

Written Answers to Questions

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Friday 21 March 2014

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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 March 2014

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Executive Information Service

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 18689/11-15, for an update on the review of the Executive Information Service, including when the review began and when it is expected to be completed.

(AQW 24240/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The review of EIS is currently being progressed; a completion date is not available.

Redsky: Advice from the Attorney General

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) who sought the advice from the Attorney General, which the First Minister has publicly claimed vindicates him in respect of allegations in the BBC Spotlight programme arising from the Redsky controversy; (ii) who paid for such advice; and (iii) whether this advice will be published.

(AQW 28661/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister did not seek the advice.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many times they, and the Junior Ministers, have appeared before their Department's Statutory Assembly Committee in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30792/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The number of occasions on which we have met the OFMDFM Committee in each of the last five years is as follows;

- 2010: 4 occasions;
- 2011: 3 occasions;
- 2012: 2 occasions;
- 2013: 3 occasions; and
- 2014: 1 occasion to date.

Social Investment Fund: Twelve Capital Projects

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether planning approval has been granted, or a planning application has been lodged, for each of the twelve capital projects approved for funding under the Social Investment Fund; and on what date was each application approved or lodged. **(AQW 30965/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Responsibility for securing planning approval rests with project sponsors and this can be a condition of funding imposed by the Department in making letters of offer. Not all of the projects announced on 10 February required approval. Confirmation of planning approval will be sought before funding is released.

The current position is set out on the table attached.

Project	Planning Granted	Date
Childcare & Family Support Cluster (Ashton & Wishing Well)	Yes	May 2012 & June 2013
Taughmonagh	Yes	February 2013
Sandy Row	N/A	
Bryson Street Surgery	Yes	February 2010
New Directions (Kilcluney)	Yes	March 2011
Fermanagh House	Yes	October 2012
Coleraine Rural Urban Network	Yes	October 2010
Twinbrook	Yes	November 2009
Capital Cluster Play Ballymagroarty	Yes	
Daisyfield	Application awaiting funding decision	
Ballyarnett	Application awaiting funding decision	
Laganview	Currently being assessed by Council	
West Lisburn	Currently being assessed by Council	
Cloona House	N/A	
Sustaining the Infrastructure Brownstown Campus	Outline	TBC
Richmount Childcare	Outline	TBC
Pearse Og	Yes	TBC

St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the remainder of the St Patrick's Barracks site in Ballymena will be transferred to the Department for Social Development. **(AQW 31007/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In view of impending changes to the Regional Development functions of the Department for Social Development, no firm decision has yet been taken about the timing of transfer of the site or the eventual allocation of responsibility for the long-term regeneration of the site. For the immediate future, planning for the site will continue to be taken forward on a tri-partite

partnership basis between the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Department for Social Development and Ballymena Borough Council.

In addition, the current Stakeholder Group is to be expanded to include strategic partners, initially Roads Service and Planning Service, to ensure that the wider context of the site and its links to other infrastructure are fully considered. Arrangements are being made to carry out a further trawl of public sector organisations to identify any additional interest before planning reaches a critical stage.

Social Investment Fund in Upper Bann

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 30349/11-15, to detail (i) the partners in the employability project where PLACE is the lead partner; (ii) the owners of the premises at Corcraigh shops and the Brownstown Campus, which were also successfully funded projects; and (iii) the catchment area, including the beneficiaries of the Mount Zion Energy Project.

(AQW 31229/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

- (i) Vouching and verification checks are being carried out on proposed Lead Partners. Until these checks are completed and the proposed lead partner has agreed the letter of offer, it is not possible to confirm either the Lead Partner, or others that will be involved in the delivery of any of the projects.
- (ii) Both properties at Corcraigh and Brownstown are owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
- (iii) Mount Zion Energy Project is a proposal from Shankill (Lurgan) Community Projects Ltd (SLCP) seeking funding for an ecological minor capital works programme to improve the infrastructure of its community buildings and help reduce running costs. This investment will help the organisation to sustain existing activity and reduced running costs to enhance the delivery of its services primarily to the communities in the Shankill and Wakehurst areas.

Departmental Statutory Assembly Committee

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister on how many occasions (i) they; and (ii) departmental officials cancelled briefings, which were part of the forward work programme, to their Department's Statutory Assembly Committee, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31287/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The information requested is not held in a readily accessible form and consequently could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

It should be noted that the Committee is responsible for its forward work programme, and this does not always align with policy development stages and processes within the department, therefore requiring rescheduling of the Committee's projected and proposed briefings.

The vast majority of what the Member terms "cancelled" briefings are in fact rescheduled and take place at a later date.

People with Post-Traumatic Stress: Paramilitary-Style Attacks

Mr McKinney asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much funding their Department provides to assist people presenting with post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of paramilitary-style attacks.

(AQW 31367/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) delivers support to victims and survivors, the interpretation of which is set out in Article 3 of the Victims and Survivors (NI) Order 2006. The VSS administers funding provided by our Department through the Victims Support Programme and the Individual Needs Programme.

Within these programmes, approximately £8.5m is allocated to Health and Wellbeing for 2013-15. This funding enables victims and survivors to avail of a range of services, including for psychological needs.

Goods, Facilities and Services Legislation

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have examined the legal opinion provided to the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People by Robin Allen QC and Dee Masters BL regarding the Goods, Facilities and Services legislation.

(AQW 31540/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The legal opinion has been considered in the Department. Junior Ministers have discussed aspects of the Opinion with the Equality Commission and the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Strategic Investment Fund: Early Years Projects in South Eastern Zone

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how the £2.5m allocated to early years projects in the South Eastern Zone of the Strategic Investment Fund will be broken down between council areas.

(AQW 31548/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: £2.5m has been allocated for a project which will operate across the South Eastern Social Investment Fund Zone. Discussions with a lead partner are continuing. Presently, there is no breakdown of spend for each council area.

Department's Water Bills

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) who audits their Department's water bills; (ii) when their Department's water bill was last audited; (iii) when their Department's water bill will next be audited; (iv) how much money has been saved in the last five years as a result of auditing; and (v) the process for contracting out the auditing of water bills.

(AQW 31566/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Water bills are managed centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel who own most of the buildings used by OFMDFM.

We also deal with water bills in relation to a small number of premises owned by the Department. There are no arrangements for these bills to be audited.

Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many ministerial appointments to public bodies have been made by their Department since May 2011; and of these, to detail how many were made to (i) males; (ii) females; and (iii) the organisations to which appointments were made.

(AQW 31625/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have made 51 appointments since 1 May 2011. The table below shows the public body to which these appointments were made and the gender of appointees.

Public Body	Male	Female	Total
Commission for Victims and Survivors for NI	0	1	1
Commissioner for Older People for NI	0	1	1
Ilex Urban Regeneration Company Ltd	8	3	11
Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation	10	1	11
NI Judicial Appointments Commission	7	4	11

Public Body	Male	Female	Total
Office of the Police Ombudsman for NI ¹	1	0	1
Planning and Water Appeals Commissions	2	1	3
Strategic Investment Board Ltd	6	2	8
Victims and Survivors Service	3	1	4
Total	37	14	51

- Under provisions contained in the Police (NI) Act 1998, the First Minister and deputy First Minister are responsible for jointly recommending the appointment of the Police Ombudsman. The Office of the Police Ombudsman is an executive non-departmental public body financed by grant-in-aid through the Department of Justice.

Strategic Policy Framework: E-Safety

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of their letter to the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety asking him to draw up a strategic policy framework on e-safety, whether they hold the responsibility for co-ordinating such a cross-departmental strategy.
(AQW 31635/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The development of an overarching, strategic and co-ordinated approach to e-safety is essential if we are to ensure our children can use the internet safely in all areas of their lives.

We believe that while the issue of child internet safety impacts across a number of departments, the development of an Executive-wide approach needs to be informed by, and consistent with the principles and best practice which underpin the work which DHSSPS is taking forward on child protection overall.

That is why Junior Ministers have written to the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety asking him to take forward the co-ordination and development of a policy framework on e-safety as part of his responsibility for child protection. As we have indicated in our letter to Minister Poots, we will make the Delivering Social Change governance structures available to assist the development of such an approach.

Bright Start Strategic Framework for Childcare

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the Bright Start Strategic Framework for Childcare, what consideration has been given to the capacity of the private sector to provide child care places in urban and rural areas of social disadvantage.
(AQW 31704/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The capacity of the private sector to provide affordable childcare places in socially disadvantaged urban and rural areas was one of a number of factors considered during the development of the first phase of the Bright Start Strategy and its 15 Key First Actions. Several of the Key First Actions aim to address current market failure by creating affordable and accessible childcare services in areas where the present supply is insufficient. The performance of the Key First Actions will be kept under review over the coming months in close consultation with childcare stakeholders. This will help to inform the development of the full Bright Start Childcare Strategy which we aim to publish towards the end of the year.

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within their Department; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.
(AQW 31725/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: For the purposes of this question, senior management has been interpreted as meaning permanent staff within the Senior Civil Service.

Year	Number of permanent SCS staff at 1 April	Total amount of Employer's Pension Contributions paid
2008/09	26	£182,067 (incomplete)
2009/10	25	£416,465
2010/11	21	£392,508
2011/12	21	£392,727
2012/13	21	£378,020

Information for the year 2008/2009 is incomplete; the NICS introduced a new payroll system during that year and pension data for the legacy system is not held by the Department.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Horse Racing Fund

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she is considering a legislative change to permit the Horse Racing Fund to receive voluntary contributions, as a means of assisting the industry.

(AQW 31572/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): I would be supportive of voluntary contributions being made in support of the two racecourses in the north of Ireland. To permit the Horse Racing Fund to receive voluntary contributions would require a change to both the horse racing legislation, which is my Department's responsibility, and the gambling legislation, which is the responsibility of the Department of Social Development. However, there is nothing to prevent anyone wishing to make a contribution to the two racecourses in the north from doing so directly to the racecourses.

Household Flood Protection Grant

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to (i) detail any plans to implement the Household Flood Protection Grant; and (ii) clarify that consultation with Councils will take place.

(AQW 31643/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As part of the work to implement the EU Floods Directive, consideration is currently being given to the benefits of an individual flood property protection scheme. While the detail of the scheme has not yet been finalised, I can confirm that the need for grant aid to assist those who wish to make flood resilience modifications to their homes is being actively examined. Rivers Agency has been working with the Local Flood Forums on the development of this approach, and there are Council representatives on these groups. Engagement with Councils will continue as proposals are developed, particularly in relation to options for administration of the scheme. I hope to bring this matter to the Executive before the summer as I believe that this type of assistance would be welcomed by those at flood risk.

Sea Defences in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the timescale for the final assessment on the level of damage to sea defences in North Down as a result of recent storms.

(AQW 31645/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rivers Agency maintains a section of the sea defences located on the North Down Coastal Path at the Esplanade in Holywood, between Kinnegar Road and Kinnegar Avenue. The defence was inspected in January and I am pleased to advise that no damage was found.

Department Headquarters in Ballykelly

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in the first year of her departmental headquarters relocating to Ballykelly, to detail the approximate number of staff who will be located in Ballykelly and their average gross annual salary.

(AQW 31662/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The preferred option in the business case for my new departmental headquarters at Ballykelly is a phased approach to construction with phase one, which will be 400 workstations, to be completed by July 2017 and phase two, a further 200 workstations, by the end of 2020.

As soon as phase one of the construction is complete we will relocate staff to posts at Ballykelly on a phased basis with approximately 350 staff expected to be working in Ballykelly by the end of 2017.

As you will know from previous correspondence a significant number of the current departmental staff had indicated that they would prefer not to remain with their post when it relocates to Ballykelly. Therefore, at this stage we do not know the individual people who will staff the new headquarters and cannot provide average gross annual salaries as requested.

I do know however that the first phase of staff movement, the first 350 staff, will include all NICS analogous grades from Administrative Assistant through to Permanent Secretary. I have provided below the most recently published salary median earnings (at March 2013) in respect of each of these analogous grades.

TABLE1: MEDIAN SALARIES OF NICS ANALOGOUS GRADES AS AT 31 MARCH 2013

Grade	Median Salary
AA	17,110
AO	20,890
E01 & E011	24,000
S0	30,230
DP	37,510
G7	47,940
G6	62,410
G5+	66,190

Notes: Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and include Basic Salary only. Salaries of part-time employees are represented as full time equivalent gross salaries.

Dairy Sector: Assistance

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance or funding is available to the dairy sector.

(AQW 31680/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The dairy sector makes a very important contribution to the local agri-food industry and to ensure its future sustainability and development it is vital that it remains competitive and profitable. My Department therefore provides the sector with a wide range of assistance and funding to help it improve its performance and grow its potential in the market-place. This has included joint support with Invest NI for an industry-led dairy competitiveness study aimed at helping the sector to plan for the

future post milk quotas which end on 31 March 2015. The recommendations of that study are being taken forward by the industry.

My Department also carries out a wide range of activities through CAFRE and AFBI aimed at assisting the dairy sector. These include the provision of technical support to producers and processors including competence development programmes, the provision of knowledge and technology transfer programmes and benchmarking services which enable farmers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their farm business. The industry also receives significant assistance through various research projects and with product innovation and AFBI is hosting a Dairy Conference, "Growth Through Innovation", at the Kings Hall Conference Centre on 20 March 2014.

Financial assistance is currently available to the dairy sector through the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013 (farm modernisation scheme including the manure efficiency technology scheme, processing and marketing grant scheme, training measures on focus farms and environmental schemes) and support measures provided by Invest NI to dairy processing companies to help them remain competitive. It is anticipated that the dairy sector will also be able to access funding through the RDP 2014-2020. Work is on-going to finalise the draft Programme 2014-2020, taking into account the views expressed in the public consultation, advice from the Rural Development Stakeholder Consultation Group, and the available budget.

EU measures available to support the market include export refunds, intervention buying of butter and skimmed milk powder and private storage aid for butter. However, intervention purchases and export refunds are now only used when market prices are very low. This is because the 2003 CAP Reform substantially reduced intervention prices. To compensate for this, an annual dairy premium was paid to producers and this is now included in the Single Farm Payment. The dairy sector also benefits indirectly from EU aid (including a national top-up subsidy) which continues to be provided under the EU School Milk Scheme to encourage the consumption of milk by school children.

In terms of animal health, the dairy sector, along with the rest of the industry, benefits from the TB and Brucellosis Programmes which support the export trade in milk and milk products and live cattle exports. My Department also provides export certification for milk and milk products free of charge to the processing sector. In addition, dairy hygiene inspection and feed sampling analysis costs which assure the safety and quality of milk and milk products are met by my Department and the Food Standards Agency.

The dairy sector has the potential to grow further and to exploit opportunities arising from the predicted rise in world population. The Agri-Food Strategy Board's report Going for Growth has set challenging growth targets for the dairy sector. The recommendations in the report and proposals on the way forward (including potential assistance/funding) are currently under consideration by the Executive and I hope to be in a position to make an announcement on this in the near future.

Young Farmers: Family Farms

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what incentives are currently available to encourage a young farmer to take over their family farm.

(AQW 31681/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: You will be aware that DARD, through CAFRE, provides programmes of Further and Higher education to equip young people for entry into farming. Currently, some 743 people are enrolled on CAFRE's Higher and Further education programmes.

Over the past two years CAFRE, in conjunction with the Countryside Agri Rural Partnership, has delivered a series of events covering farm succession planning which were attended by over 2,100 individuals. CAFRE has also developed a programme to assist young farmers, who have returned home from college, to further develop their knowledge and skills. This is delivered through local groups of like-minded people who have not as yet assumed responsibility for the farm.

Also, as part of the current Rural Development Programme, my Department operates a Farm Family Options Mentoring programme which assists farmers and family members, with the support of an

experienced agricultural business mentor, to consider their current position, address the main issues such as succession and retirement, and to develop a focused action plan for the future. Since the Scheme opened in 2010, 2,503 letters of offer have issued and 1,562 action plans have been completed. The most recent period for applications closed on 28 February 2014.

Looking to the future, the reform of Pillar I of the Common Agricultural Policy, which will take effect from 1 January 2015, will offer direct support to young farmers setting up as head of holding, provided, of course, they meet the eligibility conditions of the scheme. Within the development of the next Rural Development Programme consideration is also being given on how to provide appropriate support to young farmers.

Bovine Animals: Regulations

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many people have been charged with being a keeper of bovine animals born after the coming in to operation of the Cattle Identification (No.2) Regulations (NI) 1998, failed to attach approved ear tags to bovine animals, in contravention of Regulation 3 (3)(b) of the Regulations, contrary to Regulation 3(5) of the Cattle Identification (No.2) Regulations (NI) 1998, in each of the last four years.

(AQW 31698/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department submits Investigation File Reports for consideration by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), however the decisions whether to direct a prosecution, and what offences a defendant is charged with, are made by the PPS. The PPS has assisted the Department in compiling the statistics below. 3 persons were charged in the 4 years 2010-13.

Offence	Year	Number of Persons Charged
Failure to Attach Ear Tag	2010	0
	2011	0
	2012	0
	2013	3

Cattle: Regulations

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many people have been charged with failure to keep a herd register as required by Regulation 3 (4) of the Cattle Identification (Enforcement) Regulations (NI) 1998 in accordance with the form set out in the Schedule of said Regulations, contrary to Regulation 3 (1) of the Cattle Identification (Enforcement) Regulations (NI) 1998, in each of the last four years.

(AQW 31700/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department submits Investigation File Reports for consideration by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), however the decisions whether to direct a prosecution, and what offences a defendant is charged with, are made by the PPS. The PPS has assisted the Department in compiling the statistics below. 24 persons were charged in the 4 years 2010-13.

Offence	Year	Number of Persons Charged
Failure to Keep Herd Register	2010	5
	2011	10
	2012	5
	2013	4

Bovine Animals: Regulations

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many people have been charged with being the keeper of bovine animals, in contravention of Article 7.1 of the Council Regulations (EC) No 1760/2000, failed to notify the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of the death of bovine animals in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 8 of the Cattle Identification (Notification of Births, Deaths and Movements) Regulations (NI) 1999, contrary to Regulation 5 (1) of the Cattle Identification (Notification of Births, Deaths and Movements) Regulations (NI) 1999, in each of the last four years.

(AQW 31701/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department submits Investigation File Reports for consideration by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), however the decisions whether to direct a prosecution, and what offences a defendant is charged with, are made by the PPS. The PPS has assisted the Department in compiling the statistics below. 19 persons were charged in the 4 years 2010-13.

Offence	Year	Number of Persons Charged
Failure to Notify Death of Animal	2010	7
	2011	8
	2012	1
	2013	3

Animal By-Products: Regulations

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many individuals have been charged of being a person to whom an animal by-product requirement applied, in contravention of Regulation 6 of the Animal By-Products (Enforcement) Regulations (NI) 2011, failed to hold a carcass or part of a carcass of any farmed animal that had not been slaughtered for human consumption, pending consignment or disposal, in accordance with the EU Control Regulations as read with the EU Implementing Regulations, in such a manner as to ensure that any animal or bird would not have access to it, contrary to Regulation 17 of the said Regulations, in each of the last four years.

(AQW 31702/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department submits Investigation File Reports for consideration by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), however the decisions whether to direct a prosecution, and what offences a defendant is charged with, are made by the PPS. The PPS has assisted the Department in compiling the statistics below. 11 persons were charged in the 4 years 2010-13.

Offence	Year	Number of Persons Charged
Failure to Hold Animal Carcass	2010	0*
	2011	1
	2012	3
	2013	7

* Legislation came into operation 19 March 2011

Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many ministerial appointments to public bodies have been made by her Department since May 2011; and of these, to

detail how many were made to (i) males; (ii) females; and (iii) the organisations to which appointments were made.

(AQW 31703/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Ministerial appointments, including re-appointments, made since May 2011

Body	Male	Female	Total
Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute	5	1	6
Agri-Food Strategy Board (appointments made jointly with DETI)	9	0	9
Agricultural Wages Board [note same person re-appointed within the timescale]	2	0	2
Drainage Council	12	4	16
Fishery Harbour Authority	6	1	7
Livestock and Meat Commission for NI	5	1	6
Total	39	7	46

I have instructed my Officials to urgently review reasons for the under-representation of women, and prepare a report, including specific affirmative action measures, goals and timetables.

I along with the DCAL Minister have requested a meeting with the Commissioner for Public Appointments to discuss the under-representation of women in the public appointments process.

Single Farm Payments: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many Single Farm Payments to farmers are still outstanding, for the year 2013, within the North Down constituency; and to detail how much this represents as a total of all farmers in North Down.

(AQW 31712/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has delivered a record payment performance in 2013 with 90% of Single Farm Payment claims finalised in December 2013 and 96% of claims finalised in February 2014. Only 4 farm businesses in the North Down constituency have not yet received their Single Farm Payment, comprising 1.7% of farm businesses in North Down which claimed Single Farm Payment in 2013. Two of the 4 farm businesses which have not been paid are subject to probate proceedings which are outside the Department's control.

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within her Department; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31726/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Senior management has been interpreted as meaning those staff within the Senior Civil Service (SCS) which includes all Grade 5 and above and analogous grades. The numbers of SCS staff in post within DARD has fluctuated each year throughout the period in question.

The amount of employer's contributions paid into pension schemes for senior management in DARD and the number of employees involved are detailed in the table below:

Year	Amount of Employer Pensions Contribution Paid	Number of SCS staff
*Nov 2008/ March 09 *Information is only held from November 2008	£125,060	19-23
2009/10	£328,917	22-24
2010/11	£379,259	22-23
2011/12	£344,320	21-22
2012/13	£ 352,336	21-23

Rivers Agency: Drainage Council

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any scheme put forward by the Rivers Agency that was turned down by the Drainage Council in the last four years.

(AQW 31743/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There have been no schemes recommended by Rivers Agency that were turned down by the Drainage Council in the last four years.

Animal Cruelty

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what central coordination is carried out within her Department to combat animal cruelty.

(AQW 31756/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The welfare of animals here is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, which provides strong powers to deal with all animal welfare concerns including “animal cruelty”. From 2 April 2012 responsibility for enforcement of the Act is as follows: Councils in respect of non-farmed animals such as domestic pets and horses; my Department’s 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 works closely with the Councils to support them in their non-farmed animal welfare enforcement role, and my officials attend the Council’s Animal Welfare Project Board, which meets regularly throughout the year to monitor operational and governance issues.

While each organisation has its own respective enforcement role to undertake, there is a good working relationship between the three bodies and they work together on specific cases when enforcement issues cover more than one body’s area of responsibility.

My Department also has a Policy Branch which sets the policy and legislative requirements for animal welfare and provides advice and guidance to the enforcement bodies as required. This helps to ensure that the Act is implemented effectively and consistently.

Imported Eggs

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the checks that are carried out on imported eggs.

(AQW 31758/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: EU Egg Marketing Regulations require all hen eggs placed on the market for human consumption (Class A eggs) to comply with certain quality, weight and labelling provisions. Checks on imported eggs take place as part of a risk based inspection programme across egg packing centres, wholesalers, processing plants and production units in the north of Ireland. The checks are made to ensure that pack labelling information is correct and that production site traceability codes have been

marked on individual eggs. Eggs are also “candled” to ensure that they meet minimum quality criteria and are weighed to ensure that they meet the weight category stated on packs.

In the case of imported eggs for processing (Class B eggs), checks are made to ensure that pack labelling information is correct and that individual eggs have been appropriately marked. The Regulations require that all eggs are individually marked with either the full production site traceability code or with a Class B mark prior to movement across Member State boundaries.

My Department’s inspectors take enforcement action to control the marketing of any batches of eggs found to be in breach of these provisions.

