers national insurance contributions but also include a significant element of other costs such as air support, operational catering and vehicle fuel costs. Opportunity costs represent the duty-time salary-related costs of those officers who have been diverted away from core policing activity.

People Convicted of Domestic Violence Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what courses are available through the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, or any other agency, for people convicted of domestic violence offences; and to detail the estimated success rate in preventing participants re-offending.
(AQW 30675/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since 2009, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) has delivered the Home Office accredited Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP). The programme is designed to reduce re-offending by adult male domestic violence offenders where the victims were females. There are currently no courses available in the UK or Ireland for female offenders convicted of domestic violence offences although PBNI has undertaken work with individuals convicted of these offences in Northern Ireland.

The Youth Justice Agency also delivers a Domestic Violence programme designed for young people, young parents and family members who have experienced domestic violence either as a perpetrator, victim or witness.

Domestic violence is not recorded as a specific offence type and as such evaluation of success rates is difficult. Most evaluations of perpetrator programmes find that about 70% of men who complete a programme cease using physical violence and significantly reduce their use of other forms of controlling

behaviour. In an evaluation of IDAP in Northern Ireland, PBNi found 95% of the participating offenders felt the skills they learned on IDAP would help to prevent them reoffending in the future.

Independent Review by Lord Faulks

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether prisons in Northern Ireland will be included in the independent review by Lord Faulks in to investigate the death in custody of people aged 18-24.

(AQW 30676/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is currently no indication that any prisons in Northern Ireland will be included in the review to be led by Lord Harris of Haringey into self inflicted deaths in custody of young people aged 18—24.

Policing the Terrorist Threat

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost of policing the terrorist threat in the last twelve months.

(AQW 30692/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PSNI recently completed a comprehensive review of its costs which are directly associated with the security situation in Northern Ireland.

For the purpose of the review, security costs were defined as those unique costs incurred by the PSNI, over and above normal policing costs, as a direct result of the specific security situation in Northern Ireland now or in the past. This includes the costs of policing the terrorist threat and also the costs of policing public disorder and parading.

The review concluded that PSNI currently spends some 32% of its total budget on dealing with the current security situation.

Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison: Detention of Children

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice, given that the Youth Justice Review and the Prison Review commented on the unsuitability of Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre for the detention of children, whether his Department will bring forward legislation to permanently end the detention of children with adults in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre in all circumstances; and if so, to outline the timeframe for this.

(AQW 30695/11-15)

Mr Ford: On publication of the Youth Justice Review Implementation Plan, I gave a commitment to remove all children from custody at Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and no child has been held there since November 2012. Whilst this is currently being achieved by administrative means, I will be bringing forward legislation to underpin the position. A public consultation on this, and other aspects of custodial arrangements for children, has recently concluded and we are considering the responses with a view to making the necessary legislative amendments through the Fines and Enforcement Bill, which is scheduled for introduction in the autumn.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Payments

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 why the Northern Ireland Prison Service are yet to process this.

(AQW 30716/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the member to the reply I gave the member on 12 February to AQW/30285/11-15.

Serious Case Reviews

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30164/11-15, to detail the (a) names; (b) convictions; and (c) reasons for carrying out a Serious Case Review in respect of all listed, with the exception of Shay Barry Johnston.

(AQW 30720/11-15)

Mr Ford: Four of the serious case reviews involved individuals who were not convicted of the alleged offences which gave rise to the review. For reasons of data protection it is not possible to provide personal information about those individuals.

The remaining five serious case reviews were undertaken following the alleged commission of a further serious sexual or violent offence. The names of the individuals and the offence for which they were subsequently convicted are listed in the following table.

Name	Principal offence on conviction
Trevor Hamilton	Murder
Patrick Coleman	Indecent Assault
Arthur McElhill	No charges preferred (deceased)
Thomas Ward	Sexual Assault
David Page	Sexual Assault

Leaving the Scene of an Accident

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30496/11-15, to detail the number of convictions and the penalties given for this offence in (i) North Antrim (ii) across Northern Ireland, in the last two years.

(AQW 30722/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 175(2) of the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981 provides that it is an offence to fail to stop your vehicle after an accident and give to a constable, or any person with reasonable grounds for asking, your name and address, the name and address of the owner of the vehicle and the identification mark or number of the vehicle.

The tables below gives the number of convictions under the Article specified, for Northern Ireland and, for those offenders who had an

address in the North Antrim Constituency when charges were brought, for 2008 and 2009. These are the most recent two years for which the information requested is available.

NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS^{1,2} FOR OFFENCES UNDER ARTICLE 175(2) OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (NI) ORDER 1981, IN NORTHERN IRELAND 2008-2009

Disposal type	2008	2009
Imprisonment	0	2
Suspended custodial	3	3
Community sentence	3	2
Fine	122	97
Discharge	4	0
Total	132	104

NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS^{1,2} FOR OFFENCES UNDER ARTICLE 175(2) OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (NI) ORDER 1981, IN NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY³ 2008-2009

Disposal type	2008	2009
Imprisonment	0	0
Suspended custodial	1	0
Community sentence	0	0
Fine	6	3
Discharge	0	0
Total	7	3

Note:

- 1 Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.
- 2 The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offence specified.
- 3 Figures relate to offenders with a known address in the North Antrim constituency when charges were brought.

Leaving the Scene of an Accident

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30496/11-15, to detail the number of custodial sentences handed out for this offence in the last two years.

(AQW 30723/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 175(2) of the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981 provides that it is an offence to fail to stop your vehicle after an accident and give to a constable, or any person with reasonable grounds for asking, your name and address, the name and address of the owner of the vehicle and the identification mark or number of the vehicle.

The tables below gives the number of convictions under the Article specified, for Northern Ireland and, for those offenders who had an

address in the North Antrim Constituency when charges were brought, for 2008 and 2009. These are the most recent two years for which the information requested is available.

NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS^{1,2} FOR OFFENCES UNDER ARTICLE 175(2) OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (NI) ORDER 1981, IN NORTHERN IRELAND 2008-2009

Disposal type	2008	2009
Imprisonment	0	2
Suspended custodial	3	3
Community sentence	3	2
Fine	122	97
Discharge	4	0
Total	132	104

Number of convictions^{1,2} for offences under Article 175(2) of the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981, in North Antrim constituency³ 2008-2009

Disposal type	2008	2009
Imprisonment	0	0
Suspended custodial	1	0
Community sentence	0	0
Fine	6	3
Discharge	0	0
Total	7	3

Note:

- 4 Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.
- 5 The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offence specified.
- 6 Figures relate to offenders with a known address in the North Antrim constituency when charges were brought.

Leaving the Scene of an Accident

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30496/11-15, whether there are plans to introduce tougher penalties and fines for this offence.

(AQW 30724/11-15)

Mr Ford: At present I have no plans to increase the penalties for this offence though I continue to keep the legislative framework of the criminal law more generally under review.

Recorded Audio Proceedings of Tribunals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the provision of recorded audio proceedings of tribunals, including benefits appeals.

(AQW 30740/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service (NICTS) have introduced the audio recording of appeals, on a point of law, from the appeals tribunal before the Social Security and Child Support Commissioners.

A pilot to audio record benefit appeal tribunal hearings is still at the preliminary planning stage and a commencement date has not yet been agreed between the Department for Social Development and NICTS officials.

Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost to his Department of answering an Assembly Question.

(AQW 30746/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and so the information requested is not available.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Medication

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30298/11-15 and AQW 30332/11-15, what impact cost pressures have on efforts to address the drug culture in prisons; and whether in-possession medication was introduced as a cost-saving exercise.

(AQW 30748/11-15)

Mr Ford: NIPS has a stated policy of zero tolerance in regard to the misuse of drugs, including prescription medication. NIPS, operating within its budget, has shown an increase in the number of drug seizures and in the number of people made accountable.

The move towards greater use of medication was not in itself a cost-saving exercise, but releasing nurses from the burden of dispensing medication does allow them to divert time and energy to other health improvement initiatives.

Unduly lengthy medication queues also slow down prison regimes and limit opportunities for work in education, training and offending behaviour programmes. Any measures which speed up prison routines are broadly welcomed.