During the past 12 months inspectors have encountered consignments of eggs imported from the south of Ireland at both egg packing and egg processing establishments. None of these consignments were found to be non-compliant with the Regulations. No imported eggs for consumption have been encountered from other Member States or beyond.

In addition, documentary checks are conducted on imported hatching eggs and records for traceability are maintained on a database. Consignments of special pathogen free hatching eggs have been received from Germany during the past year.

Single Farm Payments: North Antrim

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many Single Farm Payments to farmers are still outstanding, for the year 2013, within the North Antrim constituency; and to detail how much this represents as a total of all farmers in (i) North Antrim; and (ii) Northern Ireland.

(AQW 31766/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: The Department has delivered a record payment performance in 2013 with 90% of Single Farm Payment claims finalised in December 2013 and 96% of claims finalised in February 2014. In the North Antrim constituency, 3268 farm businesses have received a Single Farm Payment for 2013 and 237 claims are outstanding. This represents 6.76% of claimants in North Antrim and 0.63% of all farmers in the north of Ireland who claimed Single Farm Payment in 2013.

Department’s Water Bills

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) who audits her Department’s water bills; (ii) when her Department’s water bill was last audited; (iii) when her Department’s water bill will next be audited; (iv) how much money has been saved in the last five years as a result of auditing; and (v) the process for contracting out the auditing of water bills.

(AQW 31794/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: DARD owns a number of premises and is also a tenant/occupier in properties owned by Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

DFP pay water bills for some of these locations. However where DARD has responsibility for handling water bills for any of the premises it occupies, these are processed in accordance with existing financial guidelines. The Department does not conduct a separate, formal audit of water bills and there is no intention, at present, to move towards any contracting out arrangement.

Scrutiny of water usage by the Department’s College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise has realised £56k in savings over the last 5 year period.

Grievances: Timescales

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many formal grievances are currently being dealt with by her Department; (ii) how long each grievance has been on going; and (iii) in instances where the grievance has taken longer than the timescale quoted in the Northern Ireland

Civil Service Code of Practice, to outline the extenuating circumstances that have led to the additional timescale.

(AQW 31797/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The number of formal grievances currently being dealt with is 9
- (ii) Details of the timescales are set out in table below:

Number of grievances	Period from date grievance lodged to 10 March 2014
2	3 months
1	4 months
3	9 months
1	11 months
1	12 months
1	15 months

- (iii) While there are timescales for meetings and processes within the NICS grievance policy there is no overall timescale. The objective of the policy is to resolve a grievance "as quickly as possible". Where appropriate a grievance raised under the formal procedures will be investigated. Issues such as the complexity of the issues involved, availability of witnesses and their representatives and the various appeal processes can impact on the time taken.

Suspected Illegal Abattoir at Forkhill

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development on what date, and at what time, did she first become aware that her Department was engaged with others in the investigation that led to the discovery of the suspected illegal abattoir at Forkhill.

(AQW 31831/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As this case is under investigation, I cannot disclose when I, or indeed my staff, became aware of the specifics of this case. This is to protect the integrity of the investigation. However, in general terms, both my Department staff and I have been engaged with others since 2012 in efforts to tackle agricultural and rural crime.

In the course of this engagement I have met the Chief Constable, the Minister of Justice and many stakeholders. My enforcement staff have engaged closely with a number of enforcement partner agencies including the PSNI, An Garda Síochána, the south's Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine, the Food Standards Agency, Local Councils and HM Revenue and Customs. I am regularly updated on multi-agency enforcement operations and ongoing multi-agency co-operation for example the Rural Crime Unit Steering Group and the Livestock Theft Multi-Agency Group.

Commercial Mussel Operations in Belfast Lough

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the economic value of the commercial mussel operations in Belfast Lough; (ii) the number of current licences; and (iii) how much licences cost.

(AQW 31884/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The annual statistical returns from aquaculture producers indicate that the value of mussels harvested from Belfast Lough in 2012 was just under £2m.
- (ii) There are currently 18 Fish Culture Licences in operation covering a total of 21 sites.

(iii) There is currently no charge for a Fish Culture Licence.

Single Farm Payments

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any Single Farm Payments received for land owned by her Department.

(AQW 31900/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has received Single Farm Payments (SFP) as detailed in the table below:

Year	SFP Amount Paid
2005	£259,005.35
2006	£249,785.65
2007	£250,465.17
2008	£281,246.22
2009	£313,546.12
2010	£306,668.26
2011	£294,281.27
2012	£272,653.28
2013	£186,659.41

This does not include any Single Farm Payment which may have been claimed by businesses leasing land from the Department.

Research Challenge Fund

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 31329/11-15, for a breakdown of each reallocation.

(AQW 31948/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A breakdown of each reallocation is set out in the table below.

Research Challenge Fund projects are normally of two or three years duration. The money committed by DARD is for the duration of the project and does not therefore equate to actual in-year spend which is based on claims made for actual spend incurred.

The reallocation of unspent monies from the Research Challenge Fund was on the basis of claims made in relation to the projects in-year. The figures below will therefore not align exactly with the value of unallocated funds.

Regional Innovation Strategy Action	£'000
DCAL	50
DETI	230
Student Awards	22
Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute	305
NI Rural Development Plan	730
Loughs Agency of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission	75

Common Agricultural Policy Package

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many of the decisions required to be made on implementation of the new Common Agricultural Policy package require referral to the Executive.

(AQW 32078/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There is a range of decisions to be made on the implementation of the new Common Agricultural Policy package. In due course, I will make a careful assessment of which decisions might fall within any of the categories specified in Section 2.4 of the Ministerial Code which triggers the requirement for referral to the Executive.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Department's Water Bills

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) who audits her Department's water bills; (ii) when her Department's water bill was last audited; (iii) when her Department's water bill will next be audited; (iv) how much money has been saved in the last five years as a result of auditing; and (v) the process for contracting out the auditing of water bills.

(AQW 31563/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): DCAL is responsible for payment of water bills at PRONI - Titanic Quarter, Belfast and Fisheries Regional Offices at Bushmills, Movinagher, Riversdale and Portadown. The water charges for these premises are very small in value and proportionate effort is expended to ensure that charges applied are valid.

The water bills for the Department's headquarters at Causeway Exchange, Belfast are managed by DFP as the owning department of the building.

Irish City of Culture Competition

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 31225/11-15, given that the relevant authorities in the Republic of Ireland have confirmed that the Irish City of Culture competition will be confined to cities within the Republic of Ireland, and there is no political consensus in Londonderry for such a bid, whether her Department will actively support any European bid that commands that consensus.

(AQW 31660/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I understand that a bid for the Irish City of Culture title has been discussed by Derry City Council and it is the responsibility of the Council to progress with the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs. I am fully supportive of a bid.

In terms of a European bid, whilst there are no specific procedures in place to assist cities seeking the EU City of Culture designation, my Department will continue to work with and support stakeholders in Derry and across the North West to ensure that the City is in a strong position should any bid be made in the future.

Promotion of the Irish Language: Spend

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the spend on promoting the Irish Language; and (ii) the cost of the most recent television advert promoting the Irish Language, in the last three years.

(AQW 31668/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The spending on the promotion of the Irish language has been by Foras na Gaeilge, Colmille Project, and the Líofoa Campaign all of which are funded by DCAL.

The amounts spent over the last three years are shown in the table below:

DCAL Funding	2011	2012	2013	Total 2011-2013
Foras na Gaeilge	£3,816,012	£3,605,080	£3,502,960	£10,924,052
Colmcille	£133,164	£114,679	£114,117	£361,960
Líofa	£2,625	£110,100	£368,692	£481,417
Total	£3,953,812	£3,831,871	£3,987,782	£11,767,429

The total cost of the current television advertising campaign for Líofa is £51,614.

Promotion of Ulster-Scots: Spend

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the spend on promoting the Ulster-Scots language in the last three years.

(AQW 31669/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The spending on the promotion of the Ulster-Scots language has been by the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Ministerial Advisory Group Ulster-Scots both of which are funded by DCAL.

The amounts spent over the last three years on the promotion of the Ulster-Scots language are shown in the table below:

DCAL Funding	2011	2012	2013	Total 2011-2013
U-SA	£115,691	£116,325	£105,356	£337,372
MAGUS	£30,000	£48,309	£151,145	£229,454
Total	£147,702	£166,646	£258,514	£566,826

As DCAL provides 75% of the funding for the Ulster-Scots Agency the figures shown only relate to the DCAL contribution.

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within her Department; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31727/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the last five financial years, the Department contributed the following amounts in respect of its senior managers all of whom were members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland).

The number of employees involved in each year have also been provided, along with explanatory notes.

Year	Contributions (£)	Number of Employees	Notes
2008-09	112,259	10	Employed for the full year – 5 Employed for less than the full year – 5
2009-10	102,452	9	Employed for the full year – 4 Employed for less than the full year – 5
2010-11	107,948	6	All employed throughout the year

Year	Contributions (£)	Number of Employees	Notes
2011-12	107,810	8	Employed for the full year – 5 Employed for less than the full year - 3
2012-13	122,968	7	All employed throughout the year

Grievances: Timescales

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) how many formal grievances are currently being addressed; (ii) how long each grievance has been ongoing; and (iii) whether any grievance has taken longer than the timescale detailed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Practice, including (a) how much longer; and (b) the reasons for the delay.

(AQW 31767/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) My Department is currently addressing one formal grievance;
- (ii) The grievance was lodged on 11 October 2013 and the grievance meeting took place on 06 November 2013. A verbal decision has been given and a written decision is currently being processed.
- (iii) While there are timescales for meetings and processes within the Grievance Policy, there is no overall timescale. The objective of the policy is to resolve a grievance “as quickly as possible”. The delay in issuing the formal written decision was caused by a delay by the parties in reaching agreement about the minutes of the grievance meeting.

Ards Borough Council: Future of Exploris

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department has received a revised Business Plan from Ards Borough Council regarding the future of Exploris; and if so, to detail the steps that will be taken following consideration.

(AQW 31942/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department received a copy of the business plan from the Council’s Consultant. The plan recognises that the Exploris Centre is an important tourism and environmental resource and the contribution that it makes to the local economy.

As you are aware, my Department has no remit for aquariums or the marine and it is therefore appropriate for other Departments to consider in view of their respective responsibilities including the economy, tourism and the marine environment.

The development of tourism and encouraging more visitors to the North of Ireland relies on us having the appropriate infrastructure. Exploris is an important part of the tourism product and I hope that a sustainable future can be secured for the Centre.

Department of Education

Departmental Bank Accounts

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education 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 31263/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Department does not have any bank accounts that have been inactive for twelve months or more.

Pupil Absence Rates

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what his Department is doing to improve pupil absence rates.

(AQW 31383/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department's circular number 2013/13, Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording by Schools, which was issued to schools in June 2013 provides schools with good practice, guidance and strategies to manage pupil attendance.

My Department recommends that every school should have an attendance policy in place. Schools should refer pupils to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) for support, if appropriate, if their attendance falls below 85% or if there is a cause for concern.

Intervention by the EWS is tailored to the individual child following the assessment of their circumstances including their needs, the parents/carer's capacity to meet those needs and the family and environmental factors. Provision of advice and support, consideration of warnings or any onward referral is completely determined by the outcome of this assessment.

My Department also issued Attendance Matters - A Parent's Guide to the parents and guardians of all Year 1 and Year 8 pupils last year. Response has been very positive and schools can download this from my Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk

Children with English as an Additional Language

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education what percentage of pupils in each constituency do not have English as their first language.

(AQW 31392/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the table overleaf.

PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE BY CONSTITUENCY IN WHICH THE SCHOOL IS LOCATED, 2013/14

Constituency in which the school is located	Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Total enrolments	% of pupils with English as an additional language
Belfast East	865	14,816	5.8%
Belfast North	912	21,736	4.2%
Belfast South	2,139	20,507	10.4%
Belfast West	837	18,560	4.5%
East Antrim	367	14,436	2.5%
East Derry	544	17,006	3.2%
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1,977	20,876	9.5%
Foyle	477	21,434	2.2%
Lagan Valley	700	15,847	4.4%
Mid Ulster	1,226	20,604	6.0%
Newry and Armagh	1,458	23,944	6.1%
North Antrim	727	20,069	3.6%
North Down	394	13,778	2.9%

Constituency in which the school is located	Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Total enrolments	% of pupils with English as an additional language
South Antrim	512	14,406	3.6%
South Down	498	21,064	2.4%
Strangford	391	14,986	2.6%
Upper Bann	1,934	22,704	8.5%
West Tyrone	610	17,792	3.4%
Total	16,568	334,565	5.0%

Source: NI school census

Note:

- 1 Figures include funded children in voluntary and private preschools, nursery schools, primary (including nursery, reception and year 1-7 classes), post primary and special schools.
- 2 Figures for voluntary and private preschools and nursery schools relate to newcomer pupils only. Information about first language of non-newcomer pupils is not collected for these school types.
- 3 A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school but who does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, and the wider environment, and does not have a language in common with the teacher, whether that is English or Irish. This has previously been referred to as English an Additional Language. It does not refer to indigenous pupils who choose to attend an Irish medium school.
- 4 Constituency refers to the constituency in which the school is located rather than constituency in which the pupil is resident.

Auditor General's Improving Pupil Attendance Follow-up Report

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education, in light of the Auditor General's Improving Pupil Attendance follow-up report that states that is unacceptable that the Education Welfare Service is discouraging schools from referring pupils who miss more than 15 per cent of school attendance, whether he plans to investigate this issue.

(AQW 31408/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Northern Ireland Audit Office report Improving Pupil Attendance: follow-up report was published on 25 February 2014. I note the comments in relation to the Education Welfare Service discouraging schools from reporting pupils with greater than 15 per cent absenteeism. However, the Chief Executives of the five Education and Library Boards have provided assurances that this is not the case.

My Department's Circular 2013/13, Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording by Schools, which was issued to schools in June 2013, advises that "where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address ore improve school attendance".

Auditor General: Absenteeism

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the Auditor General's concerns that the Education Welfare Service is discouraging schools from reporting pupils with greater than 15 per cent absenteeism; and what plans he has to encourage schools to report these pupils.

(AQW 31409/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Northern Ireland Audit Office report Improving Pupil Attendance: follow-up report was published on 25 February 2014. I note the comments in relation to the Education Welfare Service discouraging schools from reporting pupils with greater than 15 per cent absenteeism. However, the Chief Executives of the five Education and Library Boards have provided assurances that this is not the case.

My Department's Circular 2013/13, Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording by Schools, which was issued to schools in June 2013, advises that "where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance".

Education Welfare Service: Absenteeism

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education whether he has carried out a review into resourcing the Education Welfare Service to ensure that all referral cases of absenteeism are dealt with promptly.
(AQW 31410/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Resourcing of the Education and Welfare Service (EWS) is a matter for the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) themselves. My Department works closely with the EWS and if there are any pressures it is expected that the ELBs would bring the matter to the attention of officials.

Department's Water Bills

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) who audits his Department's water bills; (ii) when his Department's water bill was last audited; (iii) when the Department's water bill will next be audited; (iv) how much money has been saved in the last five years as a result of auditing; and (v) the process for contracting out the auditing of water bills.

(AQW 31461/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All bills relating to water usage by my Department are managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel as the owning Department for buildings used by my Department.

Special Education: Spend

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how much has been spent in each Education and Library Board area on special education, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31541/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below provides the total spent in each Education and Library Board on special education in each of the last five financial years.

	BELB £m	NEELB £m	SEELB £m	SELB £m	WELB £m	Total £m
08/09	37	31	37	33	32	170
09/10	36	32	39	32	33	172
10/11	37	35	37	32	35	176
11/12	39	35	38	31	35	178
12/13	39	36	40	33	35	183
Total	188	169	191	161	170	879

Children in Care: Further Education

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how he is engaging in with the Minister for Employment and Learning to support children in care who are moving into further education.

(AQW 31735/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The joint Department of Education (DE) and Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Preparing for Success Careers Strategy recognises the importance of enabling all young people, including children in care, to develop the skills to be able to make informed decisions about their education, training and employment options ensuring successful transition into education, training, or employment.

The Strategy endorses a partnership model as the preferred model of provision. This means that careers teachers work in partnership with DEL's careers advisers to offer advice to young people on making appropriate and informed choices on pathways that lead to higher or further education, training or employment. Schools enable learners to develop their knowledge and skills to manage their career development and make relevant informed choices.

Schools and the Careers Service have developed Partnership Agreements with over 98% of post primary schools detailing the range of services offered by the Careers Service to ensure that the appropriate level of external support is built into careers programmes and that pupils have access to impartial advice and guidance from the careers service at key transition points.

The policy lead for Looked after Children lies with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Out of this policy the Care to Careers Regional Steering Group was formed to focus on promoting positive outcomes in education, training and employment for looked after and care-experienced children and young people. My Department is represented on this Steering Group, which is co-chaired by DEL and the Health and Social Care Board.

Hockey Facilities in Schools

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what steps he is taking to improve access and facilities for school children who play hockey in Portadown, particularly pupils of Killicomaine Junior High School. **(AQW 31751/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: Killicomaine Junior High School is a controlled school, which is the responsibility of the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB).

Provision of sports facilities in controlled schools is funded from ELB's Minor Capital Works Programme. The Department of Education administers a Minor Capital Works Programme for non-controlled schools. I understand that the SELB has received a number of applications for synthetic pitches or multi-use games areas including one from Killicomaine Junior High School under the Minor Capital Works Programme.

The Board have informed me they will continue to work with schools and other agencies to deliver appropriate sports facilities at the earliest opportunity.

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within his Department; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31760/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

Year	Number of Senior Civil Servants involved	Amount contributed to pension schemes by employer and employees
2008/09	16 - 18	314,055.98
2009/10	16 – 19	320,479.53
2010/11	15 – 18	332,854.54
2011/12	15 – 16	324,092.74
2012/13	15 – 20	379,949.05

Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Practice: Grievances

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) how many formal grievances are currently being addressed; (ii) how long each grievance has been ongoing; and (iii) whether any grievance has taken longer than the timescale detailed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Practice, including (a) how much longer; and (b) the reasons for the delay.

(AQW 31768/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The details relating to the handling of any grievances (including timescales and the reasons for any delay) are specific to each individual grievance and as such constitute personal information. As the number of grievances currently being addressed within my Department is fewer than five, it is not appropriate to provide any of the information requested as to do so would contravene the first principle of the Data Protection Act.

Confucius Education Project

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what financial support his Department provides the Confucius education project.

(AQW 31858/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department does not provide financial support to the University of Ulster's Confucius Institute education project. I have however met with representatives of the University of Ulster Confucius Institute, to discuss possible financial support from my Department for the Confucius Classroom Scheme in schools here. A proposal has been received from the University of Ulster and is currently being considered.

St. Patrick's School, Magheralin: Minor Works

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has made a decision on the application by St. Patrick's School, Magheralin for improved accessibility to the school grounds under the minor works process.

(AQW 31892/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has been working to progress the minor works application for improved accessibility to the school grounds at St Patrick's Primary School , Magheralin.

During September 2013 approval was given for a topographical survey to be carried out to enable an appropriate design to be progressed. This work is ongoing at present.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Provision in Schools

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the CBI's Evaluation of Education and Employer Partnerships in Northern Ireland report that recommends (i) the need for a sea-change in careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools; (ii) the need for greater

prioritisation of CEIAG by the Minister, his Department, head teachers and business; (iii) that all CEIAG teachers should have an up to date professional qualification to deliver CEIAG; (iv) enhanced and mandatory work experience for pupils during holidays; (v) a UCAS style system for vocational routes such as apprenticeships and other non-academic pathways; and (vi) access to user friendly Labour Market Information for teachers, parents and children.

(AQW 31990/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A copy of the CBI's report was recently received by my Department and I have attended its launch on 27 February. I welcome the report which contains important insights from the employer's perspective and look forward to considering it in more detail. A review of the joint DE and DEL Careers strategy 'Preparing for Success' will take place this year and many of the issues raised within the report will be considered further as part of this review.

Department for Employment and Learning

Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many ministerial appointments to public bodies have been made by his Department since May 2011; and of these, to detail how many were made to (i) males; (ii) females; and (iii) the organisations to which appointments were made.

(AQW 31623/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The attached table provides all details requested.

Public Body	Appointments of Males	Appointments of Females	Total Ministerial Public Appointments since May 2011
Certification Officer	0	1	1
CITB ConstructionSkills-NI	9	4	13
Industrial Court	6	4	10
Labour Relations Agency	6	3	9
Governing Body of Stranmillis University College	3	1	4
Ulster Supported Employment Ltd	5	1	6
Belfast Metropolitan College	6	3	9
Northern Regional College	5	5	10
North West Regional College	7	4	11
South Eastern Regional College	9	1	10
Southern Regional College	7	4	11
South West College	7	3	10
Totals:	70	34	104

Student Numbers at the Magee Campus

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the University of Ulster's One Plan commitment of securing a targeted increase of 1,000 Maximum Student Numbers at the Magee campus by 2015.

(AQW 31676/11-15)

Dr Farry: To date I have been able to fund an additional 1,550 higher education places in Northern Ireland. 1,210 of these have been in the two universities and 340 are in our further education colleges. The University of Ulster has been allocated a total of 652 of the university places and it has undertaken to deploy these places at its Magee campus. As I have stated before, I am committed to achieving the One Plan target of 1,000 additional places at Magee by 2015 and I will take every opportunity to seek additional resources in order to bring this about.

Steps to Work and Training for Success Social Clause Requirements

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the implementation and effectiveness of his approach to filling placements on the Steps to Work and Training for Success social clause requirements.

(AQW 31792/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's responsibility in terms of social Clause requirement is to provide a supply chain of clients for employment opportunities, apprenticeships or work placements to assist contractors fulfil their social clause obligations. Although officials have been effective in engaging with a large number of contractors, not all contracts are notified to the Department. Officials are currently working with 133 social clause contracts across Northern Ireland, 77 of which are in construction and 56 are in supplies and services.

My Department works in partnership with Central Procurement Directorate, to promote best practice which has resulted in some Departments seeking to go above the minimum social clauses requirements.

New Theatre at South Eastern Regional College in Bangor

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the new theatre at South Eastern Regional College in Bangor will be available for community use and if so, how will this be facilitated.

(AQW 31841/11-15)

Dr Farry: Although the Performing Arts and Technology Innovation Centre at the Bangor campus of the South Eastern Regional College is first and foremost a further education facility, the college recognises fully the potential for community engagement and access to the resource outside of educational activity. The protocol for the use of the theatre by external bodies and community groups will be developed by the College and will be in place for the opening of the centre in September 2015.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Jobs Promoted by International Investors: Foyle

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the (i) number of jobs promoted by international investors in the Foyle constituency; (ii) the firms responsible; (iii) grant aid received by those firms; (iv) timescales for the jobs promoted to be created; (v) the number of those jobs created to date; and (vi) the number of jobs that currently exist, for each financial year from 2008/09 to present.

(AQW 31614/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):

- (i) The table below shows the number of jobs promoted by international investors in the Foyle constituency for each financial year from 2008-09 to 2012-13.

Financial Year	New Jobs Promoted
2008-09	30
2009-10	86
2010-11	297
2011-12	132
2012-13	200

Note: Includes GB-owned projects.

- (ii) The companies that promoted these jobs were:

- Allstate Northern Ireland Limited
- AXA Insurance Limited
- Du Pont (U.K.) Industrial Limited
- Injixo Ltd
- One Stop Data Limited
- Perfecseal Limited
- Rigney Dolphin Limited
- Seagate Technology (Ireland)
- You Bloom Limited

- (iii) The amount of assistance paid to those firms between 2008-09 and 2012-13 was £13.3 million.

- (iv) New jobs are created over a period of time agreed between Invest NI and the company when an offer of support is being negotiated. These arrangements are monitored and managed by Invest NI and financial support is only released when commitments have been met in line with the agreed plan. Invest NI's support for job promotion is conditional on the maintenance of the employment created for a minimum of five years (three years in the case of SMEs).

- (v) and (vi) At present, Invest NI does not report on the number of jobs created by its interventions. Invest NI has developed new systems that will allow it to begin reporting on jobs created in the next financial year. Alastair Hamilton will update the Enterprise Trade and Investment Committee on this process at his end of year results presentation, currently scheduled for May.

Consumer Council: Energy Issues

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the change in the number of complaints made to the Consumer Council regarding energy issues, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31661/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland has a statutory remit to promote and safeguard the interests of consumers in relation to energy matters, including considering consumer complaints and enquiries. During the last five years, it dealt with the following number of complaints:

Year	Number of Complaints
2009/10	242
2010/11	218
2011/12	204
2012/13	277
2013/14*	119

* The 2013-14 figures are from 1 April 2013 to 13 March 2014.

Single Electricity Market

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 7003/11-15, how it was possible to include comparative information in response to AQW 1305/11-15 and whether this indicates her Department has ceased to collect such comparative data; and if so, to outline the reasons for this.

(AQW 31671/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As I indicated in response to AQW 7003/11-15, my Department does not collect electricity price comparison data.

Review into Electricity Policy: Part II - Electricity Pricing

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she fully accepts Recommendation 15 in the second report of the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment on its Review into Electricity Policy: Part II - Electricity Pricing; and if not, which parts she accepts.

(AQW 31674/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I made my position clear on this recommendation when, in the time available to me, I responded to the Committee's Motion debated in the Assembly on 3 March 2014.

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within her Department; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31729/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

Year	Contribution to Pension Schemes £	*No. of Employees	Notes
2008/2009	£65,084	10	Information only available from Nov-08 to Mar-09
2009/2010	£146,421	11	
2010/2011	£170,091	12	
2011/2012	£182,627	12	
2012/2013	£163,896	15	

* There are currently 9 substantive senior management posts in DETI. However, the number of employees listed above reflects the total number of staff who occupied senior management posts for a period during the year in question, e.g. it includes temporary promotions and it also includes both the new and the previous post-holder when any new member of staff joined the Department.

InvestNI's Jobs Fund: North Down

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

(AQW 31755/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As of 31st December 2013, a total of 164 jobs have been promoted in North Down by the Jobs Fund since its launch in April 2011. This includes support to companies such as Mango Direct Marketing to promote 55 jobs and to Omnisoft Services to promote 11 jobs.

72 jobs were created between April 2011 and December 2013.

Department's Water Bills

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) who audits her Department's water bills; (ii) when her Department's water bill was last audited; (iii) when her Department's water bill will next be audited; (iv) how much money has been saved in the last five years as a result of auditing; and (v) the process for contracting out the auditing of water bills.

(AQW 31795/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment, does not audit its water bills.

The Department's water use is for domestic purposes only. We have had many recommended water saving systems installed over several years. The expense of formal auditing of our bills against any potential savings at this stage would not be justified.

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within InvestNI; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31817/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The amount of money contributed to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) for senior management within Invest NI and the number of employees involved is as shown in the table below. No contribution to any other pension scheme was made.

Period	*FTE	Pension scheme Contributions £
13/14	20.08	382,254.66
12/13	19.92	395,194.86
11/12	17.93	323,113.14
10/11	18.25	323,155.44
09/10	19.42	315,560.51

* Full Time Equivalent

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within the Northern Ireland Tourist Board; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31818/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The amount of money contributed to pension schemes for The Senior Management Team within The Northern Ireland Tourist Board; and
- (ii) The number of employees involved, in the last five years is as follows:

Year:	Amount (£):	Employees:
2012/13	66163.96	7
2011/12	64214.06	8*
2010/11	65226.72	7
2009/10	55587.72	7
2008/09	45404.26	6
Total:	296596.72	-

* In 2011/12 a hand-over period resulted in 2 employees involved for 1 post (Director of Product Development, Grade 7).

Ards Borough Council: Future of Exploris

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has received a revised Business Plan from Ards Borough Council regarding the future of Exploris; and if so, to detail the steps that will be taken following consideration.

(AQW 31946/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is my understanding that the Council's Business Case and Economic Appraisal for the facility will be submitted to the Minister of the Environment who will table the report and options for the future of Exploris to the Northern Ireland Executive in due course.

Department of the Environment

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether any organisations have been identified or contracted to carry out councillor training under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 31550/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): My Department has worked closely with local government to set priorities for capacity building for councillors, council staff and civil servants who are impacted by the local government reform element of the Review of Public Administration. The Capacity Building Programme was developed in consultation with The Local Government Training Group, the National Association of Councillors and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association. To date, my Department has commissioned the Local Government Training Group and Community Places to deliver capacity building. Co-operation Ireland has also been commissioned to deliver a capacity building event. DOE Planning has developed a capacity building action plan that will include training and awareness raising on the new planning responsibilities of councillors. In addition Statutory Transition Committees have been allocated funding for capacity building at a local level and may appoint organisations or individuals to help them address the capacity building needs of councillors

Taxi Operator Licences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 30315/11-15, when licensing was informed to grant a licence; and who made the decision.

(AQW 31608/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As Fonacab's taxi operator application met with licensing requirements, the taxi operator licence was issued by the taxi operator licensing section on 19 June 2013.

Single Wind Turbine Planning Applications: Consultations

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the average consultation response times, over the last three years, for each district council's Environmental Health Offices on single wind turbine planning applications by the Planning Service.

(AQW 31616/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The average consultation response time from Environmental Health is 21 days across all Councils in the last 3 years. The table below shows the number of consultations, and the average response time for each District Council over the last 3 years.

It should be noted that the figures are provided from Planning administrative systems and do not form part of published and validated DOE Official Statistics.

AVERAGE1 CONSULTATION RESPONSE TIMES (DAYS)2 FOR EACH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICE, ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR SINGLE WIND TURBINES BETWEEN 1ST APRIL 2010 AND 31ST JANUARY 20143

Financial year applications received	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14 (up to 31/01/14)		Total	
	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time
Env Health Antrim Borough Council	37	15	35	13	36	7	7	15	115	13
Env Health Ards Borough Council	5	5	14	5	22	3	40	12	81	7
Env Health Armagh City & District Council	98	22	66	16	41	33	58	37	263	27
Env Health Ballymena Borough Council	104	98	67	90	50	43	51	14	272	49
Env Health Ballymoney Borough Council	65	24	69	16	39	22	26	9	199	18
Env Health Banbridge District Council	33	7	46	7	54	22	34	17	167	11
Env Health Belfast City Council	0		5	5	0		0		5	5
Env Health Carrickfergus Borough Council	28	53	22	94	5	64	2	21	57	57
Env Health Castlereagh Borough Council	14	19	27	51	11	25	3	31	55	35
Env Services Coleraine Borough Council	91	15	55	13	35	8	32	6	213	11
Env Health Cookstown District Council	104	34	59	28	86	36	20	37	269	34

Financial year applications received	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14 (up to 31/01/14)		Total	
	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time
Environmental Health Office										
Env Health Craigavon Borough Council	5	42	6	68	12	19	5	9	28	23
Env Health Derry City Council	48	23	31	27	53	18	16	18	148	18
Env Health Down District Council	65	39	58	52	37	33	19	23	179	39
Env Health Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	72	10	77	14	114	23	43	20	306	16
Env Health Fermanagh District Council	38	12	113	8	80	19	72	31	303	16
Env Health Larne Borough Council	49	16	44	11	33	11	30	2	156	10
Env Health Limavady Borough Council	31	27	22	15	27	23	15	11	95	18
Env Health Lisburn City Council	27	9	54	9	24	13	21	10	126	10
Env Health Magherafelt District Council	66	18	70	15	60	15	28	13	224	15
Env Health Moyle District Council	32	30	19	75	17	45	11	32	79	36
Env Health Newry & Mourne District Council	22	34	72	31	52	27	26	34	172	31
Env Health Newtownabbey Borough Council	2	74	18	10	11	18	11	13	42	13
Env Health North Down Borough Council	7	16	2	35	0		0		9	16

Financial year applications received	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14 (up to 31/01/14)		Total	
	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time	Number	Average1 Response time
Env Health Omagh District Council	109	41	169	53	191	50	70	57	539	50
Env Health Strabane District Council	54	8	137	25	133	29	38	25	362	22
Total	1,206	21	1,357	20	1,223	24	678	20	4,464	21

Notes:

- 1 The consultation response time is calculated, in days, from the date of the consultation to the date of the response. The median is used for the average response time and is determined by sorting data from the lowest to highest values and then taking the data point in the middle of the sequence. The median is used because some consultations can take several weeks/months to be responded to. Consequently, these extreme cases inflate the mean and the result is that the mean may not be considered as 'typical'.
- 2 These figures for consultations and response times are provided from Planning administrative systems and do not form part of published and validated DOE Official Statistics.
- 3 Up to 31st January 2014 is currently our Latest available, provisional, renewable energy information.
(http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/asb/statistics/planning_statistics.htm?edit)

Article 83A of the Planning (NI) Order 1991

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has assessed the compatibility of Article 83A of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 against the obligations of the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) as amended.

(AQW 31621/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department has assessed the compatibility of Article 83A of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 with the EIA Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended).

The Department may issue a certificate of lawful use or development under Article 83A of the Planning (NI) Order 1991, without carrying out an assessment under that Directive.

In case C-98/04, the Court of Justice of the European Union rejected as inadmissible a complaint by the European Commission that the issue of such a certificate could be considered a means of by-passing the consent and assessment procedures laid down by that Directive

Similar statutory provisions and procedures to NI exist in the corresponding legislation in the other UK planning jurisdictions.

Environmental Effects of Development

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department contends that it is lawful to issue a certificate of lawful use or development (i) without first assessing the environmental effects of the development; and (ii) without assessing the cumulative environmental effects of associated developments within the locality of the development made lawful.

(AQW 31622/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department has assessed the compatibility of Article 83A of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 with the EIA Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended).

The Department may issue a certificate of lawful use or development under Article 83A of the Planning (NI) Order 1991, without carrying out an assessment under that Directive.

In case C-98/04, the Court of Justice of the European Union rejected as inadmissible a complaint by the European Commission that the issue of such a certificate could be considered a means of by-passing the consent and assessment procedures laid down by that Directive

Similar statutory provisions and procedures to NI exist in the corresponding legislation in the other UK planning jurisdictions.

Taxi Operator Licences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 30315/11-15, who assessed Ravenhill and informed licensing that an operating centre was in situ.

(AQW 31657/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Fonacab applied to include Ravenhill rugby ground on its taxi operator licence on 28 February 2013 and it was included on the full licence issued to Fonacab on 19 June 2013. This licence replaced the temporary licence held by the company under the transitional arrangements for the introduction of taxi operator licensing. Operating centres were not routinely inspected as part of the licensing process.

As a result of a subsequent review of Fonacab's operations at Ravenhill, the Department was not satisfied that an operator centre had been established at that location and, as I have already indicated in a previous answer, this operating centre was removed from their licence on 1 October 2013.

Taxi Operator Licences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 30315/11-15, whether regulations were amended to permit this temporary licence to be granted; and if so, (i) which specific regulations; and (ii) to outline the legality of this amendment.

(AQW 31706/11-15)

Mr Durkan: All applications for taxi operator licences have been processed in accordance with the provisions of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and the Taxi Operators Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 and no regulations were amended. The legislation provided for the issue of temporary licences as an initial, transitional measure for the introduction of taxi operator licensing

MOT Provision for Motorists in Banbridge and Craigavon

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of MOT provision for motorists in Banbridge and Craigavon; and what plans he has to increase access to testing.

(AQW 31722/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) conducts 'MOT' vehicle tests from 15 centres strategically located across Northern Ireland.

The Banbridge and Craigavon area is serviced by test centres located in Craigavon, Lisburn, Newry and Armagh. The DVA target is that 92% of all vehicle tests are conducted within 21 days of the customer making an application. From 1 April – 31 December 2013 approximately 99% of all vehicle tests in the Banbridge and Craigavon areas were conducted within that period.

I am content, given forecast demand projections, that there is sufficient MOT provision for motorists in the Banbridge and Craigavon area and therefore I have no plans to increase access to testing at this time.

Waste and Minerals Planning Applications

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment who will be responsible for waste and minerals planning applications following the implementation of the Review of Public Administration in 2015.

(AQW 32046/11-15)

Mr Durkan: All major and local developments will be dealt with by councils under the new planning system. It is anticipated that following the implementation of the Review of Public Administration in 2015, the majority of waste and minerals applications will be dealt with by councils. I have instructed that extra resources are allocated to the Minerals Unit to help ensure waste and mineral application backlogs are cleared before planning transfers to local councils.

Any regionally significant development proposals will be determined by the Department.

My Department will be consulting on the criteria for identifying local, major and regionally significant applications in the near future.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any communication that he has had with NISRA regarding the Office for National Statistics certification of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report.

(AQW 31301/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): There has been no communication with NISRA regarding the certification of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report (NFBR).

Dormants Accounts Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how much of the Dormants Accounts Funding has been spent or allocated to projects in North Down.

(AQW 31579/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department is currently considering possible spending priorities for the NI Dormant Accounts Scheme. Having reviewed the proposals to date, it is my intention that the Scheme will focus on social finance.

My officials are currently working across a number of issues in relation to the proposals. This work includes the development of a business case, undertaking a competitive tendering exercise and completing the legislative and Assembly process. In addition, my officials are in discussion with the Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO) as to whether further public consultation is required.

As the policy is still in development, none of the available NI Dormant Accounts funding has been utilised.

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any steps taken in regard to meeting the UK Governments commitments, in relation to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

(AQW 31687/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Officials from my Department continue to work with other representatives on the Interdepartmental Charter Implementation Group to take forward commitments in relation to the Charter.

Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, since May 2011, to detail (i) how many ministerial appointments to public bodies have been made by his Department; (ii) how many of those were made to (a) males; and (b) females; and (iii) the organisations to which appointments were made.

(AQW 31697/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Since May 2011, a total of 22 public appointments have been made to bodies which are sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel. Details are contained in the table overleaf.

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS TO DFP SPONSORED BODIES SINCE MAY 2011

Public Body	Number of appointments made		
	Male	Female	Total
Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation	5	1	6
Statistics Advisory Committee	5	2	7
Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee	8	1	9

Traders in North Down: Rates Rebates

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

(AQW 31707/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The table overleaf details the number of non-domestic properties in the North Down Borough Council area which have benefited from (i) a rates rebate (Small Business Rate Relief or Empty Property Relief); and (ii) property derating for 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 (up to 28th February 2014).

	(i) Small Business Rate Relief or Empty Property Relief	(ii) Derating
2011/12	502	476
2012/13	874	477
2013/14 (up to 28th February 2014)	967	479

Public Service Pensions Bill (NIA 23/11-15): Equality Impact Assessment

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the responses to his Department's Equality Impact Assessment consultation on the Public Service Pensions Bill (NIA 23/11-15).

(AQO 5794/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel conducted a policy screening exercise for the Public Service Pensions Bill which concluded that an Equality Impact Assessment was not required.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in the Moyle District Council Area

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the small and medium sized enterprises in the Moyle District Council area.

(AQW 31850/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I refer the Member to my response given in AQW 31650 /11-15.

Haulage Industry

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the contribution of the haulage industry to the local economy in the last five years.

(AQW 31866/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The information requested is provided in Table 1, overleaf. This shows that the haulage industry has accounted for approximately 2% of Northern Ireland's private sector approximate Gross Value Added (aGVA) in each of the last five years.

Please note that figures are taken from the NI Annual Business Inquiry (NI ABI), which is a sample survey. NI ABI estimates at industry class (Standard Industrial Classification 2007 4-digit) are based on relatively small sample sizes, and are therefore subject to a higher degree of sampling variability than for NI level results.

TABLE 1: GVA FOR THE HAULAGE¹ INDUSTRY AND THE NI ABI POPULATION, 2008-2012 REPORTING UNIT RESULTS

Year	Haulage GVA (£millions)	NI GVA (£millions)	Haulage GVA as Percentage of NI total
2008	361	17,743	2.0
2009	421	17,989	2.3
2010	427	18,158	2.4
2011	366	17,901	2.0
2012	440	18,399	2.4

Source: NI Annual Business Inquiry

- 1 Haulage is defined as SIC 2007 code 49.41 – Freight transport by road.

Median Salary in the Civil Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the median salary in the Civil Service in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 31912/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Please see the tables below.

THE MEDIAN SALARY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS.

Year (March)				
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
£19,647	£21,392	£21,924	£21,924	£23,999

THE MEAN SALARY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS.

Year (March)				
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
£22,964	£24,776	£25,352	£25,808	£26,823

THE AVERAGE SALARY IN EACH OF THE THREE LOWEST GRADES IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Year (March)					
Analogous Grade	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
EOII	£19,113	£21,168	£21,620	£22,048	£23,675
AO	£16,010	£18,783	£19,552	£20,078	£20,695
AA	£13,906	£16,092	£16,505	£16,806	£17,067

- 1 The above tables show staff in their substantive responsibility level unless on temporary promotion, in which case staff are recorded at the higher responsibility level.
- 2 Earnings represent actual annual gross salaries and include basic salary only.
- 3 For part-time employees, salaries represent full-time equivalent earnings.
- 4 Figures take account of backdated pay awards (either using calculations or actual data on backdated pay).
- 5 Alignment to pay scales for AA to EOII staff, as a result of a settlement of equal pay claims, while effective from 1 February 2009, is not seen in the data until 2010.
- 6 The increase between 2012 and 2013 in these tables is accounted for mainly by service based assimilation for staff in EOII and EOI grades.
- 7 For consistency over the 5 year period the tables exclude DOJ, which was created in April 2010.

Median Salary in the Civil Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the mean salary in the Civil Service in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 31913/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Please see the tables below.

THE MEDIAN SALARY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS.

Year (March)				
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
£19,647	£21,392	£21,924	£21,924	£23,999

THE MEAN SALARY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS.

Year (March)				
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
£22,964	£24,776	£25,352	£25,808	£26,823

THE AVERAGE SALARY IN EACH OF THE THREE LOWEST GRADES IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Year (March)					
Analogous Grade	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
E0II	£19,113	£21,168	£21,620	£22,048	£23,675
AO	£16,010	£18,783	£19,552	£20,078	£20,695
AA	£13,906	£16,092	£16,505	£16,806	£17,067

- 8 The above tables show staff in their substantive responsibility level unless on temporary promotion, in which case staff are recorded at the higher responsibility level.
- 9 Earnings represent actual annual gross salaries and include basic salary only.
10. For part-time employees, salaries represent full-time equivalent earnings.
11. Figures take account of backdated pay awards (either using calculations or actual data on backdated pay).
12. Alignment to pay scales for AA to E0II staff, as a result of a settlement of equal pay claims, while effective from 1 February 2009, is not seen in the data until 2010.
13. The increase between 2012 and 2013 in these tables is accounted for mainly by service based assimilation for staff in E0II and E0I grades.
14. For consistency over the 5 year period the tables exclude DOJ, which was created in April 2010.

Median Salary in the Civil Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the average salary in each of the three lowest grades in the Civil Service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31914/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Please see the tables below.

THE MEDIAN SALARY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS.

Year (March)				
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
£19,647	£21,392	£21,924	£21,924	£23,999

THE MEAN SALARY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS.

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17. For part-time employees, salaries represent full-time equivalent earnings.
18. Figures take account of backdated pay awards (either using calculations or actual data on backdated pay).
19. Alignment to pay scales for AA to E0II staff, as a result of a settlement of equal pay claims, while effective from 1 February 2009, is not seen in the data until 2010.
20. The increase between 2012 and 2013 in these tables is accounted for mainly by service based assimilation for staff in E0II and E0I grades.
21. For consistency over the 5 year period the tables exclude DOJ, which was created in April 2010.

Ards Borough Council: Future of Exploris

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether his Department has received a revised Business Plan from Ards Borough Council regarding the future of Exploris; and if so, to detail the steps that will be taken following consideration.

(AQW 31944/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel has not received any business plan from Ards Borough Council regarding the future of Exploris.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**Required Savings: Budget**

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the comparison across directorates within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in terms of required savings for realising a balanced budget.

(AQW 31414/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has a savings target of £26m in 2013/14. The allocation of the target across directorates is determined by the Trust. Where possible, in allocating targets to Directorates, account is taken of the directorate's capacity to generate savings as indicated by a wide range of potential productivity opportunities. It should also be noted that corporate directorates have been required to achieve

proportionately higher targets to reflect the Trust's focus on reducing administration costs and discretionary spend.

Bamford Review of Psychological Therapies

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how each Health and Social Care Trust has implemented the Bamford Review of Psychological Therapies.

(AQW 31532/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) established a Regional Steering Group to implement the Psychological Therapy Services strategy. The Steering Group includes representatives from all of the Trusts, Psychological Therapy Professional Bodies, Universities and Experts by experience.

A primary focus of the Group's work is to standardise care models and the development of outcome frameworks. A Mental Health and Psychological Training Strategy has been established and £300K has been invested over all trusts on a wide range of psychological therapies training. This is benefiting over 30 staff who have availed of Counselling, CBT & Dual diagnosis training. In addition, over 100 staff are also benefiting from modular based training.

The HSCB has invested £700k to establish Primary Care Talking Therapies Hubs in each Trust. These hubs bring together GPs, Mental Health clinicians and Third Sector Providers into a single consortium. The hubs will improve access to care for people with common mental health problems. The HSCB is committed to incrementally build these hubs as a new way of working over the next 3 years.

The HSCB has also invested around £300K in order to enhance Psychological Therapy services for those with physical health needs such as pain management.

Evacuation of Skeagh House, Dromore: Costs

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 30878/11-15, to itemise the goods and services paid for since the evacuation of Skeagh House, Dromore.

(AQW 31542/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that the following goods and services have been paid for since the evacuation of Skeagh House, Dromore, on 27 March 2013:

GOODS & SERVICES COSTS

Description	Expenditure
Staff Travel	£15,906.63
Water Charges	£12,420.79
Electricity	£2,886.52
Registration Fees	£1,104.00
Gas	£353.19
Miscellaneous	£896.78
Total Goods & Services for 9 Months	£33,567.91

First Responder Defibrillator Schemes

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of First Responder Defibrillator Schemes currently operating; (ii) the areas they serve; and (iii) the funding they receive.

(AQW 31603/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) has advised there are currently eight community first responder schemes operating in Northern Ireland which use automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) as follows:

- Islandmagee;
- Enniskillen;
- The Mid-Glens, Co Antrim;
- Broughderg, north-west of Cookstown;
- Slaughtneil, north of Maghera;
- Rathlin;
- Loughgeil, Co Antrim;
- Heart of Foyle, Londonderry.

The names of the schemes relate to the general areas served. Most first responder schemes are set up as charities or trusts; they are voluntary schemes and are not funded by NIAS.

Nurses Employed: Health and Social Care Trusts

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many nurses have been employed by each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31605/11-15)

Mr Poots: The numbers of staff in each major group, including qualified nurses and midwives, in each Health and Social Care (HSC) organisation are published quarterly in the HSC Key Facts Workforce Bulletin. The Bulletin is available at: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/work_force/stats-hsc.htm .

The five year trend for Trust-only qualified nurses and midwives is provided below.