Court Services in Limavady

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to outline his future plans for the provision of court services in Limavady.

(AQW 30761/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 22 November 2012 I announced my decision to close Limavady Hearing Centre and transfer all Limavady business to Coleraine Courthouse.

At that stage I anticipated these changes would take effect in 2014, following the implementation of a single territorial jurisdiction for County Courts and Magistrates' Courts. However, these provisions will be carried in a Justice Bill to be introduced into the Assembly this Spring.

Abortion Law: Fatal Foetal Abnormality

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice when he will issue the consultation on the potential change to abortion law with regard to fatal foetal abnormality.

(AQW 30767/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is my intention to submit a draft consultation paper to the Justice Committee by the end of March, prior to sharing with Executive colleagues. Publication will follow as soon as possible thereafter.

Northern Ireland Prison Service's Policy on Tackling Drugs in Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for a copy of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's policy on tackling drugs in prisons.

(AQW 30779/11-15)

Mr Ford: The current strategy, entitled 'Strategic Framework for the Reduction and Management of Substance Misuse in Custody' which was agreed in March 2012, is currently under review.

Dungannon Magistrates Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions, after a contest at Dungannon Magistrates Court, have been appealed at County Court in each of the last two years; and how many of these convictions were upheld.

(AQW 30781/11-15)

Mr Ford: In 2012 there were 103 appeals to the County Court against a conviction following a contest at Dungannon Magistrates' Court in 2012, of which 83 convictions were upheld. Provisional data for 2013 indicates 93 appeals against a conviction, of which 60 convictions were upheld.

Prisoners: Medication

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30419/11-15, what is the proposed cost to replace medication lockers in prisoner cells; and what assessment has been made of using this funding to allow staff to supervise the delivery of medication.

(AQW 30782/11-15)

Mr Ford: The estimated cost for replacement lockers is approximately £75 per locker at a total cost of £190,000.

Capital expenditure on the provision of secure locker storage for individual prisoners is entirely the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Separately, decisions on the management of supervised swallow of medication and deployment of healthcare staff are the responsibility of the South Eastern Trust.

Writs and House Repossession Orders: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many writs and house repossession orders have been issued for the North Down area in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30807/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of writs and summonses issued and possession orders made in the High Court for commercial and domestic properties in North Down constituency in each of the last three years. It is not possible to specifically identify house repossessions without incurring disproportionate cost.

WRITS AND SUMMONSES ISSUED AND POSSESSION ORDERS MADE IN THE HIGH COURT FOR PROPERTIES IN THE NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY: 2011 TO 2013P

	Year		
	2011	2012	2013 ^P
Writs and summonses issued	190	171	164
Possession Orders made	77	98	85

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS).

P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Businesses: CCTV Security Monitoring

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what legislative requirement is in place for the licensing of businesses and staff that operate CCTV security monitoring.

(AQW 30808/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is the body which licenses individuals operating in the Public Space Surveillance (CCTV) sector. An SIA front line licence is required for any individual who (in relation to a contract for services, and for the purposes of guarding) uses CCTV to monitor the activities of members of the public in a public or private place, or identify particular individuals. A non-front line licence is required for those who manage, supervise and/or employ individuals who engage in Public Space Surveillance, as long as front line activity is not carried out - this includes directors or partners. These requirements are set out in the Private Security Industry Act 2001 and the Private Security Industry Act 2001 (Licences) Regulations 2007.

Businesses: CCTV Security Monitoring

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what guidance on the holding of security footage his Department issues to businesses that operate CCTV.

(AQW 30809/11-15)

Mr Ford: Responsibility for issuing guidance on such matters rests with the Information Commissioner.

Businesses: CCTV Operators

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what steps his Department has taken to ensure that businesses only allow CCTV operators who are trained and security checked to use such equipment.

(AQW 30810/11-15)

Mr Ford: In order to obtain an SIA licence to work in the Public Space Surveillance (CCTV) sector, an individual is required to pass an identity check, a criminal record check, and must have achieved the appropriate SIA-approved training qualification. Under Section 3(1) of the Private Security Industry Act 2001 it is a criminal offence to undertake licensable conduct whilst not the holder of an SIA licence. The SIA also has the power to revoke or suspend licences where an individual is no longer deemed “fit and proper” to hold a licence. The SIA works closely with police, local authorities, training providers, trade associations, industry representatives and other government agencies to ensure that individuals and companies operating within the private security industry comply with the law.

Businesses: CCTV Operators

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what legitimacy exists to allow a business to hold recorded CCTV footage for prolonged periods when no reports of suspicious events have taken place.

(AQW 30811/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is a legal requirement of the Data Protection Act (1998) that businesses inform the Information Commissioner about their CCTV system and its purpose. The Information Commissioner provides a Code of Practice for the use of CCTV systems which provides guidance and advice for CCTV users on how to comply with the Data Protection Act.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice how many times he has appeared before his Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30877/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of Committee meetings I have attended since my election as Minister of Justice in April 2010 is shown in the table below:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (to date)
Justice Committee	2	5	3	2	1
Joint Health & Justice Committee	2			1	
Total	4	5	3	3	1

Deaths Involving Serious Adverse Incidents in Hospitals

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how many deaths involving Serious Adverse Incidents in hospitals have been referred to the Coroner in each of the last three years.

(AQW 30887/11-15)

Mr Ford: As deaths reported to the Coroner which involve Serious Adverse Incidents are not separately categorised, this information is not available.

Post-Conviction Appeals at Enniskillen Magistrates Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of post-conviction appeals at Enniskillen Magistrates Court in each of the last two years; and of these, how many were upheld.
(AQW 31048/11-15)

Mr Ford: In 2012 there were 30 appeals to the County Court against a conviction following a contest at Enniskillen Magistrates' Court, 26 of which were upheld. Provisional data for 2013 indicates 35 appeals against a conviction 31 of which were upheld.

Prisoners: Medication

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 30299/11-15 and with the exception of the Juvenile Justice Centre, to show these figures as a percentage of the respective facility population.
(AQW 31051/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the answer given to AQW/30299/I 1-15. As DHSSPS could not provide a figure for the number of prisoners who are in charge of their medication it is not possible to provide the information requested as a percentage.

Interface Violence: Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Justice what action his Department is taking to tackle recent interface violence in the Derry City Council area.
(AQO 5579/11-15)

Mr Ford: The recent attacks in the vicinity of the Fountain Estate, coming so soon after such a successful year for the city, are disappointing and should be condemned by all.

Not only are such attacks a risk to public safety, they spread fear and mistrust among the people who live in the area. It is also disturbing to hear that young people were involved.

I welcome the actions of the police in dealing with these incidents. Four youths were arrested in connection with this disorder, and investigations are on-going. Part of those investigations will include reviewing CCTV footage from around the area where disorder took place.

Police deployed additional resources in the area, including video evidence gathering capabilities, and local neighbourhood officers have continued to be visible and are engaging with communities to prevent a reoccurrence.

We all recognise that tensions can be heightened around commemorative dates (Bloody Sunday). That doesn't mean we should accept that trouble is inevitable, but we must also acknowledge that the disorder was not widespread or sustained, and appears to have involved a small number of people, particularly youths.

We shouldn't lose sight of the good work that has been done by many community groups and statutory organisations in Derry in recent years, including the Youth Justice Agency, to build relationships, calm interface tensions, and divert young people away from trouble.

Chief Constable: Appointment Criteria

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Justice to outline the consultation he undertook with the Policing Board and other stakeholders regarding the proposed changes to the criteria for the appointment of the Chief Constable.
(AQO 5571/11-15)

Mr Ford: I undertook an informal consultation which began in July 2013 with a paper to the Police Advisory Board (NI) setting out my intention to review all aspects of the minimum criteria.

My informal consultation went deeper and wider than I was required to - and I was indeed also minded to consider any reasonable suggestions respondents may have offered. Those consulted included the Chief Constable, Staff Association, the Policing Board and the Justice Committee. An oral briefing was provided to the Justice Committee in October 2013 and advice was also taken from the Equality Commission to support that informal consultation.