QUALIFIED NURSES & MIDWIVES EMPLOYED IN HSC TRUSTS ONLY AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER EACH YEAR

HSC Trust	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	HC	WTE								
Belfast	5,578	4,794.0	5,459	4,675.3	5,397	4,626.0	5,317	4,557.1	5,371	4,642.6
Northern	2,921	2,456.7	2,856	2,401.3	2,777	2,325.6	2,807	2,361.9	2,821	2,389.1
South Eastern	2,340	1,964.5	2,409	2,027.5	2,416	2,025.2	2,579	2,182.8	2,634	2,242.6
Southern	2,624	2,162.0	2,671	2,198.5	2,676	2,214.6	2,749	2,306.6	2,811	2,341.6
Western	2,693	2,433.5	2,699	2,416.6	2,686	2,406.1	2,727	2,450.3	2,781	2,498.5
Total	16,156	13,810.9	16,094	13,719.3	15,952	13,597.5	16,179	13,858.6	16,418	14,114.5

Source: Human Resources Management System and Human Resources, Payroll, Travel & Subsistence system. Figures exclude bank staff and staff on career breaks. HC=headcount, WTE=whole-time equivalent.

Notes:

- 1 The figures above will include a number of midwives who do not have a first qualification in nursing but whose first qualification is in midwifery (direct entry programme).
- 2 2012 figures onwards for South Eastern Trust will include prison nurses who became Trust employees from 1st April 2012.

Urology Day Procedures

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline (i) the number of patients who have been on the waiting list for urology day procedures within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for more than 52 weeks; (ii) the criteria which the Belfast Trust applies in giving Red Flag priority status to urology day procedure patients; (iii) whether additional criteria are used in prioritising those patients whose cases are not given Red Flag status; and (iv) the actions which he will take to ensure that the Belfast Trust responds to concerns raised by local GPs regarding urology day procedure waiting lists.

(AQW 31612/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The most recent statistics relating to waiting times for day case admission in the urology specialty in each Health and Social Care Trust can be found at the link below: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/northern_ireland_waiting_times_qe_december_2013.xls

I am advised that due to confidentiality reasons, numbers of those patients waiting over 52 weeks for urology day procedures at the Belfast HSC Trust cannot be disclosed because of the small number, less than five, involved.

- (i) Every suspected cancer referral in Northern Ireland is considered to be red flag and is assessed according to the Northern Ireland Guidance for Suspected Cancer which reflects recommended best practice. The guidance was developed by NICaN's Tumour Groups and Primary Care Group and builds on existing NICE guidance. The guidance can be found at: <http://www.cancerni.net/search/node/guidance>
- (iii) All non red-flag referrals which have a low suspicion of cancer are triaged based on the information provided on the referral according to their clinical symptoms such as age, prostate specific antigen (PSA) etc. These referrals may still be regarded as urgent and can be upgraded to red flag status by consultants.
- (iv) To help improve the current provision of urology services, the Health and Social Care Board is undertaking a clinically led stock take of the 'Review of Adult Urology Services' which was completed in 2009. This exercise will help to identify the current challenges which have directly impacted on the service provision and will make recommendations to improve patient access and reduce waiting times across the region.

Business Services Organisation: Meat Products

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures are undertaken by Business Services Organisation to ensure that meat processed in illegal animal slaughter and meat operations cannot be sold or served in hospitals or any of his Department's public buildings.

(AQW 31694/11-15)

Mr Poots: Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS), as the CoPE for goods and services procurement across the HSC, is responsible for competitively tendering for fresh, frozen and cooked meat products to required specifications in conjunction with the relevant HSC organisations.

In that context, PaLS periodically issues tender specifications to the market based on a number of qualitative factors affecting supplier eligibility. In order to be eligible to submit tender documents, potential suppliers must obtain, apply and retain Total Quality Management (TQM) standards and appropriate industrial accreditations issued by organisations, including the International Standards Organisation (ISO). This TQM requires accountability and traceability throughout the food chain, which involves other statutory functions and accountability mechanisms, including the Food Standards Agency, Environmental Health and STS Solutions (an NHS-recognised due diligence Auditor for food premises). The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is also integral to the food chain audit process through its Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS), which manages the movement and control of animal registrations in Northern Ireland.

Other terms and conditions incorporated by PaLS within contract awards typically include:

- On request, results of sampling and analysis for authenticity must be submitted to demonstrate absence of any Non-Bovine DNA in the supply chain;
- Any changes in the supply chain must be notified to the Authority and or Organisation in advance to ensure the authenticity of meat products supplied; and
- Manufacturers of cooked meats and poultry must be appropriately registered and provide evidence. A manufacturer who does not currently hold appropriate certification must obtain this prior to contract award.

PaLS has also implemented additional quality testing regimes to supplement third party affirmations as a result of recent food labelling issues. These additional measures include:

- Segregation and withdrawal of any suspect products;
- Random DNA testing and analysis is carried out on a quarterly basis across all HSC Trusts on minced beef, beef sausages and beef burgers, with results being circulated across all Trusts. This measure has been in place for nine months on a rolling program across all Trusts. To date all have been satisfactory; and
- Microbiological Tests are carried out on sample cooked meat products prior to contract award and during the life of the contract.

Business Services Organisation: Meat Products

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps have been taken by his Department to improve the quality of meat products sold and served in hospitals or any of his Department's public buildings, following horsemeat products being supplied to hospitals in 2013. **(AQW 31696/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS), as the CoPE for goods and services procurement across the HSC, is responsible for competitively tendering for fresh, frozen and cooked meat products to required specifications in conjunction with the relevant HSC organisations.

In that context, PaLS periodically issues tender specifications to the market based on a number of qualitative factors affecting supplier eligibility. In order to be eligible to submit tender documents, potential suppliers must obtain, apply and retain Total Quality Management (TQM) standards and appropriate industrial accreditations issued by organisations, including the International Standards Organisation (ISO). This TQM requires accountability and traceability throughout the food chain, which involves other statutory functions and accountability mechanisms, including the Food Standards Agency, Environmental Health and STS Solutions (an NHS-recognised due diligence Auditor for food premises). The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is also integral to the food chain audit process through its Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS), which manages the movement and control of animal registrations in Northern Ireland.

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- Microbiological Tests are carried out on sample cooked meat products prior to contract award and during the life of the contract.

Funding Requests for Unapproved Cancer Drugs

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 31158/11-15, how many individual funding requests for unapproved cancer drugs have been granted in the last three years.

(AQW 31724/11-15)

Mr Poots: All requests considered and approved via the individual funding request (IFR) process are for therapies that fall outside current NICE guidance or where NICE has not considered or made any recommendation on the use of a drug. This may include instances where:

- NICE has not recommended the drug for the condition for which it is requested;
- NICE has not assessed the drug for the condition for which it is requested (the request may be for the licensed or off label use of the drug).
- there is no explicit advice from NICE and the HSCB takes into consideration the guidance issued by other recognised appraisal bodies such as Scottish Medicines Consortium or, in particular circumstances, NHS England Commissioning Board.

Information is not available in the form requested prior to 1 January 2012. The information available for 2013/14 is from 1 March 2013 to 31 January 2014. The number of IFRs approved in the last three years is 214, broken down as follows:

01/01/12 – 31/03//12 (3 months)	26
01/04/12 – 31/03/13	93
01/04/13 – 31/01/14 (10 months)	95

It should be noted that during same period i.e. January 2012 to January 2014 241 IFRs were submitted of which 214 were approved, eight were not approved and 19 were either not needed or further information was requested from the referring Trust.

The Roddens Residential Home, Ballymoney

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the amount spent on capital expenditure and improvements on The Roddens Residential Home, Ballymoney, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31737/11-15)

Mr Poots: The NHSCT spent the following on work to The Roddens from its annual general capital allocation:

2010/11	Bedroom refurbishment and redecoration	£64k
	Firecode upgrade works	£79k
2011/12	Heating mains replacement	£29k
2012/13	Nurse call system	£28k

Proposed MRI Scanner: The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the preparatory work completed for the proposed MRI scanner for the The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.
(AQW 31749/11-15)

Mr Poots: Survey work and feasibility planning exercises have been carried out to gather the information which will inform the design process for the new MRI Unit. This included an asbestos survey to identify the requirements for asbestos removal.

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service: Sickness Absence

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the amount paid by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service for sickness absence, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 31764/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department does not routinely measure the cost of sickness absence in HSC Trusts therefore the information below has been provided directly by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service:

	2010/11 £k	2011/12 £k	2012/13 £k
Annual Staff Costs (£k)	40,557	47,939	47,858
Absence Percentage	6.87%	7.18%	7.50%
Estimated Cost of Absence (£k)	2,786	3,442	3,589

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service: Technician and Paramedic

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the reasons for the ten year delay in the re-banding of technician and paramedics employed by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.
(AQW 31765/11-15)

Mr Poots: The NIAS Trust commenced the process of assimilating Paramedics, Rapid Response Vehicle Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians to Agenda for Change pay bands in December 2004. Despite following due regional and national processes and significant effort by all those involved, the Trust was unable to conclude the process and produce agreed outcomes.

In February 2013, it was agreed that the posts should be referred to the Regional Quality Assurance (RQA) Job Evaluation Panel. The RQA Panel met on 6 and 7 February 2014 to progress the job evaluation. The RQA Panel has advised that further information gathering is required before the outcome can be agreed.

I would also refer the honorable member to my response to AQW 30921/11-15.

Departmental Arm's-Length Bodies: Procurement Process

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the procurement processes used by his Department and its arm's-length bodies; and what action he is taking to simplify the process.
(AQW 31789/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland Procurement Policy requires that Departments and their Arm's Length Bodies carry out procurement by means of a Service Level Agreement with Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) or a Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE). Whilst CPD is the CoPE for my Department, there are two CoPEs for Health and Social Care (HSC) organisations in Northern Ireland:

- Procurement and Logistics Services (PaLS) within the Business Services Organisation, which is the CoPE for goods and services procurement; and
- Health Estates Investment Group (HEIG) within my Department, which is the CoPE for construction works and design services.

Public procurement over a certain value, known as the EU Threshold, is governed by the EU Directives for Public Procurement (2004/18), which are enacted into UK law as the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (and any amendments thereto).

In May 2012, the NI Procurement Board approved guidance on simplified procurement processes for contracts above £30,000 and below the value of the relevant EU Threshold. These processes have since been implemented by CPD and the CoPEs. Details of these processes can be found in Procurement Guidance Note (PGN) 05/12 at:

PGN 05/12 to be followed on procurements subject to the influence of PaLS i.e. goods and services	http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd-policy-and-legislation/simplified-procurement-process/pgn-05-12.htm
PGN 05/12 to be followed on procurements subject to the influence of HEIG i.e. construction works and design services	http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/pgn_05_12_-_amended_by_heig.pdf

Details of simplified processes for procurement below the value of £30,000 can be found in PGN 04/12 at:

PGN 04/12 to be followed on procurements subject to the influence of PaLS i.e. goods and services	http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd-policy-and-legislation/content_-_cpd_-_policy_-_procurement_guidance_notes/pgn-04-12.htm
PGN 04/12 to be followed on procurements subject to the influence of HEIG i.e. construction works and design services	http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/pgn_04_12_-_amended_by_heig.pdf

In order to further simplify the processes, a number of measures have been, or are being introduced, by CPD and CoPEs, for example:

- Standardising contract terms and conditions across all Departments, agencies and non-departmental public bodies;
- Eliminating Pre-Qualification Questionnaires for many contracts below £100,000;
- Reducing liability and insurance requirements for tenderers by making them proportionate to the risks associated with the contract; and
- Removal of the requirement to provide evidence of financial standing for tenders for supplies or services contracts below the value of EU thresholds.

In addition, PaLS (together with CPD and other CoPEs) is in the process of developing a consistent approach to the market in terms of processes and documentation, via a new eTendering portal, which will be launched later in 2014.

Public Health Agency: Contracts

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he is aware of any delays in the tendering or awarding of contracts by the Public Health Agency.

(AQW 31791/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am not aware of any delays in the tendering or awarding of contracts by the Public Health Agency. Procurement and Logistics Services and Health Estates Investment Group, as the Centres of

Procurement Expertise for the HSC, work with the Public Health Agency to progress any tenders within agreed timescales.

Complementary and Alternative Medicines Pilot

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to the implementation of a combined care system which would integrate Complementary and Alternative Medicine and the current system, in order to ease the burden on Emergency Departments and GPs.

(AQW 31838/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Complementary and Alternate Medicines (CAM) Pilot Project, funded by the Department in 2007/2008, aimed to treat patients with acute or chronic conditions who were referred by their GP to a range of CAM therapies including acupuncture, chiropractic, osteopathy, homeopathy, reflexology, aromatherapy and massage. The project was commissioned with a view to exploring the potential to integrate CAM within existing primary care services in Northern Ireland.

In the light of the constrained budgetary environment faced by my Department I need to focus my resources on sustaining existing frontline health and social care services. As a result it has not been possible to allocate any funding for CAM services during the current spending period. However I am willing to keep this issue under review should funding become available in future.

Preventative Spending

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to the need for preventative spending within his departmental budget.

(AQW 31854/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Executive's commitment through Programme for Government is to allocate an increasing percentage of the overall health budget to public health (measured in terms of the Public Health Agency budget), with the aim of allocating an additional £10m by 2014/15 compared with the 2011/12 baseline. The Department is on track to fully achieve this target.

Defining the total preventative spend across the health and social care sector is complex and includes, for example, maternal and child health; family planning and counselling, school health services, prevention of communicable diseases, prevention of non communicable diseases and occupational healthcare.

Further, the development of initiatives, such as Transforming Your Care and the new Public Health Strategic Framework, will impact on the future proportion of Departmental spend on preventative measures.

Combat Stress Community Outreach

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the current status of Combat Stress Community Outreach.

(AQW 31873/11-15)

Mr Poots: Combat Stress is a registered UK charity which provides treatment and support for Armed Forces Veterans who have mental health problems resulting from their military service.

Their services include a dedicated 24 hour helpline; Community Outreach support; and, access to a residential clinical treatment in a facility in Scotland. Services are provided free of charge and veterans can self-refer.

It is understood that it provides services to around 750 veterans in Northern Ireland.

People Diagnosed with Eating Disorders

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the level of support, including medical treatment and other means of assistance, available to people diagnosed with eating disorders; and how the opinions of sufferers are collected and reflected in this support.

(AQW 31886/11-15)

Mr Poots: Specialist community-based eating disorder teams are now established in each Health & Social Care Trust area. The Belfast Trust team provides these services for the South Eastern Trust.

Adult inpatient treatment for eating disorders is provided in each Trust area in beds managed by specially trained medical and psychiatric staff, supported on an in-reach basis by staff from community based eating disorder teams.

Inpatient care for children and adolescents with eating disorders is provided at Beechcroft, the Regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Unit.

Complex cases, including patients with a co-morbid mental illness may require treatment in specialist units outside Northern Ireland.

With these services now firmly established, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and Public Health Agency (PHA), through the Regional Eating Disorders Network Group, are now focussing on the further development of skills in relation to the treatment of eating disorders across Trusts. A regional care pathway for Eating Disorders is currently being developed which will span primary to secondary care and improve service quality across the region.

In addition to the Health Service provision, a number of voluntary and community groups also provide valuable support services.

The Regional Eating Disorder Network Group, which advises the Health and Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency on services and support for people with an eating disorder includes membership from the Northern Ireland Eating Disorders Association. This voluntary organisation articulates the views of service users and their carers on service provision.

Each Trust also has arrangements in place to ensure user and carer views are taken into account in the development and delivery of local services.

People Diagnosed with Eating Disorders

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total level of resources spent on supporting people with eating disorders, including the specific annual costs of (i) consultant psychiatrists; (ii) counsellors; (iii) nutritionists; (iv) nursing staff; (v) and any other relevant staffing posts, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31887/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since 2008/2009, a total of £2 million per annum has been allocated to specialist Eating Disorder Services across the Region. This figure does not include inpatient care or the cost of treatment for eating disorders provided outside of Northern Ireland.

There are around 39 (whole time equivalent) funded specialist Eating Disorders practitioners across children's and adult services. This compares with a figure of less than 1 (wte) practitioner in 2005.

Specific information broken down by staffing posts is not available.

Hospital Admissions: Eating Disorders

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of hospital admissions as a result of eating disorders in each Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last five years; and to detail the estimated annual cost to the Health Service.

(AQW 31888/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of admissions to acute hospitals as a result of eating disorders in each Health and Social Care Trust and the estimated total cost to the Health Service in each of the last five years is given in the table below. The figures do not include admissions to any community or mental health facilities.

Year	HSC Trust					Total Cost (£)
	Belfast	South Eastern	Northern	Southern	Western	
2008/09	13	9	9	<5	8	271,742
2009/10	12	5	13	<5	<5	239,305
2010/11	6	9	14	<5	5	250,779
2011/12	<5	13	9	<5	6	220,113
2012/13	<5	9	14	6	7	289,166

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

Notes:

1. Where cell sizes are less than 5, these have been masked to protect patient confidentiality.
2. Eating disorders have been searched for in the primary diagnosis position only.

People Suffering from Eating Disorders: Residential Care

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people suffering from eating disorders who have been sent for residential care outside Northern Ireland, broken down by country of destination, in each of the last five years; and to detail the estimated annual cost.

(AQW 31890/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information requested is not available centrally and was therefore requested from each Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. Their responses can be found below. A '<4' represents a cell count less than 4 in order to avoid personal disclosure. Figures provided for 2013/14 are for the financial year up to the 11 March 2014.

BELFAST HSC TRUST

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
England	10	6	5	<4	4
Scotland	<4	<4	0	0	0
Republic of Ireland	<4	0	0	0	0

The Belfast HSC Trust was unable to provide information on costs in the available time.

NORTHERN HSC TRUST

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
England	4	0	0	<4	0
Scotland	0	0	<4	0	<4
Republic of Ireland	<4	0	0	0	0

The Northern HSC Trust did not provide information on costs.

SOUTH EASTERN HSC TRUST

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
England	5	6	4	<4	<4
Republic of Ireland	<4	<4	0	0	0
Annual Cost (£)	£377,308	£797,994	£766,284	£221,626	£62,725

SOUTHERN HSC TRUST

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
England	<4	0	0	0	0

The Southern HSC Trust was unable to provide information on costs.

WESTERN HSC TRUST

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
England	7	<4	0	0	<4

The Western HSC Trust was unable to provide information on costs.

The HSC Board provided information on the annual cost of eating disorder services provided outside Northern Ireland for the last three years, as detailed in the table below:

ANNUAL COST OF EATING DISORDER SERVICES PROVIDED OUTSIDE NORTHERN IRELAND

Financial Year	Cost of Treatment
2011/12	£1.521m
2012/13	£1.288m
2013/14	£1.218m

Prescribed Drug in Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 31207/11-15, whether this drug is prescribed in prisons; and if not, to detail (i) when it was last prescribed; and (ii) why it was stopped.

(AQW 31894/11-15)

Mr Poots: I can confirm that since May 2011, temazepam has not been available as a prescribing option within Prison Healthcare. Any patient committed to prison on temazepam will have this medication reviewed and either discontinued or switched to a more suitable alternative.

The reason taken to discontinue temazepam was a policy decision taken in light of the well documented potential for abuse of this drug. Removing temazepam from the prescribing formulary has ensured that it cannot be prescribed or dispensed and this in turn removes the legitimate supply of this medication from the prison environment. There are a number of clinically effective alternatives available which may be prescribed and which do not have the same potential for abuse.

MRI Scanner: Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current situation with the MRI scanner at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, including the timescales; and how much money has been invested in the private sector to provide this service.
(AQW 31899/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is planned to tender the contract for the construction of the MRI accommodation in June 2014 with commencement of work on site planned for August 2014. Completion of the MRI suite is expected at the end of March 2015. The Trust plans to make the MRI scanner operational immediately after handover.

The HSCB/Trust has confirmed that it secures MRI services in Belfast for the majority of patients from permanent funded capacity in the Belfast Trust. Where demand for services exceeds this capacity, as at present, the HSCB secures additional capacity through Belfast Trust from independent sector providers, pending the establishment of additional permanent capacity. Currently the additional activity includes private sector MRI scanners located at Musgrave Park and Mater Hospitals as part of a £2.5m initiative to improve waiting times in 2013/14.

Development of the Rathmoyle Site

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 31482/11-15, when the plans for the development of the Rathmoyle site will be available to families and elected representatives.
(AQW 31925/11-15)

Mr Poots: Plans for the development of the Rathmoyle site are currently being finalised and the Trust will confirm the position with clients, their families and elected representatives when this information is available.

An anticipated date cannot be provided at present until the site plans are completed and agreed.

Domiciliary Care Services

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people who received domiciliary care services in each of the last five years; and the number of people forecasted to receive such services in the next two years.
(AQW 31951/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of people who receive domiciliary care services during a year is not collected centrally.

However, information is available on the number of clients receiving domiciliary care services during a survey week each year. This information is published in the annual 'Domiciliary Care Services for Adults in Northern Ireland' publication and is available to download from the DHSSPS internet site at: [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib- /statistics_and_research-cib-pub/adult_statistics-1/statistics_and_research-dom_care_services.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib-/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/adult_statistics-1/statistics_and_research-dom_care_services.htm)

I have been advised by the HSC Board that projections for numbers of people in receipt of domiciliary care services for the next two years are not available.

Supported Living Accommodation

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the supported housing needs of young people with special educational needs are assessed and met.

(AQO 5792/11-15)

Mr Poots: Special Educational Needs is not a term that we would normally utilise in connection with assessing the housing needs, and specifically the care needs, of young people likely to benefit from supported housing. The Health and Social Care (HSC) Board jointly plans Supported Living with the NI Housing Executive. People with a learning disability are one of the client groups identified for this support.

The HSC Trust would assess the housing needs of young people with a learning disability who wish to live independently. Once assessed, the Trust may develop an appropriate business case for a scheme to meet the needs of such individuals, and this is presented to the local Area Supporting People Partnerships (ASPP) who prioritise the housing support needs for a range of vulnerable client groups at local level. ASPP approved schemes then go forward to the Supporting People Programme Commissioning Body for prioritisation and funding.

The Commissioning Body is responsible for identifying priorities and commissioning services and is chaired by the NI Housing Executive (NIHE) with representatives from the HSC Board, the ASPPs and the Probation Board NI. Approval for funding is made by the Board of the NIHE in its strategic role.

Air Ambulance: Cost

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much it costs per hour when an air ambulance is in operation.

(AQW 31964/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department does not hold information about running costs for air ambulance operations. The HSC Board has an air ambulance contract in place to support the transfer and retrieval of patients from Northern Ireland accessing specialist care outside Northern Ireland.

Inappropriate Access to Local Health Care Services

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made in putting in place a service to identify inappropriate access to local health care services by people not resident in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 31965/11-15)

Mr Poots: In June 2013 the Access to Health Care Team was established within the Business Services Organisation as a specialist unit to provide advice and guidance to HSC Trusts on how to deal with inappropriate access to health care.

The Team has been working on systems and processes for trial and development with Trusts, to identify potentially chargeable patients from either overseas or EEA member states. The team has arranged specialist training for HSC staff and provides on an on-going basis, expert and specialist advice to HSC staff across Primary, Secondary and Social Care Services.

Collaborative work between the BSO, HSCB, DHSSPS and the Home Office has resulted in a number of initiatives being taken forward in relation to the identification of patients who are not resident in Northern Ireland and who wrongfully claim health care services. A Memorandum of Understanding has also been developed with the Department of Social Protection in the Republic of Ireland to facilitate the sharing of information to assist in the determination of residency.

Motive Weight Loss Program

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the Motive weight loss program was not further developed by the Western Health and Social Care Trust, his Department and the Public Health Agency despite its effectiveness.

(AQW 31966/11-15)

Mr Poots: Regionally, the Public Health Agency is undertaking a piece of work to review the evidence relating to weight management programmes in adults and scope out the range of programmes which are/have been delivered in Northern Ireland. This includes Motivate, which was developed and piloted in the Northern Area only. The outcomes of this review will inform future commissioning directions of the PHA.

Patients Admitted: Triage Categories

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of patients admitted to each triage category at the Ulster Hospital Emergency Department in each of the last twelve months.