The Policing Board and the Justice Committee were unable to provide collective views during the informal consultation process, particularly with regards to the criterion requiring at least 2 years senior officer service outside of Northern Ireland.

Having considered input gained through the informal consultation, I indicated my intention to amend the Determination under Regulation 11 of the Police Service Northern Ireland Regulations 2005. I issued my draft Determination to the constituent members of the Police Advisory Board (NI) in line with Regulation 46 – which includes the Chief Constable, the Policing Board and Staff Association. I have, as required considered any further representations made to me in relation to the draft Determination – which would amend the minimum criteria to:

- introduce the requirement for successful completion of the Strategic Command Course (or its equivalent);
- amend the current mandatory requirement for 2 years service at Senior Officer level or above in a force outside of Northern Ireland to a desirable requirement; and
- require advertisement of the post on the Policing Board and PSNI websites.

Hearing Damage: PSNI/RUC

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Justice to outline the legal and medical consultancy costs for the PSNI/RUC hearing damage cases to date.

(AQO 5577/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PSNI have advised that up to 30 November 2013 the total sum paid out in respect of legal costs was £65m.

This figure relates to the disposal of over 8,000 claims. Approximately £40m relates to claimant's costs and £25m relates to defendant's costs. The costs consist of solicitors' fees, barristers' fees, medical expert's fees and other disbursements, for example; court stamp fees; fees for medical experts' court attendance; examinations and preparation of reports; fees for obtaining medical records; and in some cases fees for other experts (e.g. hearing aid experts, accountants). Many of these fees also attract VAT at 20%.

Chief Constable: Appointment Process

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Justice to outline the steps he has taken to restore public confidence in the selection process for the Chief Constable.

(AQO 5581/11-15)

Mr Ford: Despite the unhelpful speculation we have witnessed over the last couple of weeks, I am not aware that public confidence has been damaged with regards to the selection process for Chief Constable.

I am sure that, when the Policing Board defines the specification for the post (including any skills or experience required above the minimum criteria set by me) as part of that Body's statutory duties, the public will have every confidence in the selection process for our next Chief Constable.

Department for Regional Development

Pot-Holes and Road and Surface Related Claims: East Antrim

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how much compensation has been awarded in the East Antrim area due to pot-holes and other road and surface related claims.

(AQW 29417/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): The NICS accounting system does not hold details of the cause of accidents and, for that reason, it is not possible to separately identify the amount of compensation awarded from pothole and other road surface claims.

Crossing Time at Pedestrian Crossings

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development when the crossing time at pedestrian crossings was last reviewed; and whether consideration has been given to increasing the crossing time.

(AQW 29549/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department for Transport (DfT) provides advice to road authorities in GB in its Local Transport Note 2/95 (for Pelican and Puffin Crossings) and Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/05 (for pedestrian facilities at junctions) on calculating timings for crossings. These documents were last reviewed in 1995 and 2005 respectively and my Department has adopted this guidance for use in Northern Ireland.

The design walking speed of 1.2m/s used in the guidance, covers 85% of the population. It is generally felt this allows pedestrians enough time to cross, and is long enough to accommodate people who walk more slowly. Where a crossing might be used by a large number of older people or those with mobility issues, for example outside residential care homes, it is recommended this should be taken into account when setting timings

The guidance for crossings is not statutory and my officials are able to use slower walking speeds for specific crossing sites, if appropriate.

A review of traffic signing legislation, including the Zebra, Pelican and Puffin Crossings Regulations and General Directions is currently being undertaken at a national level. Once this is concluded, my Department will determine whether any revised guidance should be followed.

My Department continues to take pedestrian safety issues very seriously and I would, therefore, stress if you have concerns about any particular crossing to contact my Department's Roads Service directly, who will look into your concerns.

Crossing Time at Pedestrian Crossings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there is discretion to lengthen the time permitted at traffic light controlled pedestrian crossings, to allow enough time for a person with a disability who may have slowed or impaired mobility to cross.

(AQW 29563/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department for Transport (DfT) provides advice to road authorities in GB in its Local Transport Note 2/95 (for Pelican and Puffin Crossings) and Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/05 (for pedestrian facilities at junctions) on calculating timings for crossings. These documents were last reviewed in 1995 and 2005 respectively and my Department has adopted this guidance for use in Northern Ireland.

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January Monitoring Round: Road Network Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the road network schemes that will receive funding as a result of the January Monitoring Round.

(AQW 30291/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: A total of 204 road network schemes will receive funding as a result of the January monitoring round. These are broken down by Roads Service Division as follows:

Eastern	11
Northern	75
Southern	62
Western	56

NI Water: Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how much money NI Water has returned to his Department this year; and (ii) how remaining funding is committed.

(AQW 30301/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: To date NI Water has returned £988k DEL Capital and £3.3m DEL Resource to my Department through the 2013-14 monitoring rounds. My Department will continue to monitor expenditure across all areas to determine whether any further adjustments are needed before the end of the financial year.

NI Water's remaining funding for this year is committed as follows: £164.7m DEL Capital and £170.3m DEL Resource.

Train Stations: Funding for Maintenance or Improvements

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the train stations that will receive funding for maintenance or improvements.

(AQW 30394/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the train stations where capital expenditure planned for maintenance or improvements is scheduled for the next three years. These are current plans and open to change as priorities change and finalization of the Translink Corporate Plan. The timing of implementation of many of these projects will be subject to the successful completion of the approval process as well as securing the necessary funding as part of Executive budgets or from other sources including EU sources.

Stations

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Adelaide / Boucher Road Halt | ■ Jordanstown Station |
| ■ Antrim Integrated Bus / Railway Station (NIR) | ■ Larne Harbour Station |
| ■ Ballymartin / Templepatrick Station | ■ Lisburn Station |
| ■ Ballymena Rail Station | ■ Lisburn West Station |
| ■ Ballymoney Railway Station | ■ Londonderry Station |
| ■ Bangor Station | ■ Lurgan Railway Station |
| ■ Belfast Central Station | ■ Moira Station |
| ■ Botanic Station | ■ Portadown Railway Station |
| ■ Coleraine Station | ■ Seahill Station |
| ■ Cullybackey Station | ■ Whiteabbey Station |
| ■ Cultra Station | ■ Whitehead Station |
| ■ Derriaghy Station | ■ Yorkgate Railway Station |
| ■ Dunmurry Station | ■ NIR/Ulsterbus - Cycle Shelter Programme |
| ■ Europa / Great Victoria Street | ■ Other Minor Works Projects (NIR) - Property |

Transport Links Between Banbridge, Portadown and Lurgan

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Regional Development what actions are being taken to improve transport links between Banbridge, Portadown and Lurgan.

(AQW 30454/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service and Translink are committed to improving transport links throughout Northern Ireland. Road improvement schemes currently being considered and under construction on the transport network in the Banbridge, Portadown and Lurgan area include:

- Millennium Way link to Gilford Road, Lurgan - my Department is continuing to develop this scheme and a new Planning Application for a revised alignment was submitted early in September 2013. I am hopeful planning permission will be granted in the near future;
- A3 Northway Portadown widening - scheme is due to commence in summer 2014 at an estimated cost of £1.5 million;
- A3 Flush Place/Avenue Road, Lurgan - junction upgrade which is due to commence in February 2014 at an estimated cost of £240K;
- Tandragee Road, Portadown - proposal to provide a missing footway link which is due to commence in March 2014 at an estimated cost of £25K;
- Plantation Road near its junction with the Clare Road - improvement works which are due to commence in March 2014 at an estimated cost of £75K;
- A26 Tullyraine Road/Old Bann Road junction - a visibility improvement scheme which is due to commence in the 2014/15 financial year at an estimated cost of £55K; and
- Edward Street/Francis Street, Lurgan - junction improvement which is currently ongoing and due to be completed in February 2014 at an estimated cost of £220K.