(AQW 31975/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of new and unplanned review attendances assessed at each level of the Manchester Triage Scale at the Ulster emergency care department, is detailed in the table below for each of the last 12 months.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF NEW & UNPLANNED REVIEW ATTENDANCES AT THE ULSTER EMERGENCY CARE DEPARTMENT, BY CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT ON THE MANCHESTER TRIAGE SCALE (MARCH 2013 – FEBRUARY 2014)¹

Month	Immediate	Very Urgent	Urgent	Standard	Non Urgent	Blank Codes	Total
March 2013	39	1,023	3,595	2,183	31	16	6,887
April 2013	42	1,156	3,659	2,198	27	31	7,113
May 2013	35	1,032	3,471	2,348	19	33	6,938
June 2013	40	983	3,351	2,348	23	31	6,776
July 2013	34	1,032	3,470	2,611	40	15	7,202
August 2013	26	1,096	3,305	2,472	26	16	6,941
September 2013	30	1,019	3,301	2,544	30	7	6,931
October 2013	39	1,121	3,502	2,314	27	13	7,016
November 2013	24	1,059	3,207	2,268	30	11	6,599
December 2013	32	1,102	3,440	2,090	28	8	6,700
January 2014	42	1,019	3,461	2,212	27	13	6,774
February 2014	32	967	3,184	2,106	22	9	6,320

1 Information is provisional and may be subject to change.

Screening Clinics: South Tyrone

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to increase the number of screening clinics for women in South Tyrone, given the increased diagnosis of ovarian cancer in Dungannon between 2008-2012.

(AQW 31981/11-15)

Mr Poots: The National Screening Committee, which is the expert body that advises the four UK Health Departments on screening programmes, at present recommends that screening should not be offered for ovarian cancer, except in the context of the current Medical Research Council randomised controlled trial which is due to report in 2015/16. This study is investigating the effectiveness of screening for ovarian cancer using either a blood test or ultrasound screening. 200,000 women between the ages of 50 and 74 have been recruited to the study. Belfast City Hospital is one of the centres involved in the study.

A sister study, the UK Familial Ovarian Cancer Screening Study is also in progress. The primary objective of this study is to develop a screening strategy for ovarian cancer, in terms of the most appropriate screening tests, criteria for the interpretation of results, and screening interval, in women who are at high risk of ovarian cancer because of a family history or an inherited genetic predisposition.

New Surgery: Donaghcloney and Waringstown

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 26324/11-15 and AQW 26323/11-15, when a new surgery for Donaghcloney and Waringstown will (i) receive the necessary funding; and (ii) open to patients.

(AQW 31988/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am not in a position to advise when such a facility will receive the necessary funding or when it will be open to patients. Until the budgetary position becomes clear for 2015/16 and beyond, the timescale for further capital projects cannot be determined.

Consideration will be given to a range of funding options, including capital funding, 3rd Party Development, Ring-Fenced Transactions or through revenue from the GMS Budget. The outcome of this consideration will feed into the overall Capital Priorities Review leading to a capital plan which will form the basis of the Department's bid for the next budget period.

MRI Scanner: Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the reasons for the delay in the operation of the MRI scanner at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

(AQW 31989/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is essential that all infrastructure works are undertaken in line with proper procedure whilst ensuring the safety of patients and staff. Prior to commencement of design and planned works on site, surveys had to be undertaken of the area in which the new machine is to be installed. These identified the need for additional works including the removal of asbestos as well as complex site service alterations. Completing these works, within the site of an operational hospital, presents significant challenges and required more time than planned to ensure that they are completed whilst ensuring the safety of everyone using the building.

Serious Adverse Incidents in Hospitals

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Serious Adverse Incidents were reported by each hospital during the first quarter of each of the last three years.

(AQW 31993/11-15)

Mr Poots: SAIs can occur in a hospital, community or primary care setting. In some cases an SAI will involve services from more than one of these areas. 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 five in order to protect patient confidentiality.

Information on the total number of SAIs reported by Trusts in the first quarter of 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 1 Jan -31 March	2011	2012	2013
BHSCT	13	20	28
NHSCT	13	11	18
SEHSCT	10	13	21
SHSCT	15	13	12
WHSCT	9	8	11
Total	61	65	92

Acute Coronary Care Unit: South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the long term future of the acute coronary care unit at the South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen.

(AQW 32004/11-15)

Mr Poots: The provision of services at the South West Acute Hospital is a matter for the Western Health and Social Care Trust; however, the Trust has advised me that it has no plans to change the current coronary care service provided in the South West Acute Hospital.

Surgery: Donaghcloney

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, following his recent statement that the premises at Donaghcloney Surgery are not fit for purpose, to detail how any new premises arrangements will be funded.

(AQW 32026/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am not in a position to advise when such a facility will receive the necessary funding or when it will be open to patients. Until the budgetary position becomes clear for 2015/16 and beyond, the timescale for further capital projects cannot be determined.

Consideration will be given to a range of funding options, including capital funding, 3rd Party Development, Ring-Fenced Transactions or through revenue from the GMS Budget. The outcome of this consideration will feed into the overall Capital Priorities Review leading to a capital plan which will form the basis of the Department's bid for the next budget period.

NICE Guidance and Best Practice Relating to Ovarian Cancer

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance and best practice relating to Ovarian Cancer, which were issued in England April 2011, were not issued to Northern Ireland General Practitioners until 2014 .

(AQW 32030/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland General Practitioners have been aware of relevant aspects of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on Ovarian Cancer for some time.

The Health and Social Care Board has advised that the Northern Ireland Cancer Network (NICAN) developed guidance for GPs in 2012 on symptoms suggestive of cancer including ovarian cancer. This incorporates NICE recommendations on detection of ovarian cancer in primary care.

A pathway for investigating possible ovarian cancer was issued to Northern Ireland General Practitioners on 19 February 2014. The pathway was developed by GPs and Trusts and is consistent with the guidance issued by NICE. It clarifies and standardises the steps in investigating women with possible ovarian cancer. It also gives ovarian cancer a specific and higher profile; it describes the symptoms as well as investigations to be completed and provides all GPs and Trusts with a single simple and clear regional pathway.

Glaucoma Patients: Waiting Times

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the waiting times, following referral from a GP, for glaucoma patients to receive surgery in each of Health and Social Care Trust catchment area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 32036/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not collected on waiting times from referral to treatment in Northern Ireland. Information is however available on hospital waiting times for outpatient, inpatient and diagnostic services.

It should also be noted that in Northern Ireland, waiting time information is collected on the basis of the specialty that the patient is waiting for, rather than the condition that the patient is diagnosed with. As such, it is not possible to identify the waiting times for only those patients specifically diagnosed with glaucoma.

With this in mind, information is available on the waiting times for (i) a first outpatient appointment with a consultant in the Ophthalmology specialty and (ii) inpatient admission in the Ophthalmology specialty, for each Health and Social Care, and shown in the tables overleaf.

Information is presented for the waiting time position at 31st December 2013, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, and at the same point in time for each of the two years previous.

(I) PATIENTS WAITING FOR A FIRST OUTPATIENT APPOINTMENT IN THE OPHTHALMOLOGY SPECIALTY, BY WEEKS WAITING AND HSC TRUST

HSC Trust	Quarter Ending	Length of Time Waiting (weeks)						Total Waiting
		0-6	>6-9	>9-12	>12-15	>15-18	>18	
Belfast	31/12/11	1,901	700	815	561	505	1,386	5,868
	31/12/12	1,871	780	623	496	415	301	4,486
	31/12/13	2,101	841	664	619	492	2,042	6,759
South Eastern	31/12/11	533	234	172	88	12	1	1,040
	31/12/12	614	238	72	7	0	0	931
	31/12/13	585	244	234	205	200	136	1,604
Southern	31/12/11	555	301	293	241	250	2,461	4,101
	31/12/12	643	359	289	221	223	609	2,344
	31/12/13	678	354	377	280	202	154	2,045

HSC Trust	Quarter Ending	Length of Time Waiting (weeks)						Total Waiting
		0-6	>6-9	>9-12	>12-15	>15-18	>18	
Western	31/12/11	752	355	315	268	210	1,348	3,248
	31/12/12	864	316	231	180	70	13	1,674
	31/12/13	818	265	59	14	0	0	1,156

Source: Departmental Return CH3

Outpatient ophthalmology services in the Northern Trust are covered by visiting consultants from other Trusts.

(II) PATIENTS WAITING FOR INPATIENT ADMISSION IN THE OPHTHALMOLOGY SPECIALTY, BY WEEKS WAITING AND HSC TRUST

HSC Trust	Quarter Ending	Length of Time Waiting (weeks)						Total Waiting
		0-6	>6-9	>9-12	>12-15	>15-18	>18	
Belfast	31/12/11	631	1,045	1,028	423	208	98	3,433
	31/12/12	618	1,082	986	370	233	323	3,612
	31/12/13	746	963	889	277	39	55	2,969
Northern	31/12/11	5	3	7	0	0	0	15
	31/12/12	8	14	35	2	0	1	60
	31/12/13	17	10	9	0	0	0	36
South Eastern	31/12/11	131	245	113	3	0	0	492
	31/12/12	158	125	0	0	0	0	283
	31/12/13	154	209	32	0	0	0	395
Southern	31/12/11	72	61	4	1	0	1	139
	31/12/12	98	35	6	0	0	0	139
	31/12/13	92	53	1	0	0	0	146
Western	31/12/11	384	463	176	36	5	0	1,064
	31/12/12	470	401	165	39	3	6	1,084
	31/12/13	474	346	71	11	2	3	907

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

Inpatient ophthalmology services in the Northern Trust are covered by visiting consultants from other Trusts.

Inappropriate Access to Local Health Care Services

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made following his announcement in November 2013 that “a new service is being put in place, funded by HSCB, to develop expertise and to actively work with Trusts” in dealing with inappropriate access to health care by those not resident in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 32042/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the Member to my written response to AQW 31965/11-15.

Urology Day Procedures

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 31320/11-15, what action his Department is taking to reduce the number of patients who have to wait more than twelve weeks for an appointment for a urology day procedure.

(AQW 32050/11-15)

Mr Poots: To help improve the current provision of urology services, the Health and Social Care Board is undertaking a regional clinically led stock take of the 'Review of Adult Urology Services' which was completed in 2009. This exercise will help to identify the current challenges which have directly impacted on service provision and will make recommendations to improve patient access and reduce waiting times across the region.

Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 31271/11-15, whether he can provide a more specific timetable as to when the revised guidance on the termination of pregnancy will be published.

(AQW 32081/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the guidance of the Termination of Pregnancy Working Group, the document is currently being redrafted to take account of the issues raised in last year's public consultation. I expect to receive their advice and recommendations in the near future. When finalised, I will bring the document to the Northern Ireland Executive for consideration.

Department of Justice

Part-Time Reserve Support Programme

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 29108/11-15 and AQW 27033/11-15, (i) whether he will be able to deliver part of the monies of the Part-Time Reserve (PTR) Support Programme in this financial year; (ii) if agreement has been reached on how these funds will be dispersed via police charities; and if so, to detail (i) how these funds will be dispersed; (ii) the charities controlling the funds; and (iii) whether any Trustees from the PTR have been appointed to supervise the distribution of these funds.

(AQW 31547/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): In 2011, from a total fund of £20m, £19.6m was allocated by my Department, with support from the Northern Ireland Police Fund (NIPF), to former members of the Police Part-Time Reserve through the PTR Gratuity Scheme. Officials from my Department have engaged with a number of the policing charities in order to determine how best to distribute the remaining amount. It was initially hoped that the policing charities could have administered this programme

However, this has not proved possible, not least as a number of schemes such as grants offering financial assistance to officers are already in place through the RUC-PSNI Benevolent Fund and the NIPF.

I have decided that this money, £383,000, will be made available to the new Police Museum. It is envisaged that the Museum will publicly mark the service and dedication of the Part-Time Reserve, during some of the most difficult days of the Troubles, in a lasting and enduring tribute to their role in policing in Northern Ireland.

The RUC GC Foundation will retain an important role in the ongoing work on the new Police Museum. Details as to the provision of funding for this part of the new Museum are currently under consideration.

Filling Stations: Illicit Fuel

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice whether he will liaise with HMRC to name filling stations caught fraudulently selling illicit fuel.

(AQW 31619/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have asked for the issue of enforcement action against filling stations to be considered at the next meeting of the Organised Crime Task Force, Cross Border Fuel Fraud sub group, which meets later this month.

I am advised by HM Revenue and Customs that Section 18 of the Commissioners of Revenue and Customs Act 2005 has a tax payer confidentiality clause which makes it an offence to divulge details of anyone in relation to the tax affairs in a civil recovery investigation.

HMRC cannot therefore name those believed to be defaulters of tax in respect of fuel cases. To do so would require a change in the legislation.

On-the-runs: Letters

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether there is any evidence that, during the dealings with on-the-runs, that the Northern Ireland Prison Service was asked to prepare letters giving prison numbers to on-the-runs as if they had served time, when they had not.

(AQW 31691/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no evidence that any such requests were made of the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Prison Officers: Cutlery

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether Prison Officers have been informed that they are no longer permitted to use metal knives and forks during lunch break and must instead use plastic cutlery; and if so, to detail (i) how widespread is this throughout the Prison Service; (ii) who made the decision; (iii) when the decision was made; and (iv) whether prisoners convicted of murder are still permitted to use metal cutlery and delph plates and cups.

(AQW 31692/11-15)

Mr Ford: In common with all tools and equipment that might pose a threat to the security of a prison significant control measures are required for metal cutlery.

The use of metal cutlery is restricted in residential areas of prisons at all times. A recent audit identified areas where compliance was not as expected in all three prisons and remedial action has been taken.

That is consistent with the rules laid out in the Northern Ireland Prison Service Security Manual, which has been in effect since 2004.

Prisoners are not permitted to have access to metal cutlery. Some prisoners, including those convicted of murder, may be permitted to use ceramic cups or plates.

Remand Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 31049/11-15, as the differences for remand prisoners amount to a more liberal regime, why time served on remand in advance of a sentence is equated to a full or part sentence if convicted; and, (ii) how remand time involves rehabilitative processes if the person is innocent until convicted and therefore not obliged to take part in work or programmes, and depending on the length of time on remand could be freed at the point of sentencing and therefore not rehabilitated.

(AQW 31709/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since imprisonment on remand amounts to deprivation of liberty, regardless of the regime individuals are held under, it is equated in full to a full or part sentence on conviction. Remand

prisoners are not excluded from rehabilitative opportunities and can also access Learning & Skills along with other work opportunities whilst in custody.

Attempted Poisoning of a Female Prison Officer in Magilligan Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the prisoner who admitted attempting to poison a female Prison Officer in Magilligan Prison, whether at the time of the offence this prisoner (i) held a key to his own cell; and (ii) was permitted to be in possession of his own medication.

(AQW 31711/11-15)

Mr Ford: The prisoner in question did not hold a key to his cell. The South Eastern Trust has confirmed that at the time of this incident the prisoner was not prescribed any medication.

Prison Service Facilities: Drugs Tests

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 31122/11-15, in respect of the figures relating to prescription drugs, to clarify if these results were discovered in conjunction with other non-prescribed drugs being detected per test, or whether it was solely prescription drugs detected per test.

(AQW 31747/11-15)

Mr Ford: Pursuant to AQW/31122/11-15 the figures for those tests which returned a positive result for both prescription drugs (illicitly taken) and non prescription drugs are set out below.

Hydebank Wood 2012	17
Hydebank Wood 2013	10
Magilligan 2012	13
Magilligan 2013	38
Maghaberry 2012	56
Maghaberry 2013	120

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission: Legal Aid Claims

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the ruling made by Mr Justice Treacy on 27 February 2014 against the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission in respect of their policy on the late submission of Legal Aid claims; and to clarify if the policy in question is to be reviewed.

(AQW 31753/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department is currently liaising with the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission to consider the content and implications of the judgment. The High Court has yet to give its ruling on remedies in the case. Accordingly, it would be inappropriate to comment further at this time.

Pension Schemes for Senior Management

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the amount of money contributed to pension schemes for senior management within his Department; and (ii) the number of employees involved, in the last five years.

(AQW 31762/11-15)

Mr Ford: For the purposes of this question, senior management has been interpreted as meaning those staff within the Senior Civil Service (i.e. Grade 5 and above).

The amounts of employer's contributions paid to pension schemes for senior management within my Department are detailed below. As the Department of Justice was created in April 2010 figures have only been provided from the 2010/2011 financial year onwards.

Year	Number of Senior Civil Service staff paid by DOJ	Total amount of Employer's Pension Contributions paid £
2010/11	24	379,700
2011/12	25	381,148
2012/13	31	439,747
2013/14 (to date)	35	416,112

The figures provided include those staff on NICS payroll systems. Individuals seconded into the Department who remained on their parent organisation's payroll have been excluded from the figures above.

Grievances: Timescales

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how many formal grievances are currently being addressed; (ii) how long each grievance has been ongoing; and (iii) whether any grievance has taken longer than the timescale detailed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Practice, including (a) how much longer; and (b) the reasons for the delay.

(AQW 31769/11-15)

Mr Ford: In the Department of Justice, at 7 March 2014, there were 11 formal grievances being addressed.

Whilst there are timescales for meetings and processes within the Grievance Policy, there is no overall timescale. The objective of the policy is to resolve a grievance "as quickly as possible".

All formal grievances and their current status are detailed in the table below:

Timescale	Reason for delay
21 Months	Complainant delayed producing evidence/not available for meetings/lodging DPA requests. Case at first appeal stage.
14 Months	Complainant spent some time clarifying nature of allegations. Case at investigation stage.
9 Months	Investigation completed and case at decision stage.
7 Months	Investigation ongoing but delayed due to complainant's sick absence.
6 Months	Complainant delayed producing evidence to support complaint.
4 Months	Investigation ongoing.
4 Months	Investigation ongoing.
4 Months	Investigation ongoing.
3 Months	Investigation ongoing.
6 weeks	Additional Information required.
2 weeks	Meeting with Decision Officer being arranged.

All formal grievances are being actively progressed to resolve each case as quickly as possible.

Northern Ireland Community Safety College Project at Desertcreat

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice what opportunities have been provided by architects, engineers and design consultants engaged on the Northern Ireland Community Safety College project at Desertcreat to allow local suppliers to tender for the supply of materials for the project.

(AQW 31774/11-15)

Mr Ford: The opportunities for local suppliers, provided by the design team, is through the specifications for the works, which includes materials and components. These specifications are based primarily on meeting performance requirements and standards. The preferred bidder, FGP, held a 'meet the buyer' event in Cookstown on 4 March 2014 which was attended by some 200 companies/individuals.

On-the-runs: Letters

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice whether there are any requests pending for on-the-run letters from his Department.

(AQW 31784/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department has not been involved in handling requests for 'on-the-run' letters, so there are no requests pending.

Departmental Arm's-Length Bodies: Procurement Process

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice to detail the procurement processes used by his Department and its arm's-length bodies; and what action he is taking to simplify the process.

(AQW 31790/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice, its agencies and arms length bodies currently let all contracts over £10,000 through the Department of Finance Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). We also adhere to the procurement guidance issued by CPD. This is detailed in a Service Level Agreement between my Department and CPD.

In May 2012 the NICS Procurement Board approved guidance on simplified procurement processes for contracts above £30,000 and below the value of the relevant EU Threshold. These processes have since been implemented by CPD and the CoPEs.

My Department has recently signed up to undertake procurements under £30,000. This will come into effect from 1 April 2014 and the Service Level Agreement is currently being revised by CPD to reflect that. Awareness sessions have been held in preparation for this. These were hosted in conjunction with CPD.

Details of the processes can be found in Procurement Guidance Notes (PGN) 05/12. which can be found at:

http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd-policy-and-legislation/content_-_cpd_-_policy_-_procurement_guidance_notes.htm

Details of simplified processes for procurement below the value of £30,000 can be found in PGN 04/12 on CPD's website.

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/pgn-04-12-04022013-pcls.pdf>

In addition a number of measures have been, or are being, introduced by CPD and CoPEs to further simplify processes including, for example: standardising contract terms and conditions across all Departments, agencies and non-departmental public bodies; eliminating Pre-Qualification Questionnaires for many contracts below £100,000; reducing liability and insurance requirements for tenderers by making them proportionate to the risks associated with the contract; and the removal of the requirement to provide evidence of financial standing for tenders for supplies or services contracts below the value of EU thresholds.

Unsuccessful Prosecutions: Cost

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost in pursuing the unsuccessful prosecutions of Robert Atkinson and Eleanor Atkinson, arising out of the Robert Hamill death.

(AQW 31801/11-15)

Mr Ford: The estimated costs of the case to date are given in the table below.

Cost Type	Estimated Cost (£)
Legal Aid ¹	12,051
Prosecution ²	43,000
Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	7,599
PSNI costs ³	-
Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	1,635
Total	64,285

1. The legal aid paid to date relates to junior counsel for one defendant. The legal aid claims relating to the solicitor for both defendants, senior counsel for one defendant and both senior and junior counsel for the other defendant have not yet been assessed.
2. It is not possible to produce precise costs and while some costs may be identifiable the total costs to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) are as yet unavailable. An estimate of costs for counsel to date has been provided.
3. The costs in respect of the PSNI cannot accurately be defined at this stage.

Freedom of Information Requests: Courts and Tribunals Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many Freedom of Information requests the Courts and Tribunals Service has received in each of the last five years; and in how many cases was the request refused.

(AQW 31821/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of requests made to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in each of the last five years. The table also details the number of requests refused where it was not possible to provide the requested information. This includes requests where information is fully withheld under one of the FOIA exemptions, cases that exceed the cost limit or those considered vexatious. It does not include requests where information is partially withheld or NICTS do not hold the requested information.

Year	Freedom of Information Requests Received	Number of Requests Refused
2013	135	36
2012	138	18
2011	138	14
2010	122	16
2009	119	18

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to outline any plans to review the operational aspects of the small claims court.

(AQW 31822/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans to review the operational aspects of the small claims court.

Table 1 details the number of small claims court judgments appealed in each of the last five years and the number of these appeals upheld.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF SMALL CLAIMS JUDGMENTS APPEALED AND THE NUMBER OF APPEALS UPHELD: 2009 TO 2013^P

Year	Number of small claims judgments appealed	Number of appeals upheld
2009	4	2
2010	3	0
2011	2	0
2012	3	0
2013P	5	2

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Information on the number of applications to the small claims court where the plaintiff's application was (i) rejected on the grounds of lack of information; and (ii) returned to seek further information is not available in the format requested.

An application will not be rejected on the grounds of lack of information, however, if the plaintiff has not included all the necessary information on the application, the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service will return the application to the plaintiff requesting further information before the application can be progressed.

While the majority of small claims applications are returned because of incorrect fees or missing information, it would not be possible to detail the exact number without a manual review of individual records, an exercise that would incur a disproportionate cost.

Table 2 outlines the number of small claims applications returned to the plaintiff for query in each of the last five years.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF SMALL CLAIMS APPLICATIONS RETURNED TO THE PLAINTIFF FOR QUERY: 2009 TO 2013^P

Year	Number of small claims applications returned to the plaintiff for query
2009	2,196
2010	1,742
2011	1,489
2012	1,192
2013P	1,523

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Table 3 outlines the number of small claims applications made in each of the last five years.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF SMALL CLAIMS APPLICATIONS MADE: 2009 TO 2013P

Year	Number of small claims cases received
2009	13,839
2010	13,185
2011	12,903
2012	12,153
2013P	11,943

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many small claims court judgements were appealed in each of the last five years; and in how many cases were the appeals upheld.

(AQW 31823/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans to review the operational aspects of the small claims court.

Table 1 details the number of small claims court judgments appealed in each of the last five years and the number of these appeals upheld.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF SMALL CLAIMS JUDGMENTS APPEALED AND THE NUMBER OF APPEALS UPHELD: 2009 TO 2013P

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Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

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Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice in how many applications to the small claims court was the plaintiff's application (i) rejected on the grounds of lack of information; and (ii) returned to seek further information.

(AQW 31824/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans to review the operational aspects of the small claims court.

Table 1 details the number of small claims court judgments appealed in each of the last five years and the number of these appeals upheld.

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Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

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Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many applications were made to the small claims court in each of the last five years.

(AQW 31825/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans to review the operational aspects of the small claims court.

Table 1 details the number of small claims court judgments appealed in each of the last five years and the number of these appeals upheld.

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Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

^P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

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2013P	11,943

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

P Data is currently provisional and may be subject to change.

Compensation Claims for the Death of a Child

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice how many claims for compensation for the death of a child have been paid out in the last five years; and the scale of each payment.

(AQW 31832/11-15)

Mr Ford: In the last five years the Compensation Services have made an award in respect of one compensation claim for the death of a child. The scale of the compensation awarded was £12,000.

Prisoners on Day Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to introduce tighter rules in respect of prisoners on day release following an announcement by the Ministry of Justice; and to detail if evidence exists of similar local incidences of offending by prisoners on day release which has led to the move by the Ministry of Justice.

(AQW 31847/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Ministry of Justice plans to introduce tighter rules for Release on Temporary Licence. Arrangements for Northern Ireland are significantly different from those in England and Wales. I have no plans to change arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Clare's Law: Northern Ireland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice when he will introduce Clare's Law to align Northern Ireland with England and Wales.

(AQW 31848/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am aware that the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, also known as Clare's Law, which operated on a pilot basis in specific locations in England and Wales has now been rolled out across England and Wales from 8 March 2014.

My Department, in conjunction with relevant key stakeholders, is actively engaged in a process exploring whether a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme can be introduced into Northern Ireland. It is clear however that much more work remains to be undertaken to inform a determination on the matter.

The evaluation and learning arising from the Home Office pilot and the findings of ongoing discussions with key stakeholders locally will be shared with the Regional Strategy Group on Domestic and Sexual

Violence who will consider the potential to introduce such a Scheme into Northern Ireland, and provide advice to me in due course.

Medical Examinations: Retired Police Officers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the local impact, in the respect of review medical examinations for retired police officers, of the withdrawal of Home Office Guidance 2004/26.

(AQW 31859/11-15)

Mr Ford: As I advised in my responses to AQW 28665/11-15 and AQW 28666/11-15, the administration of the Injury Benefit Scheme is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the independence of the Board and am therefore not in a position to provide details of the local impact of the withdrawal of Annex A of the Home Office Guidance 46/2004. You may wish to direct your question to the Board's Chief Executive.

Clare's Law

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to introduce legislation similar to Clare's Law.

(AQW 31867/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am aware that the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, also known as Clare's Law, which operated on a pilot basis in specific locations in England and Wales, has now been rolled out across England and Wales from 8 March 2014.

My Department, in conjunction with relevant key stakeholders, is actively engaged in a process exploring whether a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme can be introduced into Northern Ireland. It is clear however that much more work remains to be undertaken to inform a determination on the matter.

The evaluation and learning arising from the Home Office pilot and the findings of ongoing discussions with key stakeholders locally will be shared with the Regional Strategy Group on Domestic and Sexual

Violence who will consider the potential to introduce such a Scheme into Northern Ireland.

Limavady Courthouse

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail the steps he is required to take before the Limavady Courthouse can be closed legally.

(AQW 31870/11-15)

Mr Ford: As noted in my reply to AQW/30761/11-15, on 22 November 2012 I announced my decision to close Limavady courthouse and transfer all Limavady court business to Coleraine courthouse.

As Limavady and Coleraine are currently in different County Court Divisions, these changes will take effect following the implementation of a single territorial jurisdiction for County Courts and Magistrates' Courts. The necessary legislative provisions to give effect to a single territorial jurisdiction will be carried forward in a Justice Bill to be introduced into the Assembly this Spring.

In addition to the legislative changes, there will be a number of administrative steps required including changes to the court calendar.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Spend

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how much has been spent on flights and accommodation for senior staff in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, on a weekly or monthly basis, in each of the last five years; and to detail how many staff are catered for in this regard.

(AQW 31876/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not hold this information by grade and this could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Prison Service Reforms

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice for an update on Prison Service reforms.
(AQW 31880/11-15)

Mr Ford: Good progress continues to be made against the extensive programme of end to end transformational reform, guided by the 40 recommendations made by the Prison Review Team (PRT).

To date, 19 of the 40 recommendations have been signed off by the Prison Review Oversight Group, which I Chair. Of this 19, seven are currently with Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland for independent assessment and two are with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority for similar assessment.

The reform programme is now entering its final year and a clear pathway for delivery has been developed. This pathway will ensure that all of the recommendations will be signed off by the Oversight Group by the time the programme draws to a close in April 2015.

The Oversight Group has a robust independent element and provides the Justice Committee with an update on progress after each meeting. The next update will be issued to the Committee in April 2014.

Chaplaincy Services within Prisons

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice whether he has, or is aware of, any plans to institute changes to the Chaplaincy services within prisons.
(AQW 31893/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that a review of the Chaplaincy provision within Prisons has been completed and that Chaplains and Senior Church representatives have been fully engaged throughout the review.

The review sought to clarify the role of Chaplains, strengthen relationships between NIPS and Churches and addressed perceived inequalities in the current model as highlighted by the Churches during the consultation process.

NIPS officials met most recently in January and February 2014 with Church leaders and senior Church representatives to discuss changes that will ensure that Chaplaincy provision meets the current and anticipated future requirements.

Prescription Drugs in Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 31144/11-15, for his assessment of whether prescription drugs are proving more easily accessible for abuse in prisons than banned substances.
(AQW 31910/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is clear that prescription drugs, whether issued or smuggled, are abused at a higher rate than banned substances. NIPS has a zero tolerance of drug abuse and has measures in place to tackle all misuse of substances.

Brownlee Judicial Review

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the development of a new fixed fee to take account of the cases that led to the Brownlee Judicial Review.
(AQW 31920/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 9 December 2013, I made The Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2013. These amendment Rules introduced new fees for legal representatives in the circumstances where, following the conviction of the assisted person, there is a change of representative and the court grants a fresh criminal aid certificate for the purposes of the sentence hearing - the circumstances pertaining in Mr Brownlee's Crown Court case.

The amendment Rules came into operation on 9 December 2013.

Prisoners: Drugs Tests

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the drugs test carried out by the Northern Ireland Prison Service on prisoners.

(AQW 31923/11-15)

Mr Ford: The drugs test takes the form of the prisoner providing a sample of urine while under the supervision of staff. The sample is tested for MDMA, methadone, opiates, cannabis, cocaine, benzodiazepine, buprenorphine, barbiturates and amphetamines.

Payments or other Support: Members of Proscribed Organisations

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department has made any payments or offered any other support or resource to (i) Provisional IRA members or (ii) members of proscribed organisations since April 2010; and if he is aware of such support coming from elsewhere in Her Majesty's Government.

(AQW 32006/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department has not made any payments or offered any other support or resource. I am not aware of such support coming from elsewhere in Government.

Immunity from Prosecution

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 31730/11-15, what enquiries he has made in order to establish that no employee of his Department is aware of any undertakings of (a) amnesty; (b) immunity; or (c) implied immunity from prosecution given to (i) any former or serving members of the security forces; (ii) any person who has acted as an agent of the security forces or British Government intelligence services; and (iii) any member of a paramilitary organisation.

(AQW 32027/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have made no such enquiries, as doing so would be in breach of the Executive's Ministerial Code and longstanding constitutional convention that Ministers should not be told by their officials, whether directly or by access to departmental papers, information relating to the work of a previous Administration.

Department for Regional Development

Cycling Network in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how much has been spent by his Department on upgrading the cycling network in South Antrim in the last five years; and (ii) whether any capital projects will commence to upgrade cycling provision.

(AQW 31284/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department does not record this information in the format requested. However, details of expenditure on cycling measures, between 2009 and 2013, for the three Council areas comprising the South Antrim constituency are set out in the table below:

SPEND ON CYCLING MEASURES

District Council Area	Year 09/10	Year 10/11	Year 11/12	Year 12/13
Antrim	3,600	0	0	0
Carrickfergus	5,601	0	85,000	62,138
Newtownabbey	10,391	0	157.00	2,006
Total Spend (£)	19,592	0	85,157	64,144

A scheme has recently begun in Antrim to upgrade the South-Western hard shoulder, along Stile's Way in Antrim, to a combined footway/cycleway. This will stretch from Ballymena Road to Greystone Road Roundabout, a distance of approximately 2.8 kilometres. The scheme will link cycle routes in the Ballycraig Road/Greystone area of Antrim to existing cycle routes which form part of commercial developments along the Ballymena Road.

A scheme, with estimated costs of £80,000, to extend an existing cycling route along the A2 Belfast Road, Carrickfergus by providing approximately 750 metres of new combined footway/cycleway is also planned.

In addition, my Department continues to implement, in so far as available resources permit, the outline cycling infrastructure as set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015.

With the creation of the new Cycling Unit within my Department, which is developing an ongoing programme of work as it aims to ensure that cycling provision is a key element in both transport strategy and delivery, I expect this figure to rise in future years both in South Antrim and throughout Northern Ireland.

Penalty Charge Notices: Refund

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to ensure that motorists who have been incorrectly issued with a Penalty Charge Notice are contacted to ensure they receive a refund.

(AQW 31294/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department issues refunds where there is sufficient information available to do so. However, refunds are not possible where payment card details have expired or payments were made by cheque or postal order and no address details were provided. Vehicle keeper information can only be sought from the Driver and Vehicle Agency for the purpose of enforcing unpaid Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs).

With reference to AQW 31293/11-15 and AQW 31295/11-15, which you have also tabled, any motorist who believes they have been incorrectly issued with a PCN in Florence Place, between June 2011 and November 2012, can make a challenge in writing to:

Parking Enforcement Processing Unit
Roads Service
County Hall
Castlerock Road
Coleraine
BT51 3HS

Drivers should provide details of the PCN number, vehicle registration number, date, amount paid and method of payment. These details will be cross-referenced against my Department's records and refunds issued, where appropriate. All money associated with refunds is held by my Department in a separate suspense account, to enable future verified challenges to be paid.

Penalty Charge Notice

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development what advice his Department has received with regard to its duty to seek via the Driver and Vehicle Agency, the details of drivers who have been incorrectly issued with a Penalty Charge Notice.

(AQW 31295/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has a Service Level Agreement with the Driver and Vehicle Agency for the supply of vehicle keeper information. The agreement stipulates that vehicle keeper data may only be obtained for the purpose of enforcement of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs). However, if the PCN has been paid, vehicle keeper information cannot be sought because the PCN is not being enforced.

KPL Contracts: Administrators

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development, following KPL entering administration, to detail how Roads Service contracts carried out by KPL will be managed.

(AQW 31326/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Following KPL Contracts entering administration on 21 February 2014, the company has confirmed it could no longer honour the contracts. Interim arrangements have been put in place for the affected contract areas, to provide cover for emergency and urgent street lighting repairs.

My Department has appointed Whitemountain as the successor contractor from the existing tender competitions, to ensure the continued delivery of our street lighting service. This contractor has confirmed it is likely to engage KPL staff and specialist sub-contractors utilised by KPL Contracts.

Use of Land in Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the proposals for the use of the land between Hope Street and Wellwood Street, Belfast.

(AQW 31355/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department owns a strip of land, approximately 20 metres in width, on the south side of Hope Street and Bruce Street, Belfast which is protected through the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015, for the completion of the south section of the City Centre Ring Road Scheme.

The remaining land between the protection line and Wellwood Street is, as far as I am aware, under the control of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. I am not aware of how this land is to be used.

The City Centre Ring Road Scheme was included in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015 as one element of a set of integrated transport measures to address transport problems and provide for an enhanced urban environment in and around Belfast city centre. It includes proposals to widen Hope Street, Bruce Street and Cromac Street to two lanes, in both directions, and the construction of a new road known as Bankmore Link, between Dublin Road and Cromac Street.

My Department, currently, does intend to provide this road scheme, however, no funding has been identified to date for its delivery. Until such time as the future funding of the scheme is determined, the protection line should remain.

KPL Contracts

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to meet with any of those who are proposing a rescue effort for KPL Contracts.

(AQW 31358/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Following KPL Contracts entering administration on 21 February 2014, my Department has terminated the street lighting contracts held by KPL Contracts, as the company confirmed it could no longer honour the contracts.

To ensure fair and transparent procurement practice my Department has appointed Whitemountain as the successor contractor. Whitemountain was in second position in the existing tender competitions and has confirmed it is likely to engage some former KPL staff and specialist sub-contractors previously utilised by KPL Contracts.

In these circumstances it would not be appropriate to enter into discussions with other interested parties.

A6 Dualling Scheme

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the advancement of the A6 Dualling Scheme, including whether the 4.8km Dungiven bypass aspect of the Scheme will be developed at the earliest opportunity.

(AQW 31368/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling scheme is well advanced in terms of development. My officials have considered the inspector's recommendations from the Public Inquiry and I am currently considering their report in advance of an announcement on the way forward.

I am mindful of the affordability of the scheme in the current economic climate. Capital funding in this budget period is already committed to constructing major road improvement projects. Delivery of the A6 scheme, including a Dungiven bypass, will be determined by subsequent budget settlements agreed by the Executive.

20mph Zones: Northern Division of Roads Service

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 29235/11-15, why there are no 20mph zones in the Northern Division area of Roads Service.

(AQW 31376/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Division has introduced traffic calming measures across a wide range of locations in common with all other Divisions in Roads Service.

Historically I understand that the experience in Northern Division has been that sites with physical traffic calming measures have the effect of generally lowering speeds to around 20mph without the need to implement an additional layer of control through the introduction of 20mph zones.

However, in line with current policy, the introduction of 20mph zones is being actively considered on a site by site basis within Northern Division and I am pleased to confirm that a zone is currently being introduced in The Heights area of Coleraine.

Reduced Car Parking Charges: Christmas 2013

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact on town centres of reduced car parking charges at Road Service car parks during Christmas 2013; and whether there are any plans to extend this scheme to other times of the year.

(AQW 31431/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am not yet in a position to comment directly on the impact reduced car parking charges had in town centres during the last Christmas period.

The new tariff was introduced on 2 December 2013 and continued until 11 January 2014, and applied to car parks that have a tariff of 30p or more per hour.

The operation of car park tariffs is kept under regular review.

Community Transport Pilot Scheme: East and North Antrim

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has considered a community transport pilot scheme for hospital appointments in East and North Antrim.

(AQW 31450/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is currently coordinating a cross-departmental pilot project in the Dungannon and Cookstown areas to test the concept of a more integrated approach to the delivery of publicly-funded passenger transport services, focusing on improvements to passenger services and opportunities for operational efficiency. The key stakeholders involved in the pilot project include:

- The Department for Regional Development;
- The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS);
- The Health and Social Care Board and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust;
- The Department of Education;
- The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB);
- The Department of the Environment;
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- The Rural Community Transport Partnerships in the pilot area;
- The Federation of Passenger Transport; and
- Translink.

As part of the pilot project an enhanced service has been introduced to Craigavon Area Hospital involving Translink and the local community transport operator to provide for evening visits. The project team will also explore opportunities for improving public transport service provision from the Cookstown/Magherafelt area to Antrim Area Hospital. Later this year a business case will be developed to consider the long term options for a more integrated approach to the delivery of publicly funded passenger transport services, including access to hospitals.

In relation to Rural Community Transport Partnerships providing public transport services for hospital appointments, this should not be seen as a substitute for health funded transport for which DHSSPS has statutory responsibility. Under the auspices of the Patient Care Service, non-emergency patient transport services are provided on a discretionary basis across Northern Ireland. There would not currently be sufficient resources within the Rural Community Transport Partnerships to take on this role, particularly for hospital trips outside the local area. However, the Dungannon/Cookstown pilot will examine all of the resources available across the different providers with a view utilising these more flexibly and effectively.

Recognising that not all patients will qualify for transport by Patient Care Services, my Department has applied for funding from OFMDFM under the Active Ageing Strategy. If successful, the funding will be used to provide transport options for patients who are members of the Rural Community Transport Partnerships (RCTP) to get to hospital appointments outside the local operational area where they do not meet the criteria to avail of Patient Care Services transport.

Parking Schemes: Coleraine and Limavady

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development how many resident only parking schemes are currently under consideration in (i) Coleraine; and (ii) Limavady.

(AQW 31510/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department previously assessed a request for a residents parking scheme in Adelaide Avenue, Coleraine. The results of the initial surveys indicated parking demand by non-residents was not high and there were adequate opportunities for residents to park.

My Department has received a request for a Residents' Parking Scheme in Protestant Street, Limavady, which is being assessed. I have asked officials to inform you of the outcome in due course.

The timing of any schemes for residents parking outside of Belfast will be dependent upon the progress of those being developed at present elsewhere in Northern Ireland and a future prioritisation of remaining areas.

Parking Arrangements in a Housing Executive Owned Estate

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department, or any of its arm's-length bodies, are responsible for providing additional parking arrangements in a Housing Executive owned estate; and whether the policy changes depending on the number of private homes owned within the estate.

(AQW 31578/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department, and specifically Roads Service, is responsible for dealing with requests for additional parking in housing estates. The extent of its involvement depends on the proportion of privately and publically owned housing at the location in question, and whether it is considered that there is sufficient space available in householder gardens for off-street parking.

Where 50 per cent or more of the housing associated with a request for additional parking belongs to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), it will take responsibility for determining whether a scheme will be considered. If NIHE decides that additional parking is justified, it will fund the full scheme cost. Departmental officials will consider approval of the layout through its development control role as a statutory consultee within the planning process.

Where less than 50 per cent of the housing associated with the request belongs to the NIHE, departmental officials will assess the potential for a parking scheme if the representative organisation for the estate (usually NIHE, but can be the local Housing Association, a Residents' Association, or the Representative Organisation's Forum) can confirm that it will fund 50 per cent of the construction cost of the parking scheme.

Where there is sufficient space within the householders' gardens to accommodate parking, it is the responsibility of the representative organisation/homeowner to provide this at their own expense, and my officials will give no further consideration to the request for additional on/off street parking.

Traffic Attendants

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development how many traffic attendants were operating in Northern Ireland in (i) 2010; and (ii) 2013.

(AQW 31584/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Traffic Attendants deployed daily, from Monday to Saturday, for on and off-street parking enforcement in 2010 and 2013 are as shown in the table below:

Year	Number of Traffic Attendants
2010	117
2013	107

Roads in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the roads in North Down that have been fully resurfaced, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 31586/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes in North Down for the current and previous financial years can be found in Roads Service's Spring and

Autumn Reports to North Down Council. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development how many ministerial appointments to public bodies have been made by his Department since May 2011; and of these, to detail how many were made to (i) males; (ii) females; and (iii) the organisations to which appointments were made.

(AQW 31589/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have made 40 appointments to public bodies since May 2011, of which 32 were males and 8 were females. The figures are set out by body in the table below. These include 20 first appointments, 15 male and 5 female. The first appointments were made from an applicant pool of 200 males and 32 females. My written statement of 5 March 2014 explained that I have asked my officials to take all possible measures to improve the diversity of the boards to which I make appointments by making public appointments more attractive and accessible. I want to encourage more women, younger people, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities to apply for appointments to the boards of NIW, NITHC and the three main Ports.

DRD MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS FROM MAY 2011

	Non-Executive		Executive Director		Councillors	Totals	Applications for First Term Appointments
	First appointment	Re-appt	First appointment	Re-appt			
Northern Ireland Water (NIW)							
Male	4	1				5	64
Female							9
NI Transport Holding Company (NITHC)							
Male	5			1		6	34
Female	1	1		1		3	2
Belfast Harbour Commissioners							
Male	4	3		1	4	12	66
Female	2					2	11
Warrenpoint Harbour Authority							
Male	2			2	3	7	27
Female	1					1	8
Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners							
Male					2	2	9
Female	1				1	2	2
Male Totals	15	4	0	4	9	32	200
Female Totals	5	1	0	1	1	8	32
Total	20	5	0	5	10	40	232

Road Safety Measures: Newtownards Road

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on proposed road safety measures for the junction at Newtownards Road and Cotton Road.

(AQW 31595/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has programmed a scheme to provide a footway link, together with a visibility improvement, at Cotton Road for delivery in the 2015/16 financial year, subject to the availability of funding and successful acquisition of the necessary land.

Resurfacing of the Footpaths in Breezemount Estate, Conlig

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of resurfacing the footpaths in Breezemount Estate, Conlig.

(AQW 31596/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The footway reconstruction scheme currently underway in the Breezemount Estate, Conlig is expected to cost around £80,000. The scheme, which will replace existing flagstones with a more durable surface that will also be more cost effective to maintain, is due to be completed by the end of March 2014.

Resurfacing of Footpaths in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any plans to resurface the footpaths in the Morston Park and Morston Avenue areas of Bangor.

(AQW 31597/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is currently preparing its 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 published on my Department's internet site.

Information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

Resurfacing of Footpaths in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any plans to resurface the footpaths in the Hazelbrook Avenue, Chester Park, Chester Avenue and Shewesbury Drive areas of Bangor.

(AQW 31598/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 31597/11-15.

Roadworks on the M1

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the roadworks on the M1 between Belfast and Lisburn, to detail the (i) reasons for the works; (ii) the cost; and (iii) the impact on commuters.

(AQW 31599/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The works on the M1 between Belfast and Lisburn involve the construction of a Motorway Service Area and associated slip roads by a private sector developer under a licence agreed with my Department.

These works are being funded and constructed by a private sector developer and provide a further boost to the local construction industry.

In the short term, the impact of these works on commuters is likely to lead to delays estimated at 5 minutes at off-peak periods and up to 10 minutes at evening peak times as a temporary speed limit is currently in place. The construction of the slip roads is expected to conclude in early summer.

In the longer term, the opening of the facility will benefit commuters by providing access to services as well as creating additional employment opportunities.

Roadworks Planned for Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the (i) roadworks planned for Belfast in the next twelve months; (ii) the cost of the roadworks; and (iii) the impact on commuters.

(AQW 31600/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is currently preparing its 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.

Information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's 2013/14 Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

As the work programme for the 2014/14 financial year is yet to be finalised, I am unable to comment on the impact on commuters although I can assure the Member that every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum.

Posnett Street, Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the proposals for Posnett Street, Belfast, including the timescale for each.

(AQW 31602/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Whilst my Department currently has no proposals for Posnett Street, Belfast, I can confirm that officials are assisting DSD with the development of a framework for the regeneration of Shaftesbury Square that will consider the effects of any proposals which may come forward in the Posnett Street area.

Atkins Report on Orchardville Flooding Investigations

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) when he anticipates the recommendations from the Atkins Report on Orchardville Flooding Investigations, will be implemented; and (ii) if interim measures, such as the removal of hydraulic locking in the culvert adjacent to Orchardville Crescent, have been raised with NI Water.

(AQW 31713/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) The Atkins report recommendations are being taken forward in two parts. The initial element, which involves investigating the existing network, identifying structural defects and cross connections, and maximising the existing network performance is progressing well and is on target. It is anticipated that the contractor who will carry out the repairs of these defects will be appointed toward the end of March 2014 for a four to six week contract period. The second element involves examining a number of options to provide an emergency overflow to the existing wastewater pumping station. Options being considered include the construction of an additional pumping station within the existing NI Water site. NI Water is currently liaising with DARD Rivers Agency and exploring options to create capacity within the adjacent watercourse to allow this pumped overflow option to proceed. It is anticipated that a report setting out options on the way forward will be completed by May 2014.
- (ii) Interim measures, including the possibility of removing the hydraulic lock have already been examined but it has been established that this would not be viable. NI Water will be installing flap valves to the existing surface water sewer outlets as part of the contract to be awarded by the end of March 2014.