Other completed road improvement schemes in this area include:

- A50 Banbridge Road - bend improvement scheme;
- B3 Plantation Road at Shaws Farm - realignment completed in March 2009;
- A26 Banbridge Road/Tullyraine Road - realignment completed in January 2012;

- B3 Plantation Road at Calvertstown - completed in February 2012;
- A26/A50 Church Square, Banbridge - signal improvements;
- Union Street, Lurgan – upgrade of signals completed in 2011;
- A3 Edward Street/ Millennium Way, Lurgan - completed in 2012.
- A3 Robert Street/Malcolm Road, Lurgan - junction improvement completed in 2013;
- Sloan St/Union Street/Tandragee Road, Lurgan - junction improvement completed in 2011;
- Seagoe/Carn Roundabout - part time traffic signals completed in 2013; and
- Kernan Road/Seagoe Road, Portadown - junction signalisation completed in 2012.

During the spring and autumn of each year my Department's Roads Service presents its respective programmes to each Council containing details of all the schemes Divisions intend to construct during the current financial year and beyond, subject to funding availability. I have arranged for copies of the relevant council reports to be forwarded directly to you.

In respect of public transport in the area, there is currently a 15-minute frequency all day Monday to Friday on Ulsterbus services between Lurgan and Portadown. This is further enhanced by the Ulsterbus 51 service from Belfast to Portadown and the Goldline 250 service from Belfast to Armagh. Similarly, on the Banbridge to Portadown and Banbridge to Lurgan routes, there is an hourly service.

I am currently considering a request from Translink for support from my Department's Rural Transport Fund, to introduce a direct service from Portadown to Newcastle via Lurgan and Banbridge during the summer months.

Park and Ride Facility in Banbridge

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration is being given to a Park and Ride facility in Banbridge.

(AQW 30460/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is continually seeking to identify and provide opportunities that will improve park and ride and park and share facilities at appropriate locations, including Banbridge.

Whilst there are currently no schemes on the ground in Banbridge, we do hope to bring forward at least one park and share proposal in the area, at the earliest opportunity.

Translink Employees: Drug and Alcohol Testing

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the legal or operational requirements for Translink to carry out drug and alcohol testing on employees.

(AQW 30494/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are general duties under the Health and Safety at Work Order and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations that touch on this area and support the requirements regarding fitness to drive contained within the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.

The Railways (Safety Management) Regulations (NI) 2006 requires railway undertakings to hold a safety certificate and infrastructure managers to hold a safety authorisation. Assessment criteria issued by the Office of the Rail Regulators in support of certification and authorisation require holders to demonstrate how they manage safety risk. Abuse of drugs and alcohol is recognised as a risk.

Translink Employees: Drug and Alcohol Testing

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the arrangements in place for carrying out drug and alcohol testing for Translink employees, including testing on a contractual basis.
(AQW 30495/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink's internal policy on drugs and alcohol outlines the processes involved in testing. In brief, Translink carries out testing in 4 areas for safety critical and safety related workers:

- Recruitment and selection;
- Routine medicals;
- For cause (where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the actions or omissions of an employee contributed to an incident occurring. When, for behavioural reasons, it is suspected that any employee is unfit to perform normal duties through the effects of alcohol or drugs); and
- Unannounced testing.

With regard to unannounced testing, the target is to test approximately 5% of the staff group annually.

Translink: Provision of Drug and Alcohol Testing Services for Employees

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the date Translink last completed a procurement exercise for the provision of drug and alcohol testing services for employees; (ii) the duration of the contract, including any extensions; (iii) how drug and alcohol testing have been implementing since the contract expired; and (iv) the total spent on testing (a) during the contract; and (b) since the contract expired.

(AQW 30515/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have liaised with Translink officials, and would respond to each of your queries as follows:

- (i) The value of drug and alcohol testing services for employees is around £20k per annum. Translink's internal procurement control limits do not require open market tendering for spend below £30k per annum.
- (ii) Translink has stated that there is no contract in place for the reason explained in (i) above.
- (iii) Translink has stated that there is no contract in place at this time. Translink is actively seeking to commence a new procurement exercise for a multi-year contract for the provision of these services and expect to be in a position to do so by 28 February 2014.
- (iv) The amount spent on the service is commercially sensitive and disclosure would prejudice both Translink and the service provider's commercial interests.

Translink: Procurement Policy

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of whether Translink are in compliance with their (i) procurement policy; (ii) legal requirements; and (iii) Central Procurement Directorate guidance in relation to the procurement of drug and alcohol testing services for employees.
(AQW 30516/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have liaised with Translink officials and would respond to each of your queries as follows:

- i Translink has agreed a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum with the Department which sets down Procurement Control Limits and associated approval procedures based upon the value of contracts. Translink is a Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE) and recently had its CoPE status renewed following a detailed review initiated by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD)

- ii. There are general duties under the Health and Safety at Work Order and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations that touch on drug and alcohol testing and support the requirements regarding fitness to drive contained within the RoadTraffic (Northern Ireland) Orders 1995 and 2007. As a public utility Translink is also bound by EU law on utilities regulations.
- iii. I am not aware of any failures to comply with CPD guidance in relation to the procurement of drug and alcohol testing services, if any such specific guidance exists.

Kerb Height for Pavements

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the maximum kerb height for pavements; and (ii) the criteria used to determine this.

(AQW 30533/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The height of a kerb for a pavement will vary depending on its location and purpose. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges gives general guidance on the height of the kerb, which ranges from 100-125mm in urban situations to 75-100mm in rural situations.

However, the height of a kerb may exceed these ranges to deal with site specific issues, such as providing for future maintenance of the adjoining pavement. Kerbs have also been installed prior to the introduction of current guidance and by their historic nature, may exceed the parameters set out in current guidance which applies to new schemes.

Kerbs may be introduced for a number of reasons, for example, to add structural stability to a carriageway edge, or to address a flooding/drainage problem, and each circumstance requires consideration of the specific characteristics of the site. In addition, the kerb offers an element of restraint to errant vehicles and can be particularly effective in preventing overrunning of footways in urban situations where the safety of pedestrians is a consideration.

Carrickfergus Waste Water Treatment Works

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQO 5422/11-15, whether he will seek funding for additional deodorising equipment at Carrickfergus Waste Water Treatment Works.

(AQW 30542/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the current project underway at Carrickfergus Wastewater Treatment Works includes the installation of odour control equipment to comply with the Pollution Prevention Control Licence.

If it is considered that additional deodorising equipment is required following completion of the current work, then NIW will seek to meet the cost from within its PC15 funding allocation without the need to seek additional funding.

NI Water: Pumping Station in Ballymartin

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Regional Development, given that NI Water are in the process of connecting the pumping station in Ballymartin to the station in Kilkeel, whether Roads Service plan to investigate the possibility of installing a footpath between Ballymartin village and Pat's Road.

(AQW 30549/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Officials from my Department are due to meet with local representatives in Kilkeel to discuss this issue. I have asked my officials to write to you advising of the outcome of the meeting.

Repair of Defective Street Lights

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average time taken to repair defective street lights.

(AQW 30590/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The information requested is not available as my Department does not calculate the average time taken to repair street lighting defects.

Upgrading of Street Lighting: Spend

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total amount spent on upgrading street lighting in each district council area, in each of the last five financial years.

(AQW 30591/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not maintain this information in the format requested.

Road Improvement and Maintenance Schemes

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail all road improvement and maintenance schemes planned in the next financial year.

(AQW 30594/11-15)

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.

Cycle Lanes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total miles of cycle lanes.

(AQW 30598/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has currently provided approximately 235 miles of cycle lanes across Northern Ireland.

Cycle Lanes in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total miles of cycle lanes in the North Down area.

(AQW 30599/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has currently provided approximately 12.9 miles of cycle lanes in the North Down Council area.

Cost of Road Bridge Maintenance

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total cost of road bridge maintenance, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 30601/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of my Department's expenditure on road bridge maintenance in each of the last three financial years are provided in the table below:

Year	Expenditure On Road Bridge Maintenance
2010/11	£2,542k
2011/12	£2,601k
2012/13	£3,343k.

Disused Road Bridges

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total number of disused road bridges.

(AQW 30602/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can confirm there are currently six disused road bridges.

Disused road bridges may be the responsibility of my Department or may have been disposed of along with any surplus land.

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

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

(AQW 30606/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has accepted all the recommendations contained within Ombudsman's findings.

Door-2-Door Transport Service

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the review of the Door-2-Door Transport Service.

(AQW 30607/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Door 2 Door Scheme ended on 31 March 2013 and an interim scheme, The Disability Action Transport Scheme was introduced on 01 April 2013.

My Department is undertaking a review of the specialist transport policies and schemes initiated by the Department to promote social inclusion. This review, which includes evaluating the Disability Action Transport Scheme, is still ongoing and the outcome will assist my Department to develop proposals to meet the transport needs of elderly and disabled people across Northern Ireland.

Roadworks on the Sydenham Bypass

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the timescale for the completion of the current roadworks on the Sydenham Bypass; and (ii) whether it is possible to minimise the single lane operation to alleviate the impact on traffic.

(AQW 30609/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I understand that delays occurred on the Sydenham Bypass during the week commencing 3 February 2014 due to emergency repairs being carried out by NIE on a faulty electricity cable. These works were completed on Tuesday 11 February 2013.

I can also advise that the recent works on Dee Street were substantially completed on 9 February 2013.

Impact of Recent Severe Weather on Coastal Roads

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact of recent severe weather on coastal roads.

(AQW 30634/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member will be aware, a number of roads in Northern Ireland have suffered damage as a result of recent tidal events and storms.

I have placed in the Assembly Library a comprehensive list of those locations where roads have either been subject to sea wall damage, or undermining, as a result of storm damage since the turn of the year.

During last week's severe weather, a short section of road on the A2 between Rostrevor and Warrenpoint collapsed and officials are currently assessing the situation with a view to completing repairs as soon as possible.

My Department has carried out remedial works at a number of locations and additional preparatory work is underway in advance of the commencement of works at other locations. However, it may be some time before the full impact is known, necessary repairs are implemented and the full cost is realised.

The estimated cost of repairs is currently £1.2 million. However, this figure could increase significantly once detailed inspections of sea defences are completed.

Officials are continuing to assess the extent of the damage caused and although my Department received additional funding from January Monitoring, specific bids for further funding may be required, which would hopefully be considered sympathetically at a later date, if repairs cannot be funded from within existing budgets.

Resident Parking Scheme: Derry City Council Area

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the progress, including timescales, for the resident parking scheme in the Derry City Council area.

(AQW 30694/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Legislation is currently being developed for the residents' parking scheme in the Bogside area of Londonderry. It is anticipated implementation will take place in the autumn of 2014, however, this is subject to no objections being received to the proposals when they are formally advertised.

Repair Works at Ballysallagh Reservoir

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the timescale for the completion of repair works at Ballysallagh Reservoir.

(AQW 30718/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the repair works at Lower Ballysallagh Reservoir are now complete. The filling of the reservoir commenced on 24 January 2014 and is on-going.

The repair works at Upper Ballysallagh Reservoir commenced on 27 January 2014. The repair works require the draining of the reservoir in order to undertake an inspection of the external face of the tower and completion of associated remedial works. The original duration for the repair works was 11 weeks, however NIW has experienced difficulty in lowering the water level because of the recent heavy rainfall. This has resulted in an extension to the programme of works and the current completion date is 26 May 2014.

Chair to the Board of Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he adhered to stipulated timescales when making the decision on the appointment of the new Chair to the Board of Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners, which was announced on 23 January 2014.

(AQW 30800/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Yes. The shortlisting was held on 3 September 2014, interviews were held in the week commencing 4 November 2014, and the appointment took effect on 8 February 2014, as specified in the published Information Pack.

Chair of the Board of Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the criteria he used to select the Chair of the Board of Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners from the pool of six candidates judged suitable for appointment by the selection panel in November 2013.

(AQW 30802/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I selected the Chair of Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners using the four essential selection criteria set out in the person specification included in the application form and information pack for the appointment. These were:

Relevant Experience:

- 1 In accordance with the Londonderry Harbour Order (Northern Ireland) 2002, members of the Board of LPHC are appointed from among persons who appear to the Minister to have had wide experience of, and to have shown capacity in one or more of:
 - the management of harbours;
 - shipping;
 - port usage;
 - industrial, commercial or financial matters;
 - administration;
 - the organisation of workers; or
 - have in some other respect special knowledge or experience which would be of value to the Commissioners in the discharge of their functions;
 - have any other skills and abilities considered from time to time by the Department to be relevant or useful to the Commissioners;
 - such special knowledge or experience includes: logistics and estate management, marine safety, commerce and trade, human resources, management and corporate finance, planning processes, an understanding of the port's role in the local economy and working at senior level in the local community.
- 2 Strategic Thinking and Leadership
- 3 Financial Understanding and Corporate Governance
- 4 Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Age of Buses and Coaches within the Translink Fleet

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average age of buses and coaches in the Translink fleet at 30 September (i) 2009; (ii) 2010; and (iii) 2011.

(AQW 30827/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the average age of buses and coaches within Translink's fleet for the years required. For ease of reference I have included the details for 30 September 2012 and 30 September 2013.

Month	Average Fleet Age (Years)		
	Ulsterbus	Goldliner	Metro
30 September 2009	6.95	4.65	6.32
30 September 2010	5.96	5.62	7.2
30 September 2011	6.11	6.53	8.17

Month	Average Fleet Age (Years)		
	Ulsterbus	Goldliner	Metro
30 September 2012	6.48	4.76	7.07
30 September 2013	6.27	3.70	7.52

The Ulsterbus figures are for the entire Ulsterbus fleet, including Goldliners.

Roads: Mosside

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the road improvement works in Mosside, Co. Antrim.

(AQO 5587/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service commenced carriageway resurfacing works on the B147 Ballinlea Road, north of Mosside, on Thursday 6 February 2014. The work, with an estimated cost of £200,000, will take place on approximately 2.2 kilometres of the Ballinlea Road southwards from B17 Straid Road junction towards Carrowcroey Road. Road closures were required from Monday 10 to Wednesday 12 February, and again yesterday and today to surface the road. I'm sure this scheme will be well received by the local community and local elected representatives.

Comber Greenway: Lighting

Mr Douglas asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the drop in usage of the Comber Greenway during the winter months, whether the Minister has considered lighting the urban sections to encourage cycling and walking.

(AQO 5588/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As I have highlighted in previous answers the new Cycling Unit was formally established in November 2013. The Unit now has its initial staffing complement and has begun its work in planning and coordinating cycling related activities within my Department.

Among the initial functions of the unit will be the development of a prioritised programme of cycling specific schemes and bidding for and allocating the necessary budget for delivery, focusing on the development of routes to promote and encourage cycling.

As the member is very familiar through his own cycling experience, the Comber Greenway is a well used cycling route which continues to attract both walkers and cyclists. In order to capitalise on this, I can assure the member that it will be considered as part of this exercise looking at ways to improve its attractiveness and any necessary safety measures such as lighting.

I would, however, remind the Member – and I know that he would recognise this – that lighting may not be appropriate along the entire route for aesthetic and conservation reasons. Furthermore, the needs of adjacent properties and neighbours will also have to be considered.

Terrorist Commemorations

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made in securing the removal of terrorist commemorations from his Department's property, including that of its arm's-length bodies.

(AQO 5589/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can assure Members neither I nor my Department approves of, or support the unauthorised use of Departmental property for illegally erected roadside memorials.

Memorials erected without lawful authority have much in common with other unauthorised activities, such as kerb and lamp post painting, and have the potential to create tension within local communities as well as posing a risk to those tasked with their removal.

As was the practice under my predecessors Mr Conor Murphy MP, Mr Gregory Campbell MP and Mr Peter Robinson MLA, my officials do not remove terrorist commemorations on departmental controlled or associated property unless road safety is being compromised, or there are clear indications that action to remove them would have widespread local support.

Unauthorised memorials on the property of the Department's arms-length bodies are matters for the Boards of those organisations.

European Funding

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of his Department's achievements in securing European funding.

(AQO 5590/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Quite simply, my Department is amongst the highest performing departments in the Northern Ireland Executive, and has made a hugely significant contribution to the current Programme for Government's commitment to increase competitive drawdown of European funds by 20% during the current budget period.