Atkins Report on Flooding

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Regional Development when he anticipates the recommended option from the Atkins Report into flooding on the Newtownbreda Road will be implemented.

(AQW 31714/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: NI Water has received the recommended option from the Atkins report on flooding at Newtownbreda Road and intends to proceed to detailed design during March 2014. When the design has been completed, NI Water will produce a cost estimate and will then carry out a cost-benefit assessment. At that stage, a decision will be taken as to whether or not implementation of the scheme will be included within the capital works programme. It is envisaged this will be completed by September 2014.

Until then, NI Water cannot give any assurance that the scheme will be implemented.

Reduced Car Parking Charges: Christmas 2013

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact on town centres of reduced car parking charges in Road Service car parks during Christmas 2013; and whether there are any plans to extend this scheme to other times of the year.

(AQW 31715/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am not yet in a position to comment directly on the impact reduced car parking charges had in town centres during the last Christmas period.

The new tariff was introduced on 2 December 2013 and continued until 11 January 2014, and applied to car parks that have a tariff of 30p or more per hour.

The operation of car park tariffs is kept under review.

Roads Service Car Parks in Magherafelt

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the revenue generated at Roads Service car parks in Magherafelt during Christmas 2013 when reduced charges were in place; and (ii) the revenue generated when full tariffs were charged.

(AQW 31717/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of revenue generated at Roads Service car parks in Magherafelt, during Christmas 2013 (from 2 December 2013 to 11 January 2014, when reduced charges were in place) and in the corresponding period from the year before (when there were no reductions in place), are shown in the table below:

Car Park Name	Revenue Christmas 2013/14 £	Revenue Christmas 2012/13 £	Percentage Change
Union Road	7,902.63	8,658.07	-8.73
Rainey Street	20,597.44	21,983.39	-6.30

A8 Roadworks: Sound Recording Equipment

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether sound recording equipment has been provided to any residents adjacent to the A8 for the purpose of recording sound levels before, during and after the current A8 works; and if so, how many families have been facilitated.

(AQW 31739/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not provided sound recording equipment to any resident living adjacent to the A8, before or during the current A8 dualling works.

A8 Roadworks: Alternative Living Accommodation

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any families along the route of the A8 have been offered alternative living accommodation during the works on the A8 project; and if so, to detail (i) how many; and (ii) the cost.

(AQW 31740/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The contractor for the A8 dualling scheme has offered alternative living accommodation to one family during the construction of the project.

The contractor has advised that the cost to date of this provision is approximately £11,000.

A8 Roadworks: School Children

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any school children living along the A8 route have been provided a free taxi service to and from school during the works on the A8 project; and if so, to detail the (i) reasons; and (ii) cost.

(AQW 31741/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As a consequence of construction work in close proximity to a property along the A8, access to this property from the A8 has been severed. As a consequence the family no longer has access to the adjacent bus stop.

The A8 contractor, Lagan Ferrovia Costain, has entered into an arrangement with the property owner to provide a free taxi service for journeys to and from school for the duration of these works.

To date, the cost of the provision of this service is approximately £1,200.

Grievances: Timescales

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how many formal grievances are currently being addressed; (ii) how long each grievance has been ongoing; and (iii) whether any grievance has taken longer than the timescale detailed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Practice, including (a) how much longer; and (b) the reasons for the delay.

(AQW 31771/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is currently dealing with seven formal grievance cases. The table below shows, for each of these cases, the date of receipt and the approximate period of time during which it has been ongoing.

While there are timescales within the Grievance policy for meetings and processes, there is no overall timescale within which a case should be fully concluded. The objective of the policy is to resolve a grievance as quickly as possible.

Common factors which contribute to the length of time taken to bring grievance cases to conclusion include:

- the need for a full and proper investigation;
- the requirement to interview a large number of witnesses;
- the unavailability of witnesses or representatives (including TUS officials);
- legal or other challenges by the individual;
- the need to prepare responses to requests from the individual for information under Data Protection and/or Freedom of Information legislation; and
- sickness absence of the individual or witnesses.

Date on which grievance was received	Approximate timescale to date
15 May 2012	1 year 10 months
3 September 2012	1 year 6 months
8 October 2012	1 year 5 months
15 May 2013	10 months
30 July 2013	8 months
25 October 2013	5 months
14 November 2013	4 months

Pay and Display Car Parks: Income

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the approximate income derived from the Pay and Display car parks that were included in the tariff reduction scheme in December 2013; and (ii) the comparable amount derived in December 2012.

(AQW 31779/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the revenue generated at my Department's car parks when reduced charges were in place during the Christmas 2013 period (2 Dec 2013 to 11 Jan 2014) and the corresponding period during Christmas 2012 are provided in the table below:

Year	Car Park Revenue
2012/13	£901,388.97
2013/14	£802,242.93

Department's Water Bills

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) who audits his Department's water bills; (ii) when his Department's water bill was last audited; (iii) when his Department's water bill will next be audited; (iv) how much money has been saved in the last five years as a result of auditing; and (v) the process for contracting out the auditing of water bills.

(AQW 31796/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Whilst my Department primarily occupies premises owned by the Department for Finance and Personnel (DFP) for which water bills are managed by DFP, Roads Service occupies a number of specialist buildings, for which they are directly charged for water and sewerage services.

My Department has a dedicated Internal Audit function, responsible for auditing internal Departmental controls, which would include the payment and processing of invoices, such as water bills, together with the awarding of contracts for delivery of goods and services. The auditing of water bills is not contracted out.

Water and sewerage services would account for some £100,000 of expenditure in my Department's average annual resource budget of some £450 million. My Department's accounts are subject to Northern Ireland Audit Office review on an annual basis.

Housing Development Services

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any regulations in place which compel contractors to maintain a housing development in relation to such services as grass cutting and salt box provision until maintenance of these services is adopted by Roads Service.

(AQW 31829/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are no specific regulations to compel a contractor to cut grass or provide salt boxes in private streets. Where urgent repairs are required to prevent or remove danger to persons or vehicles, my Department may, upon giving at least 48 hours notice to the responsible person, carry out these works under Article 22 of the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980.

NI Water: Newry Street, Warrenpoint

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the work being carried out by NI Water on Newry Street, Warrenpoint, including the expected completion date of the work.

(AQW 31872/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: This major civil engineering contract, costing over £4 million, commenced on site in February 2013 and will provide much needed drainage improvements to the area through the construction of two large diameter pumping stations for foul and storm sewage, necessary sewer and water main replacements and a significant mechanical and electrical equipment installation

Northern Ireland Water has advised that construction work at Newry Road, Warrenpoint is progressing well and is scheduled for completion in June this year. The work is complex due to the very difficult ground conditions, high groundwater levels and various underground utility services. These difficulties did cause some initial delays but NIW has successfully managed the work to ensure completion in June.

Disability Action Transport Scheme

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the rural areas of East Antrim that are covered by the Disability Action Transport Scheme.

(AQW 31911/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Disability Action Transport Scheme is available in a number of urban areas across Northern Ireland and operational maps are available at <http://www.disabilityaction.org/services-and-projects/transport-services/operational-areas/> In regard to the East Antrim (constituency) the areas where the scheme operates are Carrickfergus, Larne and Newtownabbey.

Traders in Dungannon: Road Works

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail his plans to help alleviate the negative economic impact experienced by traders in Dungannon as a result of ongoing road works.

(AQW 31929/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council is currently undertaking an Environmental Improvement Scheme in Dungannon town centre. Extensive negotiations took place between the Council and the local Traders Association before the scheme commenced and local traders have praised the contractor for his co-operation and efforts to minimise disruption.

My officials consider the contractor is doing everything practicable to minimise the impact on traders. The Square in Dungannon is currently closed to through traffic, however, local traders acknowledge this is unavoidable.

My Department is currently carrying out a traffic signal scheme at the junctions of Killyman Road with Killymeal Road and Northland Row, with the aim of improving traffic flows in this area. All work requiring road closures is being undertaken overnight and, when traffic control is necessary, work does not commence until after 9:30 am to minimise disruption to traffic during the morning peak period. It is not anticipated this scheme, which should be complete by 31 March 2014, will adversely impact on traders within Dungannon town centre.

In addition, there was minimal disruption to traffic during the recent resurfacing scheme on a stretch of Quarry Lane, Dungannon as there were a number of alternative routes available to commuters.

Disability Action Transport Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the rural areas of North Down that are covered by the Disability Action Transport Scheme.

(AQW 32023/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Disability Action Transport Scheme is available in a number of urban areas across Northern Ireland and operational maps are available at <http://www.disabilityaction.org/services-and-projects/transport-services/operational-areas/> In regard to the North Down (constituency) the areas where the scheme operates are Bangor and Holywood.

Winter Weather

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action has been taken to strengthen the relationship between Roads Service and local councils in order to keep town centres clear of snow and ice during periods of prolonged winter weather.

(AQO 5773/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department now has arrangements in place with 25 out of the 26 District Councils to salt town centre footways during periods of prolonged snow and ice. These range from formal agreements to more informal arrangements contained in an exchange of letters between Roads Service and Councils.

All are based on the same fundamental principles and each contains the basic requirement of an agreed schedule of footways to be treated by the Council, the amount of salt to be provided by my Department and salt delivery arrangements.

In addition, at the start of the winter season, I wrote to all council Chief Executives regarding this issue encouraging them to continue to work with departmental officials to ensure that, collectively, we continue to provide an effective service during spells of severe and prolonged wintry weather.

Comber Greenway

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to further develop the Comber Greenway.

(AQO 5777/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I established a new Cycling Unit within my Department in November 2013 and it has now begun work in planning and coordinating cycling related activities.

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 by the Department, focusing on the development of routes to promote and encourage cycling.

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.

Whilst the programme for the incoming financial year has not yet been finalised, I am pleased to advise that officials plan to provide a new Toucan crossing where the Greenway crosses Sandown Road, Belfast.

Translink: Ticketing System

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on Translink's plans to install a new integrated ticketing system.

(AQO 5778/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink is currently conducting a feasibility study for a replacement ticketing system. The existing system was implemented in 2001 and is now becoming difficult to maintain. The feasibility

study will involve examining a number of replacement options including, an upgraded smartcard solution and the possible use of bank cards as part of the new system.

As part of the study, my Department has asked Translink to examine the feasibility of the systems being made available to other operators. The completion of the feasibility study will be followed by the preparation of an economic appraisal, which will examine the options and costs of the new system. The economic appraisal is expected to be finalised by June 2014. It will then be subject to approval by my Department and by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Thereafter, it will be necessary to specify requirements and begin a procurement exercise. It is expected to be early 2016 before the first phase of implementation of the new system can begin. My Department will have a role in ensuring that the new ticketing arrangements meet the requirements of Belfast Rapid Transit.

Northern Ireland Water: Chief Executive

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons for the delay in the appointment of a Chief Executive to Northern Ireland Water.

(AQO 5779/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In my response to AQO 4896/11-15 in November 2013 I advised that whilst the competition launched by NI Water in March 2013 attracted a significant level of interest, following the detailed selection process the interview panel concluded that it was not in a position to make an appointment at that time.

NI Water re-launched the Competition to fill the Chief Executive position on a permanent basis, with the placement of an advertisement in the Press on 24 January, with a closing date for applications of 17 February 2014. The selection process is now underway with interviews taking place during March. It is hoped that the final interviews will lead to the appointment of a successful candidate which, subject to acceptance, will mean that the outcome could be announced in early April 2014. A precise date for appointment will however depend on the required notice period to be given by the successful candidate.

Lurgan Train Station

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the numbers of people using Lurgan train station since 2011.

(AQO 5780/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Patronage at Lurgan train station has increased steadily since 2011.

Almost 846,000 passengers used Lurgan train station in 2010/11 increasing to almost 856,000 in 2011/12.

Patronage increased significantly in 2012/13 with over 901,000 passengers using the station, representing an overall growth of 6.56% since 2011. This makes it the 7th busiest station on the NI Railways network.

Growth in passenger journeys on the Portadown line during the current financial year has been recorded as 22% totalling 3.4 million journeys at the end of February 2014. Those using Lurgan station would be an important part of this.

Cycling: Long-Term Benefits

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the potential long term benefits of his cycling priorities.

(AQO 5781/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: You will be aware that I launched the Active Travel Strategy in 2013. In developing the Strategy, the Active Travel Forum considered the wider economic and social benefits of active travel

including cycling. This highlighted a number of key economic, social and environmental benefits including:

- reduce the costs to the economy incurred by factors such as poor physical health and heavy congestion;
- improve accessibility for local retailers and businesses; and
- increase the attractiveness of an area as a location in which to live and work

My Department's Cycling Unit is currently working on developing a clear and aspirational vision for cycling, which will be articulated through a long term Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland. The development of this strategy will take full account of the wider, long term economic, social and environmental benefits.

It is clear that a cycling revolution will take time and should happen in stages, however this is my vision for Northern Ireland and I am committed to making it happen.

Transport: Sustainability

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation.

(AQO 5782/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I launched "Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation," in March 2012. At that time I set out my vision to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life.

To assist in this regard, the New Approach set out a commitment to develop a Policy Prioritisation Framework. The aim of the Framework was to identify and prioritise those strategic transport interventions that most closely align with the Executive's priorities.

This Policy Prioritisation Framework has now been completed. My Department is now undertaking an analysis of the social, economic and environmental context to identify the key challenges and developments and inform the prioritisation process. This work will inform transport priorities for future budget periods.

My officials will be engaging with key stakeholders directly in the coming months to discuss my Department's proposals for transport investment which is aligned with and supports delivery of the Executive's vision for Northern Ireland.

Foyle Ferry Service

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the Foyle Ferry Service.

(AQO 5783/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department holds no statutory powers in relation to ferry services that extend beyond Northern Ireland and it has had no involvement in either the establishment of this service, nor its operation. Accordingly, my Department has had no cause to undertake any assessment of the Foyle Ferry Service.

I am aware that Lough Foyle Ferry Company was awarded a licence by Limavady Borough Council and Donegal County Council to run the Foyle Ferry service between Magilligan and Greencastle for a three year period from 1st April 2013. It is my understanding that the license to run the service was awarded on the basis that the service would not be supported financially by either Limavady Borough Council or Donegal County Council and that its operation would be financed solely through fare revenue.

Department for Social Development

Benefit Fraud: Repayments

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development how many people owe in excess of £30,000 as a result of benefit fraud; and, in terms of repayment arrangements, how many have arrangements likely to extend beyond their natural life expectancy.

(AQW 31102/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Agency is committed to the recovery of all overpayment debt including in instances where fraud has occurred.

The rate of recovery will depend on whether the individual is on or off benefit.

At 31 December 2013 there were 57 individuals with a fraud related debt in excess of £30,000 who have a repayment plan in place. Where an individual is convicted of benefit fraud it is within the power of the Court to make a Compensation Order. This decision is dependent on the financial circumstances of the claimant and so is not therefore possible in all cases.

Where recovery is made by deduction from benefit there are legislative restrictions on the amount which can be taken. For 2013/14 the maximum deduction in respect of a fraud related overpayment is £18.00 per week for income based benefits and up to 1/3 of entitlement for contributory benefits. As a result, overpayment recovery can take a number of years to complete.

It is not possible to calculate natural life expectancy for the individuals involved, however, the estimated length of time to repay, based on the maximum deduction permitted by legislation, is over 75 years.

Where there are individuals with a benefit fraud debt of over £30,000 who are not repaying the Agency pursues other available legal avenues, for example Compensation Orders.

Housing Benefit Fraud: Repayments

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development how many people currently owe the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in excess of £30,000 as a result of housing benefit fraud; and, in terms of repayment arrangements, how many have arrangements likely to extend beyond their natural life expectancy.

(AQW 31103/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because it is not possible to calculate the natural life expectancy for the individuals involved.

The Housing Executive has advised that there are currently 29 Housing Benefit overpayment fraud cases in excess of £30,000. They confirm that repayment arrangements for 15 cases are in place, and ranges from 26 years to 200 years.

It should be noted that where the overpayment relates to a case with an ongoing entitlement to Housing Benefit, the Housing Executive recovers the maximum allowable amount under legislation unless the debtor can prove financial hardship, in which case a lower recovery figure may be accepted. In other cases where there is no ongoing Housing Benefit entitlement, an individual repayment arrangement is made following a review of the debtor's financial circumstances.

The remaining 14 cases which do not have repayment arrangements are either being appealed by the claimant, awaiting a hearing with the Enforcement of Judgement Office, awaiting Benefit deductions, with Private Sector Recovery Agents or have other investigative action ongoing.

One-Stop Shop for Energy Advice

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the establishment of a one-stop shop for energy advice, as agreed by the Assembly on 8 April 2013.

(AQW 31371/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department and the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) continue to work closely together on energy efficiency matters as required.

Currently advice on all energy related matters in DETI is provided through NI Direct at www.nidirect.gov.uk/energywise.

Information regarding the Warm Homes and the Boiler Replacement Schemes provided my Department can also be found through NI Direct at www.nidirect.gov.uk/warm-homes-grant-scheme and www.nidirect.gov.uk/news-aug13-grant-available-to-replace-old-boilers.

Housing Benefit Fraud

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what was the total money owed as a result of housing benefit fraud in each of the last three years; and how much has been recovered.

(AQW 31377/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive gathers figures on the amount of Housing Benefit overpayments raised from their main counter-fraud activities (data-matching, Intervention and Compliance programme and referral of cases to the Social Security Agency's Single Investigation Service).

Table 1 below details Housing Benefit overpayments from the Housing Executive's counter fraud activities for the last three years: -

TABLE 1

2012/13	£3.58m
2011/12	£3.83m
2010/11	£3.61m

In relation to the amount recovered, it is not possible to provide the amount specifically recovered in relation to counter fraud activities. However, Table 2 below details the total amount recovered over the last three years in relation to all Housing Benefit overpayments, which occurred due to customer error and customer fraud (which can include the landlord) during the course of the year.

TABLE 2

2012/13	£13.9m
2011/12	£13.9m
2010/11	£13.1m

Temporary Accommodation for the Homeless

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to temporary accommodations, including hostels, to detail (i) the number that are currently available for those deemed to be homeless; (ii) where they are located; and (iii) the number of (a) individuals and (b) families that have resided in temporary accommodation for two years or longer.

(AQW 31518/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that Table 1 below provides the information requested in parts (i) and (ii) of the question: -

TABLE 1 - TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION BED BUREAU (AT 1 NOVEMBER 2013):-

Nihe District Office Area	Private Sector Accommodation Properties	Voluntary Sector Hostels	NIHE Hostels
Antrim	25		1
Armagh	5	1	
Ballycastle	14		
Ballymena	55	3	1
Ballymoney			
Banbridge	5		
Bangor	22	2	1
Belfast East	8	1	1
Belfast North 4	12	3	2
Belfast North 6	25	5	
Belfast South	124	6	
Belfast West 1	40	2	
Belfast West 3	98	3	2
Carrickfergus		1	1
Castlereagh	38	1	
Coleraine	13	3	1
Collon Terrace	51		2
Cookstown		1	
Downpatrick	46	1	1
Dungannon	52	1	
Fermanagh	55	1	
Larne		2	
Limavady	1		
Lisburn Antrim Street	91	2	1
Lisburn Dairyfarm	45	1	1
Lurgan	8	1	
Magherafelt	4		
Newry	51	3	
Newtownabbey 2	1		1
Newtownabbey 1	3		1
Newtownards	37		1
Omagh	4	1	

Nihe District Office Area	Private Sector Accommodation Properties	Voluntary Sector Hostels	NIHE Hostels
Portadown	15	4	
Strabane		3	
Waterloo Place	151	7	1
Waterside	19	3	1
Total	1118	62	20

The Housing Executive has further advised that Table 2 below provides the information requested in part (iii) of the question: -

TABLE 2

In temporary accommodation for more than two years (at 1 March 2014): -

NIHE hostels	
Household type:	
Elderly	
Large Adult Families	
Large Families	
Single people	4
Small Adult Families	
Small Families	6
Total	10
Voluntary Sector Hostels	
Household type:	
Elderly	5
Large Adult Families	
Large Families	
Single people	11
Small Adult Families	
Small Families	4
Total	20
Private Sector Accommodation	
Household type:	
Elderly	4
Large Adult Families	3
Large Families	23

Single people	33
Small Adult Families	2
Small Families	82
Total	147

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Phase 4 of the Village Regeneration Programme

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 28338/11-15, what action his Department is taking to attract interest from the private sector to develop affordable private housing in Phase 4 of the Village Regeneration programme.

(AQW 31568/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is the Housing Executive's intention to market test the Village area for the provision of private and affordable housing once planning approval for Phase 3 (27 dwellings and Public Open Space provision) is granted, as this will determine the amount of land available.

Requests for Welfare Entitlements: Languages

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of requests in relation to welfare entitlements in languages other than English in each of the last three years, broken down by language.

(AQW 31575/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Security Agency does not routinely gather information on how many people have requested information relating to welfare entitlements in languages other than English. The Agency does, however, offer telephony and face to face interpretation services and translation services. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive also provides similar interpreting and translation services for Housing Benefit applications. Data obtained from provision of these services has been collated to provide the following information with regard to the number of people who have availed of these services covering a 3 year period, and broken down by language.

It should be noted that the table below includes data for the Agency for the period April 2011 to February 2014. For the Housing Executive, the data included only relates to the period April 2011 to December 2013, their latest available information.

Language	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
Albanian	0	0	0	0
Amharic	0	3	7	10
Arabic	50	121	52	223
Armenian	0	0	0	0
Bahasa Indonesia	1	0	0	1
Bengali	8	13	3	24
Bulgarian	23	12	27	62
Burmese	0	0	0	0
Cantonese	35	18	16	69

Language	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
Chinese Trad	2	0	4	6
Czech	104	111	93	308
Dutch	0	1	1	2
Fanti	1	0	0	1
Farsi	0	0	0	0
Farsi(Persian)	26	37	5	68
French	4	5	6	15
German	5	0	1	6
Greek	0	1	1	2
Gujarati	0	0	0	0
Hindi	4	4	1	9
Hungarian	215	378	369	962
Indonesian	1	0	0	1
Italian	14	20	15	49
Japanese	2	3	0	5
Korean	0	1	0	1
Kurdish(Bahdini)	1	1	0	2
Kurdish (Sorani)	0	0	0	0
Latvian	72	70	41	183
Lingala	1	0	0	1
Lithuanian	446	457	310	1213
Malayalam	1	0	0	1
Mandarin	114	66	87	267
Mongolian	0	1	0	1
Oromo	0	6	0	6
Nepali	1	0	1	2
Pashto	1	0	0	1
Polish	1290	1400	1169	3859
Portuguese	206	306	372	884
Punjabi	4	0	1	5
Romanian	86	90	143	319
Russian	106	107	101	314
Sign Language	0	1	1	2
Sinhala	0	0	1	1

Language	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
Slovak	274	552	524	1350
Somali	100	127	127	354
Spanish	51	104	135	290
Swahili	1	1	0	2
Tamil	1	0	0	1
Tetum	285	414	175	874
Thai	1	2	3	6
Tibetan	1	0	0	1
Tigrinya	0	1	3	4
Turkish	4	7	2	13
Twi	1	0	0	1
Ukrainian	0	3	1	4
Urdu	6	1	0	7
Vietnamese	1	1	1	3
Total	3550	4446	3799	11795

Parking Arrangements in a Housing Executive Owned Estate

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department, or any of its arm's-length bodies, are responsible for providing additional parking arrangements in a Housing Executive owned estate; and whether the policy changes depending on the number of private homes owned within the estate.