Since October 2011, my Department has been awarded almost 49 million pounds across a range of European programmes.

This includes an award of over 15 million pounds for upgrading of the A8 which is, in itself, the largest funding award for a single project to any Executive department in this Programme for Government period.

In addition, my Department has been awarded some 16 million pounds through the EU Competitiveness Programme which has accelerated the replacement schedule for Goldlink and Metro service vehicles.

A further 12.2 million pounds was awarded for the A2 upgrade and some 2.5 million pounds was awarded through the INTERREG Programme for the upgrading of Portadown railway station.

Another 2.5 million pounds has been awarded for a range of smaller transport related projects including ones relating to electric vehicles and modality studies.

These achievements haven't come easily – they haven't fallen into our laps. They have come about by defining and focusing on objectives, seeking out knowledge, promoting collaboration and understanding the environment in which we operate and compete.

My Department is continuing its preparations for the 2014-2020 round of European Programmes. The competitiveness of the European funding arena must not be underestimated – a recent call for applications for TEN-T funding was oversubscribed by a ratio of 4:1 in financial terms and even the highest quality applications are not necessarily guaranteed funding.

While my Department continues its activities in working to identify, highlight and expand opportunities for Northern Ireland applications, other departments must do likewise if, collectively, we are to continue to increase the overall drawdown of funds.

It is my firm belief that my Department can be as successful in the future as it has been in the past, and I sincerely hope that all Executive departments are, in this respect, equally successful in rising to the challenge we face.

Cycle Network: East Belfast

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to upgrade the cycle network in East Belfast.

(AQO 5591/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The newly formed Cycling Unit in my Department illustrates my ambition to give an increased focus and priority to the needs of cyclists and to encourage greater participation in this healthy and sustainable form of transport. A key priority for the Cycling Unit is to develop a long-

term vision, and a comprehensive cycling strategy for Northern Ireland. I am keen to ensure that this Northern Ireland wide cycling strategy will guide development of a network of cycle and walking routes both in Belfast and across Northern Ireland.

In respect of specific interventions, my Department has started design work, with a view to providing a signalised road crossing at Sandown Road, as part of our ongoing strategy to provide controlled crossing facilities, where the Comber Greenway crosses busy main roads.

It is hoped this facility will be implemented and operational within the 2014/15 financial year, subject to the successful completion of the design processes and the availability of the necessary funding.

In addition, my officials are presently considering available options to improve cycle facilities between Tillysburn roundabout and Holywood Exchange and to improve signage on the public road, directing users from the Comber Greenway to Titanic Quarter.

Flooding: Strabane

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Regional Development how he is addressing the issue of flooding on the Cloughcor Road, Strabane, which is directly impacting on children attending St Mary's Cloughcor School.

(AQO 5592/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am aware that a section of the Cloughcor Road, Strabane is currently flooded as a result of drainage issues on adjacent land.

This section, which is the lowest point on the road, does experience occasional flooding due to these drainage issues, especially during prolonged rainfall events such as those we have experienced this year.

Whilst it is not a road drainage problem, my Department has worked with adjacent land owners in an effort to find a resolution, most recently in October 2012, when it supplied 42 metres of drainage pipe, to the Parish authorities, to help with drainage work being undertaken to address the flooding issue.

During this most recent flooding event, my officials erected flood warning signs and considered closing the road. However, officials are aware that traffic is making its way through the short stretch that is subject to flooding, to get to St Mary's Cloughcor Primary School, St Mary's Church and dwellings located on Cloughcor Road. All of these premises can be accessed from the other end of Cloughcor Road.

Water Resources: Network Problems

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the Water Resources Management Plan 2012, to outline the short term measures that can be implemented to address localised network problems.

(AQO 5593/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Water Resource Management Plan 2012, is a high level strategic document that looks to balance projected water demand with available supply through investment in trunk infrastructure and does not in itself identify localised network issues.

Localised network issues are highlighted through the Water Infrastructure Investment Model (WIIM). The WIIM applies a methodology to water infrastructure data to identify potential issues, analysis is carried out on the structural integrity (bursts), low pressure issues and water quality issues. From this work a prioritised list of interventions across Northern Ireland is developed. This list is then 'bundled' into work packages for delivery through NI Water's Price Control periods.

Roads: Reinstatement

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what checks his Department has in place to ensure that roads opened by contractors for access to utilities are reinstated properly.

(AQO 5594/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Those undertaking street works in Northern Ireland, mainly utility companies with statutory powers to do so, must comply with the requirements of the Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, and associated secondary legislation. This includes requirements regarding notification of works, co-operation with my Department in co-ordination of works, signing, lighting and guarding of works, qualifications of operatives and supervisors and reinstatement of openings.

The main utility companies in Northern Ireland work closely with the Department through the Northern Ireland Road Authority and Utilities Committee (NIRAUC) in order to co-ordinate works on roads in the interests of safety, to minimise inconvenience to those using our streets and to protect the structure of our streets and the integrity of the apparatus in the street.

NIRAUC has agreed codes of practice to provide practical guidance in meeting the respective obligations of the road authority and the utility companies. These include codes of practice on the specification for reinstatement of openings in roads and on the inspection of street works.

My Department carries out sample inspections of one in ten utility openings within six months of completion of reinstatement, to ensure roads are being reinstated properly. A further one in ten reinstatements is inspected during the final three months of the guarantee period, which is normally two years. Officials also extract sample cores from one in every 100 reinstatements to ensure the correct material has been placed to the required depth. Where the sample inspections reveal an unacceptable level of defects, the Department can increase inspection levels, with the additional cost borne by the utility company, as part of an improvement plan until the required level of improvement has been achieved.

Any reinstatement defects are reported to the utility company responsible, for repair or replacement. Additional inspections are carried out to ensure the defects have been corrected with the associated costs borne by the utility company.

Any surface defects identified through routine maintenance inspections, or those notified by members of the public, are also reported to the utility company for repair or replacement as necessary.

Rail Terminus: Belfast

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on his plans to use Great Victoria Street, rather than Central Station, as Belfast's main rail terminus.

(AQO 5595/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The project to develop a modern integrated transport hub at the existing combined Great Victoria Street Railway Station and Europa Bus Centre sites is progressing. This includes a number of different elements including potentially changing the arrival and departure point for the Belfast to Dublin enterprise service from Central station to Great Victoria Street (GVS). Great Victoria Street is already Northern Ireland's main rail terminus. Passenger flows last year exceeded 4 million compared to Central Station's 2.2 million.

Critically passenger flows for bus and rail at the Europa/GVS bus and rail terminus exceeded 8.4 million last year. The Great Victoria Street Railway Station is reaching capacity constraints for current usage as the main terminus for the Bangor, Portadown/Newry, Londonderry and Larne Lines. In addition it is recognized that there is potential to grow numbers on the Enterprise service. Relocating this service to GVS will reduce journey times and potentially allow for the introduction of an hourly frequency of service. This plan is heavily supported by users of the Enterprise service. There are no plans to make other changes to rail services to or from Central Station and it remains a key part of the rail network and one of the most heavily used stations.

In relation to the overall Transport Hub programme the tender process for an Integrated Design Team (IDT) is drawing to a conclusion and it is anticipated that an appointment will be made around the end of March or early April 2014.

The project team is currently developing a strategic business case and is in discussion with the Strategic Investment Board regarding possible funding mechanisms. Once the IDT has been appointed, design options will be developed and further consultation will be undertaken with stakeholders to identify the best way forward for both public transport and the wider community.

Subject to funding and approvals, it is currently projected that site works may begin later in 2016, with a construction programme running into several years depending on the extent of the agreed redevelopment and the number of works phases required to undertake construction around an operational public facility.

Park and Ride: Larne

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to increase the park and ride facilities along the Larne railway line.

(AQO 5596/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink is currently considering a project to extend Park & Ride facilities at Whiteabbey Station. Assuming achievement of relevant land purchase and planning permission, it is hoped that approximately 50 additional spaces can be provided within the 2014/15 financial year.

In January 2013, the available Park & Ride capacity in Carrickfergus was increased by 242 spaces by changing the existing St. Bride's car park from a Pay & Display car park into a free over-flow Park & Ride/Share facility as part of the Temporary Traffic Management Works associated with the on-going A2 Shore Road, Greenisland Road improvement scheme. This arrangement will need to be reviewed going forward in the light of Departmental strategic priorities, the interactions with the local council on car park transfers and the continuing growth of rail passenger numbers on the Larne line.

Department for Social Development

Response Maintenance Contracts

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the current response maintenance contracts, (i) how much the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has withheld from contractors in circumstances where the amount at issue is disputed; and (ii) why this action has been taken in apparent breach of Clause 52.2 of the relevant contracts.

(AQW 29925/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): In relation to (i): I would refer the Member to my response to AQW 29926/11-15.

In relation to (ii): The Housing Executive does not believe there is any breach of clause 52.2. However, the Housing Executive has advised that there is an adjudicator's decision that found that Clause 52.2 required the Housing Executive to go through a formal dispute process on disputed amounts to be set-off against amounts due to a contractor, before such a set-off was implemented. This decision is due to be challenged in the High Court.

Housing Executive: New Lodge Area

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Housing Executive's planned repair scheme to include PVC cladding on tower blocks in the New Lodge area, in order to reduce heat loss and prevent dampness.

(AQW 30440/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 29937/11-15 and would add that the work is programmed to commence in March 2014.

Employment and Support Allowance Applications

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to Employment and Support Allowance applications, under what circumstances a GP's advice that a person is unfit to work due to a serious or significant risk to health and welfare can be overruled.

(AQW 30457/11-15)

Mr McCausland: All Employment and Support Allowance claimants are subject to the Work Capability Assessment process that determines their entitlement to benefit by assessing their capability for work and carrying out everyday tasks. The assessment process includes consideration of whether or not exceptional circumstances apply because of a serious or significant risk to the claimant's health and welfare due to their physical and/or mental health-related illness.

Under current legislation, the decision on a claimant's capability for work and whether or not exceptional circumstances should apply is made by an Employment and Support Allowance Decision Maker, who will have received specialist training for this role, and who will have access to detailed supporting advice and guidance for decision-making.

In making any decision, the Decision Maker will consider all of the available medical evidence, including the Atos healthcare professional's medical report, information provided by the claimant, and any independent medical evidence from a GP or other healthcare professional.

All Social Security decisions can be reconsidered on request by another Decision Maker and/or can be appealed to the Appeal Tribunal.

Employment and Support Allowance Applicants: GP Evidence

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many Employment and Support Allowance applicants in 2013 were refused the benefit after presenting GP evidence of significant risk to their health from having to work.

(AQW 30471/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available. The IT system used to administer Employment and Support Allowance is not configured to identify claimants that have been disallowed Employment and Support Allowance after presenting GP evidence of significant risk to their health from having to work. This type of evidence along with the information provided by the claimant in their Employment and Support Allowance 50 form is considered by the Healthcare Professional as part of the Work Capability Assessment Process. The outcome of that process is then forwarded to the Social Security Agency decision maker who takes a number of factors into consideration before deciding whether there is an entitlement for benefit.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Social Development whether the scheme set to replace the Warm Homes Scheme will be in place by 1 July 2014; and what contingency plans are in place should the scheme not be in place by this date.

(AQW 30486/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department will launch a public consultation later in February 2014 seeking views on the eligibility criteria, measures available and delivery model of a proposed new Affordable Warmth Scheme. The public consultation will run until early May 2014. I am confident that a new Affordable Warmth Scheme will be in place by July 2014.

Housing Executive Belfast Framework: Tenders

Mr Milne asked the Minister for Social Development whether the contractors on the Housing Executive Belfast Framework submitted tenders in the recent secondary competition, that was run to replace the contractors that have gone out of business; and to detail the number of successful submissions for each re-tendered area.

(AQW 30492/11-15)

Mr McCausland: This information is not available as the Housing Executive has advised that the secondary competition has not yet been completed.

Double Glazing Windows in Social Housing

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 29952/11-15, whether casement or reversible specification windows will be used in the new scheme.

(AQW 30519/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the various styles of windows to be used within the Low Rise Double Glazing contract are detailed within the tender documentation and that there is the potential to use flush casement, storm proof and fully reversible windows. They explain that the specific style to be used on any particular scheme will not be known until after each contractor has carried out the site survey and presented proposals to the Scheme Clearing House meeting.

Direct Labour Organisation

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development where the Direct Labour Organisation will be located; and whether the Housing Executive are inviting tenders for the provision of its works.

(AQW 30582/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) currently delivers a response maintenance service in each of the Housing Executive's three Regions – Belfast, South and North.

Belfast Region is serviced from the Housing Executive's Glengall Street depot and from leased depots in Argyle Business Centre, North Howard Street and Musgrave Park Industrial Estate, Stockman's Way. South Region is serviced from rented premises at Annagh Hill Industrial Estate, Portadown and North Region from the Housing Executive's premises at Hillman's Way, Coleraine.

In relation to inviting tenders for the provision of its works, this information is not currently available as the Housing Executive is developing a business case which considers as an option the expansion of the DLO to cover response maintenance contracts. This will be subject to the required departmental approval.

Social Housing New Builds

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how many social housing new builds have been completed in each constituency, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 30588/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below provides details of the number of social housing completions, by Parliamentary constituency, in each of the last three financial years:

Parliamentary Constituency	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
East Antrim	25	11	6
North Antrim	5	16	9
South Antrim	11	22	127

Parliamentary Constituency	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Upper Bann	28	85	19
East Belfast	137	68	34
North Belfast	298	179	182
South Belfast	164	128	92
West Belfast	65	121	176
North Down	146	25	0
South Down	14	117	54
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	42	55	41
Foyle	142	175	184
Lagan Valley	155	19	57
East Londonderry	0	13	14
Mid Ulster	33	11	30
Newry & Armagh	82	106	60
Strangford	43	131	163
West Tyrone	19	28	6
Totals	1409	1310	1254

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Disability Living Allowance: Appeals Time Limit

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development to outline (i) the maximum time which is permitted for a final decision to be reached regarding an appeal against a refusal of, or reduction in, the payment of Disability Living Allowance; and (ii) the number of Disability Living Allowance appeal cases submitted prior to 1 October 2013 which are currently outstanding.

(AQW 30592/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Within the overall Appeals Service there is no maximum time permitted for a final decision to be reached in relation to DLA appeals. The determination of an appeal is the responsibility of an independent Judicial Office Holder, with each appeal considered on its own merits, taking account of the individual circumstances and evidence presented.

The Appeals Service currently has 755 outstanding DLA appeal cases which were received prior to 1 October 2013.

Tenancy Deposit Scheme: Simon Community Rent and Deposit Bond Scheme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development whether he is aware of any conflict between the Tenancy Deposit Scheme and the Simon Community Rent and Deposit Bond Scheme.

(AQW 30600/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There is no conflict between these two schemes.

The Rent and Deposit Bond Scheme operated by the Simon Community NI is aimed at those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless and who would find it difficult to fund rent in advance and/or a deposit. It provides a written bond to landlords in lieu of rent in advance and/or a deposit.

The Tenancy Deposit Schemes Regulations (NI) 2012 require that deposits paid, on or after 1 April 2013, by tenants in the private rented sector must be protected in either a custodial or insurance based scheme.

The Tenancy Deposit Scheme offers protection for both landlord tenants in that there is a mechanism in place for resolving disputes over the return of a deposit at the end of a tenancy.

Homeless People: Accommodation

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the current number of short term accommodation units; (ii) the current number of short term floating support units, which are available for people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless; (iii) the current demand for these units; and (iv) how the current numbers and demand for these units compares with that in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 30604/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to (i) the Housing Executive has interpreted this as the number of temporary accommodation units available to enable them to provide temporary accommodation in response to its homelessness duties. Table 1 attached provides details of the number of temporary accommodation units on the Housing Executive's bed bureau at 1 November 2013: -

TABLE 1

NIHE Hostels	Voluntary Sector Hostels including Refuges /Young Person accommodation etc.)	Private Sector Properties
20 hostels (183 units of accommodation)	62 Hostels (Circa 1700 bed spaces)	1118 (Self-contained units across a range of property types)

In relation to (ii) Floating Support is not a temporary accommodation based service. It is a service delivered to individuals primarily in their own homes. To date in 2013/14 Supporting People funded 1,487 individuals with a floating support service.

In relation to (iii) with regard to temporary accommodation occupancy, the average service utilisation was 87% in the nine months from April to December 2013. With regard to the Floating Support Services, 1,487 were being helped during the same nine month period.

In relation to (iv) the information is only available for the last five years regarding temporary accommodation demand as detailed in Table 2 attached. This provides the total number of homeless placements made to temporary accommodation.

TABLE 2

Year	NIHE hostels	Voluntary Sector Hostels	Private Sector Accommodation	Total
2008/09	571	1469	2327	4367
2009/10	588	1576	2487	4651
2010/11	502	1368	2535	4405
2011/12	483	1345	2731	4559
2012/13	518	1429	2933	4880

With regard to Supporting People funded Homeless Floating Support Services, the information is only available since April 2012 and is detailed in Table 3 attached:

TABLE 3

Year	Number
2012/13	690
2013/14 (9 months)	1487

During the last two years new floating support services have been developed and in addition existing services have been remodelled to increase the capacity of community based service across Northern Ireland.

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.

Social Housing Development Programme: One and Two Bed Units

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development his assessment of the number of new build one and two bed units being constructed within the Social Housing Development Programme.
(AQW 30608/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the current year to date (2013/14), to supplement current social housing one and two bed stock, 31 one-bed and 139 two-bed units have been started.

The table below identifies the current programmed one and two bed housing unit figures from the gross Social Housing Development Programme for the 3-year period 2014/15 – 2016/17.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
One-bed units	272	310	136	718
Two-bed units	1199	987	579	2765
Totals	1471	1297	715	3483

Where specific schemes are unable to be delivered or are slipped to later programme years, delivery will be supplemented by additional new build schemes and/or “Off-the-Shelf” schemes.

In particular, the programmed figures for one and two-bed housing in Year 3 (2016/17) will be increased through additional schemes.

Churchill Estate, Millisle: Maintenance Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the maintenance schemes planned for the Churchill estate, Millisle.
(AQW 30612/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that planned schemes for the 124 dwellings in the Churchill estate are as follows:-

External Cyclical:	124 dwellings programmed for 2015
Kitchen replacement:	24 dwellings programmed for 2014
	43 dwellings programmed for 2015
	37 dwellings programmed for 2016

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.

Liquor Licensing Legislation

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the number of recent forced pub closures, whether he will give consideration to amending the Liquor Licensing Legislation to allow for rolling registration, or a system whereby a reminder is issued to landlords in advance of the expiry date of the license.

(AQW 30616/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Under the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 any person who wishes to sell alcohol to the public must hold a valid liquor licence. An application for the initial grant of a licence is made to a County Court and subsequent applications to renew it are made to a magistrates' court. A licence is valid for a licensing period. The current licensing period runs from 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2017.

Both the Northern Ireland Court Service and my Department placed notices in the local press informing licence holders of the need to apply to their relevant magistrates' court to renew their licences in advance of commencement of the current licensing period. I understand the Pubs of Ulster, the representative body of the licensed trade in Northern Ireland, also alerted its members to this requirement.

A magistrates' court may consider a late application for a renewal of a licence which is made no later than 12 months after it has expired. Failing this an application for the grant of a new licence must be made.

I am satisfied that these arrangements are fair and reasonable and therefore have no plans to amend the renewal of licences procedure.

Ombudsman's Findings: Recommendation

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

(AQW 30660/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There have been no occasions where my Department has not accepted an Ombudsman's finding since May 2007.

Crisis Loans

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the current scale of Crisis Loans; (ii) the value of the loans to be repaid; and (iii) the amount written off in the last five years.

(AQW 30700/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Crisis Loan Budget allocation for the 2013/14 financial year was £17.5 million with expenditure on Crisis Loans amounting to £11.9 million at 31 January 2014. The value of Crisis Loans to be repaid amounted to £30.03 million at 31 March 2013 which is the last audited figure available in the Social Security Agency's Annual Report and Accounts for 2012/13. The amount of Crisis Loan debt written off in the last five years is set out in the table below and again is the last audited figure included in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts for 2012/13:

The circumstances in which Crisis Loan debt will be written off include where the claimant has been deported or gone abroad, the claimant is in prison or similar institution, the claimant's address/ whereabouts are not known, the claimant has been declared bankrupt and the bankruptcy petition date is prior to 24 December 2013 or the claimant has died and there is no estate.

Year Ended	Value of Crisis Loans Written Off
March 2013	£93k
March 2012	£101k

Year Ended	Value of Crisis Loans Written Off
March 2011	£52k
March 2010	£31k
March 2009	£50k

Benefit Applications: Crisis Loans

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development whether a check is carried out on new benefit applications to determine whether the claimant has repaid previous Crisis Loans.

(AQW 30701/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There is an electronic interface between the Social Fund Computer System and the main Social Security Benefit Computer Systems which will notify Social Security Agency Social Fund staff that a claimant with an outstanding Social Fund loan, including a Crisis Loan, has made a new claim to benefit. On receipt of this notification, action is taken to re-commence recovery of any outstanding loan. When a claimant stops claiming benefit, the Agency will take steps to ensure that any outstanding loan is re-paid in the first instance by contacting the claimant. If after three weeks this proves unsuccessful, the case will be referred to the Agency's Debt Centre Northern Ireland to pursue recovery.

Applications for Crisis Loans

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development what arrangements are in place to check the veracity of applications for Crisis Loans; and what arrangements exist to permit the payment of such loans directly to a relevant supplier, rather than the claimant.

(AQW 30704/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Fund Decision Maker in determining a Crisis Loan application must have regard to the individual circumstances of each claim and the relevant Departmental Directions. It is the responsibility of a claimant to provide all the evidence necessary to substantiate their claim, but a Decision Maker may make further investigations if insufficient information has been provided or there is any reason to doubt the validity of the application. Where appropriate, a Decision Maker will seek corroborating evidence.

Sections 134(3) and 135(5) of the Social Security Contributions Act (NI) 1992 allow for payments from the Discretionary Social Fund to be made to a third party for the provision of, or arranging the provision of goods or services for the claimant. This provision is used in exceptional circumstances where the claimant or their representative requests it, or where there is evidence that the claimant may not use the payment for the items or services awarded.

Refurbished Houses in the Lower Old Park

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail how the refurbished houses in the Lower Old Park were allocated, including whether they were allocated to people within the area by transfer or allocated from the housing waiting list.

(AQW 30817/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Clanmil Housing Association, who own the properties in question, has advised that properties continue to be allocated in accordance with the Housing Selection Scheme. They have handed over five properties in Manor Court and four in Mountview Street. These nine properties have been allocated to applicants whose area of choice was the Lower Oldpark area; this includes one transfer.

Giro d'Italia 2014: Carrickfergus Borough Council

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the budget allocated to Carrickfergus Borough Council for the Giro d'Italia 2014.

(AQW 31125/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Carrickfergus Borough Council received £13,500 of capital funding from DSD towards a £15,000 scheme to help improve the appearance of properties and derelict sites which are located along the Giro d'Italia race route and this work is due to be completed by 31 March 2014.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 21 February 2014

(AQW 30747/11-15)

The document that was referred to by officials at the Committee for the Environment on 6 February was provided to you in response to AQW 27856/11-15. This outlined the Department's final interpretation of the legal position as regards the provision of taxis at Ravenhill Rugby grounds, Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast. This document has not been supplied directly to the Committee or the Committee Chairperson.



Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,
Belfast: The Stationery Office

and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

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PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

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ISSN 1463-7162

Daily Editions: Single copies £5, Annual subscriptions £325

Bound Volumes of Debates are issued periodically during the session: Single copies: £90

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited

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ISBN 978-0-339-70328-5



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