(AQW 31577/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that parking provisions within their existing estates were accepted by planners and roads service as adequate at the time of construction. In terms of statutory planning requirements relating to existing parking requirements, there is no legislation that requires the Housing Executive to continually monitor parking provision. There is, however, no doubt that some of the Housing Executive's older estates do have substandard parking, both in terms of the number of spaces available and the parking arrangements themselves.

The Housing Executive has a Standards Bulletin dating back to April 2002 titled "Provision of Additional Car Parking in Existing Estates". The general rule applied then was as follows: -

"3.00 In general, when it is considered that there is a genuine need for additional parking on an existing estate, and the Housing Executive still owns more than 50% of the dwellings in the area of the estate likely to benefit from the improved parking, then the Area may bring forward a scheme to carry out the work which should be fully funded by the Housing Executive.

4.00 In those situations where less than 50% of the dwellings in the area of the estate likely to benefit from the improved parking are owned by the Housing Executive, the Area should approach the appropriate Division of Roads Service, outlining the need for the scheme and requesting that they share the cost. If Roads Service is unable or unwilling to participate then the scheme should not proceed.

5.00 In all situations where additional communal parking is provided the Area should ensure that the parking area is determined as part of the planning process and adopted by Roads Service on completion. Only parking areas which Roads Service has agreed to adopt will be constructed."

The Housing Executive is not aware of any parking schemes being delivered under this technical directive in recent times nor have they been asked to exercise this requirement by any of their Regional or Area offices.

Due to the lack of capital funding the Housing Executive has not carried out any Environmental Improvement schemes where this type of work would have been identified. However, some road, footpath and parking improvements have been carried out under Neighbourhood Renewal Schemes within some NIHE estates which are totally funded by the Department for Social Development. This appears to have been the only means of delivering additional parking provision in recent years. However, where amenity space has to be removed to cater for additional car parking spaces within the Housing Executive estates this may now be impacted by the current Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8).

Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development how many ministerial appointments to public bodies have been made by his Department since May 2011; and of these, to detail how many were made to (i) males; (ii) females; and (iii) the organisations to which appointments were made.

(AQW 31592/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development is responsible for five bodies that have Ministerial appointments, these are; Charity Commission Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Charities Advisory Committee, Vaughan's Trust and Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board.

Since May 2011, only two of the bodies have made appointments. The Charity Commission had two females and one male appointed.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive had one female and six males appointed to its Board. Three of these were statutory nominations, one Sinn Fein member and two SDLP members.

The Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board has not met since 2008 and steps have been taken by the Department to have this Board disbanded.

The table below gives an overview of the Department's Ministerial appointments.

Organisation	Male	Female
Charity Commission Northern Ireland	1	2
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	6	1
Charities Advisory Committee	0	0
Vaughan's Trust	0	0

Cost of Providing One Social Housing Unit

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the total cost of providing one social housing unit at 19 Downpatrick Road, Crossgar, including the (i) purchase of the site; (ii) architectural and planning fees; and (iii) estimated construction costs.

(AQW 31628/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that there is currently no social housing scheme in the Social Housing Development programme for 2014/15 – 2016/17 for 19 Downpatrick Road, Crossgar.

Village Regeneration Area: Low-Cost Co-Ownership Housing

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions have taken place with housing associations to ascertain interest in developing low-cost co-ownership housing in the Village Regeneration area.

(AQW 31648/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Housing Strategy commits the Department to increasing the supply of affordable housing in Northern Ireland.

It was always the intention to market test the Village area for the provision of affordable housing, once planning approval for Phase 3 of the Village regeneration programme is granted, as this will determine the amount of land available. The provision of affordable housing is necessarily demand-led and there is a need to establish public demand for low-cost co-ownership-type housing in this area.

Together with the developing Housing Associations and the Housing Executive, the Department will seek to develop an evidence-based policy on this issue.

Village Regeneration Area Housing Stock

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development whether interest in the Village Regeneration area housing stock could be opened up to include interest from the general South Belfast area.

(AQW 31649/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Village area falls within the Donegall Road Common Landlord Area (CLA). This CLA also forms part of the General Housing Area (GHA) that incorporates a number of CLAs, including Annadale, Donegall Pass, Sandy Row, Lisburn Road, Upper Ormeau and Stranmillis. Housing applicants can choose two CLAs and they can also request the GHA option to widen their areas choices for rehousing. If a housing applicant is assessed as a Full Duty Homeless Applicant (FLA), the GHA option is applied automatically after 6 month period.

Public Representative Meetings: Upper Bann Constituency

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 31280/11-15, whether his Department has organised any public representative meetings with any elected representatives in the Upper Bann constituency in the last three years; and to provide details of these meetings.

(AQW 31675/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not hold this information.

Combating Racism: Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what programmes his Department funds to help communities combat racism.

(AQW 31716/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not fund programmes specifically geared to help communities combat racism although funding may be considered where a priority need for action is identified within local Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans and where resources are available

Private Rented Accommodation: Strabane

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of households in Strabane in private rented accommodation; and how many of these households are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

(AQW 31723/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because my Department does not record the number of households in private rented accommodation.

However the Housing Executive has advised that there were 2,293 private sector Housing Benefit claims in their Strabane Local Office as at 1 March 2014.

Breaches of Tenancy Conditions

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 31054/11-15, to clarify why it states the Northern Ireland Housing Executive does not tolerate such breaches of tenancy conditions, when AQW 31053/11-15 indicates that no records of any such actions are kept.

(AQW 31738/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to breaches of tenancy these matters are dealt with at their local office level where any cases identified are dealt with proactively through the appropriate channels. This entails initial discussion with the tenant involved to remedy any suggested breach. There has been no requirement for local Housing Executive offices to maintain a register of such cases but the absence of a register should not be viewed as an absence of local action to address any issues identified.

Double Glazing in Social Housing: Lettercreeve in Ballymena and North Antrim

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the timescale for the completion of the installation of double glazing in social housing in (i) Lettercreeve in Ballymena; and (ii) North Antrim.

(AQW 31783/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to (i) the Housing Executive has advised that the single glazed properties in Lettercreeve are in the Ballymena Phase 2 double glazing scheme which is scheduled to go on site in autumn this year.

In relation to (ii), the Housing Executive advises that there is a double glazing scheme in Ballymoney for 67 dwellings which the contractor has been briefed on. The scheme proposals have been prepared for clearance later this month, and they advise that it is only after schemes have been cleared that the actual start and completion dates are agreed with the contractor.

Welfare Reform: Household in Negative Equity

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how the implementation of the proposed Welfare Reform will impact upon householders in negative equity.

(AQW 31788/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Currently owner-occupiers on means-tested benefits may qualify for Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) to help towards mortgage costs. Temporary changes to SMI were introduced from 5 January 2009. These changes reduced the qualifying period for support from 39 or 26 weeks to 13 weeks and increased the mortgage capital limit from £100,000 to £200,000. Those of working-age in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance will be entitled to SMI for a period of two years.

The Chancellor announced within the Autumn Statement that the temporary changes to SMI have been extended until 2015 for working-age SMI claims. The waiting period will remain at 13 weeks and the working-age capital limit will remain at £200,000 until 31 March 2015.

Under the proposed introduction of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland a zero earnings limit will apply with regard to SMI assistance. This means that a

Universal Credit claimant who is an owner-occupier will not get any assistance with their mortgage payments, if they start working part-time. While, at first glance, the zero earnings limit might seem to be perverse logic with regard to incentivizing individuals to take up or increase part-time work, it is considered that the Universal Credit tapers and disregards will help ensure that no-one should be disadvantaged by the zero earnings rule. In particular, Universal Credit does not include a time limit on the period during which the claimant can claim for SMI assistance.

Department's Water Bills

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) who audits his Department's water bills; (ii) when his Department's water bill was last audited; (iii) when his Department's water bill will next be audited; (iv) how much money has been saved in the last five years as a result of auditing; and (v) the process for contracting out the auditing of water bills.

(AQW 31793/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development do not carry out audits of water bills.

Premises Officers are required to take monthly meter readings and to scrutinise water bills to identify any irregularities in either consumption amounts or costs.

If auditing of water bills were contracted out this would be done via the NI lead procurement body, DFP Central Procurement Directorate, via a suitable tender competition to provide best value for money.

Grievances: Timescales

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many formal grievances are currently being dealt with by his Department; (ii) how long each grievance has been on going; and (iii) in instances where the grievance has taken longer than the timescale quoted in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Practice, to outline the extenuating circumstances that have led to the additional timescale.

(AQW 31800/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) My Department is currently dealing with 120 formal grievances (position at 10 March 2014).
 (ii) The table provides details on how long each grievance has been ongoing.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Number	2	19	63	36	120

- (iii) While there are timescales for meetings and processes within the Grievance Policy, there is no overall timescale. The objective of the policy is to resolve a grievance "as quickly as possible".

Repossessed Houses

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many homes were repossessed in the two years (i) prior to; and (ii) since, January 2012.

(AQW 31896/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not hold the information on the number of houses repossessed each year in Northern Ireland. However, the Department of Justice issue statistics on the number of writs and summonses issued for mortgage possession actions on a quarterly basis. These statistics show that the number of writs and summonses issued in the two years prior to January 2012 were as follows;

- 3,390 in 2010
- 3,588 in 2011

The same statistics show that the number and writs and summonses issued in the two years since January 2012 were as follows;

- 3,732 in 2012
- 3,694 in 2013

It should be noted that not all cases result in possession orders or in the enforcement of that order to evict the householder. Furthermore, lenders granted possession orders by the courts have up to 12 years in which to enforce the order, therefore, the number of possession orders granted in any given year may not translate into the same number of enforcements or evictions.

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Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration has been given to have benefits, such as Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, paid in stages to people with addictions, as opposed to fortnightly or monthly, to ensure they have funds for necessities, and do not use larger amounts to purchase substances to feed their addiction.

(AQW 31969/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No consideration has been given to different payment rules for benefit recipients with addictions. One of the purposes of welfare benefits is to promote independence. There is therefore no requirement for recipients to use their benefit for any particular purpose and they are free to choose how they spend it. However, where there is evidence that it appears necessary in an individual case to protect the interests of the beneficiary or a dependant for whom benefit is paid, the Department can direct that all or part of the benefit be paid to another person on the beneficiary's behalf.

Harbour Area of Newcastle

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the Harbour area of Newcastle being excluded from the Newcastle Public Realm Scheme, to outline any additional funding schemes available to businesses in this area now or in the future.

(AQW 31974/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The area covered by the Newcastle public realm was based on the town centre boundary as defined within the Draft Ards and Down Area Plan, which does not extend to the Harbour area of Newcastle. As the Harbour area therefore sits outside the town centre it is considered ineligible for funding. DSD is currently working with Council and the local Chamber of Commerce on a £250,000 scheme to revitalise the town centre.

Expansion of Craigavon Town Centre

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 31353/11-15, to detail any (i) meetings; or (ii) correspondence departmental officials have had with business owners and representatives regarding the expansion of Craigavon Town Centre; and (iii) for his assessment of the potential investment opportunities that exist.

(AQW 31997/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department funded the Craigavon Integrated Development Framework (CIDF) published in July 2010; the purpose of which was to assist with the prioritisation of development opportunities in Portadown, Lurgan and Craigavon town centres, as defined in the Craigavon Area Plan and updated by the Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designations Plan 2010. The purpose of the CIDF and Central Craigavon Masterplan were to clearly identify development opportunities within the 3 town centres and DSD officials continue to work in partnership with Craigavon Borough Council officials to deliver the CIDF.

A Craigavon Integrated Regeneration Partnership has been formed by Craigavon Council, comprising elected council members, council officials and senior representatives from DSD, DRD and Planning Service, with input from

the private sector on an advisory basis. My officials have had no dealings with business owners or representatives regarding extending Craigavon Town Centre.

Housing Fraud

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development, following the BBC Spotlight programme on housing fraud broadcast on 11 March 2014, to outline the action his Department is taking to address the issues raised.

(AQW 32014/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The NIAO report Tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud in Northern Ireland will be subject of a Public Accounts Committee evidence session on 14 May 2014. It would not be appropriate for me to comment in advance of the DFP Minister's considered response.

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Tenancy Fraud

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the extent of tenancy fraud, as highlighted in the BBC Spotlight programme on 11 March 2014.

(AQW 32043/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The NIAO report Tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud in Northern Ireland will be subject of a Public Accounts Committee evidence session on 14 May 2014. It would not be appropriate for me to comment in advance of the DFP Minister's considered response.

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Tenancy Fraud

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development how many instances of tenancy fraud have been identified in the last twelve months and with what outcome.

(AQW 32044/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The NIAO report Tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud in Northern Ireland will be subject of a Public Accounts Committee evidence session on 14 May 2014. It would not be appropriate for me to comment in advance of the DFP Minister's considered response.

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Tenancy Fraud

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development what coordination there is between the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and his Department's oversight of benefit payments in regard to the pursuit of tenancy fraud.

(AQW 32045/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The NIAO report Tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud in Northern Ireland will be subject of a Public Accounts Committee evidence session on 14 May 2014. It would not be appropriate for me to comment in advance of the DFP Minister's considered response.

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

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development why some recipients of Disability Living Allowance have received correspondence indicating that their claim will be transferred to the new Personal Independence Payment system given that Welfare Reform is not yet finalised.

(AQO 5790/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No Disability Living Allowance recipients in Northern Ireland have received any such correspondence.

In April every year Social Security Benefits are uprated and as part of that process claimants receive a notification informing them of the new rate of benefit they are entitled to. The notifications are issued to all claimants across the United Kingdom from the Department for Work and Pensions' IT systems. The Disability Living Allowance uprating notifications issued last year and again in 2014 included some general information about Personal Independence Payment. Given the status of the Welfare Reform Bill in Northern Ireland my officials took action to ensure that the notification accurately reflected the position for claimants in Northern Ireland. The notification includes the wording:

"Similar provisions are currently being considered by the Northern Ireland Assembly. Subject to approval by the Northern Ireland Assembly this change will apply in Northern Ireland from a later date.

This is just another example of the short-term fixes which have had to be put in place because of welfare reform delay in Northern Ireland. The position is becoming increasingly unsustainable. The longer the Bill is delayed, the increasing divergence from IT systems becomes more problematic to manage and will increasingly impact on Northern Ireland claimants.

Housing Executive: Rent Arrears

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the effectiveness of the recovery of Northern Ireland Housing Executive rent arrears since April 2011.

(AQO 5791/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised me that, while total arrears increased for the two years from April 2011 until March 2013, this should be viewed in the context of an increase in collectable income. Rent increases in these two years were 3.75% and 6.6%.

There can be no doubt that the Housing Executive's performance on rental income collection has been affected by the general economic situation. Additionally, during the 2012/2013 financial year an increase in total arrears occurred as a result of "re-uniting" returning tenants with debt which had previously been written off. This means when a tenant terminates his or her tenancy, the Housing Executive attempts to recover any rent arrears debt on their account using a number of actions. However, in many instances former tenants cannot be traced or have no means to repay the debt (for example they are on benefits) and therefore the debt at that point is written off. However, if a former tenant makes an application for housing, their debt is flagged up again and reviewed with a view to recovery if appropriate, and the debt is then reinstated – or "reunited" - against the former tenant.

It should be noted that in this financial year there has been increased collection in the recovery of arrears. Arrears have decreased during this financial year to date, by £445,000 and it is envisaged that this will remain the case at year end.

Each year the Housing Executive carries out an annual benchmarking exercise through Housemark, comparing performance against other organisations with over 20,000 stock in GB and Scotland. Results have just been provided for the 2012/2013 financial year and in terms of Arrears and Income Collection the organisation is benchmarking above the median in the majority of categories.

The Housing Executive continues to focus its efforts to ensure maximising income collection and reducing arrears and continues to do this against a backdrop where tenants with a liability to pay rent are some of lowest income households in Northern Ireland. To this end the Housing Executive continues to view eviction for non-payment of rent as a last resort. Staff involved in arrears recovery

deal with tenants in a persistent yet sensitive manner, whilst working towards reducing arrears and non payment. The promotion of specialist money advice is encouraged at each juncture to support tenants who very often have multiple debts, however as is commonly found by debt agencies, Housing Executive tenants are often reluctant to address their debt problems.

The Housing Executive continues to use a range of actions to address rent arrears, and this follows an incremental approach from early intervention to legal action. Procedures are continually reviewed and redeveloped against both internal and external best practice.

In addition, Members will be aware of the concessions I negotiated from DWP Ministers in respect of the proposed welfare reforms. These include agreement that the housing element of benefits should continue to be paid directly to landlords. This will help reduce people's chance of falling into arrears.

Social Housing: North Antrim

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development how the levels of planned development of social housing in North Antrim compares to the number of people on the social housing waiting list in the constituency.

(AQO 5793/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At 31st December 2013, 2,283 people in the North Antrim constituency were on the social housing waiting list. 1,250 are deemed to be in housing stress.

The ability to meet demand for housing is through the allocations of properties. This includes the re-letting of existing social housing stock and social housing new build. There were 461 allocations in the North Antrim Parliamentary Constituency in the year to December 2013. There are 289 new build units planned via the Social Housing Development Programme in the period 2014/17. In addition, work is on-going to reinstate 86 void properties across the constituency. Housing Associations have also been encouraged to develop additional properties in this area and have been directed to the Housing Executive Unmet Needs Prospectus.

Housing: High-Rise Accommodation

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has a policy on housing children in high rise accommodation.

(AQO 5795/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Rule 57 of the Housing Selection Scheme states "in considering whether a particular offer is suitable, the designated officer must consider the reasonable needs of the applicant, including the applicants household having regard to suitability of features". The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to the application of Rule 57 in regard to high rise accommodation they as a general rule would not allocate this type of accommodation to families with children under 10.

Social Housing: East Belfast

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the number of new build social houses planned for the East Belfast constituency in 2014/15.

(AQO 5796/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that there are 15 schemes for 142 units programmed for 2014/15 in the Social Housing Development Programme for the East Belfast Parliamentary constituency.

The Member may also wish to note that there are further schemes in the Social Housing Development Programme for the East Belfast Parliamentary Constituency as follows:-

- 2015/16 – seven schemes for 104 units
- 2016/17 – eight schemes for 91 units

Combating Racism: Funding

Mr McKinney asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department funds any community organisations in South Belfast which assist communities in combating racism.

(AQO 5797/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not directly fund community organisations to combat racism. However some of the organisations funded under Neighbourhood Renewal in both Inner South and South West Belfast are involved in initiatives to address the issue.

Sick Absence in Department

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the sickness absence levels in his Department over the last five years.

(AQO 5798/11-15)

Mr McCausland: For each of the last five financial years, the average number of working days lost per staff year in my Department due to sickness absence was: 2008/09 – 14.6 days; 2009/10 – 14.4 days; 2010/11 – 13.4 days; 2011/12 – 11.1 days; 2012/13 – 11.4 days. This is an impressive reduction of 21.9% across those 5 years.

I am pleased to report this is the 3rd year my Department achieved its annual sickness absence rate target. In 2012/13, it was one of only two departments to deliver that year's target. Current data suggests DSD is also likely to achieve its 2013/14 target.

Other NICS departments have visited my officials to see what lessons can be learnt from the DSD approach.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Ms McCorley asked the Assembly Commission for an assessment of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages report regarding the unavailability of Irish simultaneous interpretation in the Assembly and to detail any plans to fulfil its obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

(AQW 31686/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission has not given any consideration to the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages Report nor was the Assembly contacted to provide information on its procedures which were subsequently mentioned in the report. The Commission considered legal advice in May 2013, which indicated that until such time as the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages is translated into domestic law and given direct legal effect in Northern Ireland, it creates no rights or obligations on the Commission.

Draft Language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission. The views of all Parties were sought following a meeting of the Assembly Commission held on 27 February 2013 and will be considered at a future meeting of the Commission. However, this is an area on which the Commission has been unable to reach political agreement.

Parking: Parliament Buildings

Mrs Dobson asked the Assembly Commission what actions, other than existing measures, it intends to take to resolve the shortage of staff and visitor car parking facilities at Parliament Buildings.

(AQO 5800/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission continues to acknowledge the problems experienced by users of Parliament Buildings with parking, particularly on sitting days, and is aware that this remains a most difficult issue. In light of this, Assembly management have continued to discuss this matter with DFP colleagues, and further explore possibilities for improving the situation. One positive measure that has already emerged was the handing over of the lower East car park for management by Assembly staff, and the establishment of a new overspill car park, which has provided the Assembly with an additional 42 parking spaces. This has been well received and there appears to have been a decrease in the number of complaints regarding parking.

Whilst DFP have carried out a broader review of car parking within the Stormont Estate we understand that they have no plans at this time to build additional car parks or further develop existing ones. They have indicated however that on days there is an inordinately high demand for parking, they will consider temporarily relaxing some of the current parking restrictions on Prince of Wales and Massey Avenues, thus allowing more users of Parliament Buildings to park their vehicles there. Naturally Assembly management are closely monitoring this and will continue to liaise with DFP in this regard.

Assembly management have also reviewed car parking capacity within the upper car parks adjacent to Parliament Buildings and the lower East car parks, and whilst it appears unlikely that these car parks could be significantly developed in the foreseeable future, a small increase will be possible at rear of Parliament Buildings on completion of the roof project in 2015.

Energy Efficiency

Ms Lo asked the Assembly Commission for an update on the energy efficiency of Parliament Buildings. **(AQO 5810/11-15)**

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Parliament Buildings currently has a 'D' rating on its Display Energy Certificate, which is a creditable achievement for a building of this nature. Building Services Branch work closely with the Department of Finance and Personnel's Energy Unit to ensure the Commission that all reasonable steps are being taken to maintain and improve the energy performance of the building.

In addition to that, you will be aware that we are about to undertake a major capital works project to repair the roof of Parliament Buildings and this project will include a range of measures that will further improve the energy performance of the building. These will include replacement of ineffective roof insulation with modern materials, and replacing or refurbishing all of the existing roof mounted mechanical and electrical service plant. The works will also include the installation of photovoltaic panels and solar heating tubes along with improvements to the existing boiler plant and energy management controls.

It is anticipated that with the ongoing work in conjunction with DFP and the improvements planned in the roof project our carbon footprint will be significantly reduced.

Voting

Ms McGahan asked the Assembly Commission whether it has any plans to review the voting mechanism in its meetings to mirror the cross community voting mechanism used in plenary sessions. **(AQO 5811/11-15)**

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission operates a system of weighted voting, which was formally agreed at a meeting on the 10 December 1999. The Assembly Commission has always endeavoured to obtain decisions by consensus but on occasions it has been necessary to call a vote on certain matters for progress to be achieved.

You may also wish to note that the Commission Handbook details the background and context of the Commission along with the key procedures governing the conduct of Commission business. One of these procedures relates to the issue of voting, with each of the Commission Members having a voting

strength equivalent to the number of elected Members in the party to which they belong. This does not preclude individual Members of these Parties or Parties and Independent Members not represented on the Commission from allocating their vote to a Commission Member from another Party, emphasising the principle that the Commission's role is to serve the Assembly and not individual Parties.

There is no requirement within Section 40 or Schedule 5 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 for cross community voting within the Assembly Commission, and it is for the Assembly Commission itself to determine its own procedures. However, this is a matter which has been discussed and debated by the Commission and we recently took part in a corporate governance review session in February 2014 looking at all of our governance arrangements. Following that session it was agreed that further work would be undertaken in relation to voting mechanisms operating within other legislatures and public bodies. We will then consider the information as part of our next Commission meeting in April 2014.

Irish Language

Mr D Bradley asked the Assembly Commission for an update on its policy on the use of the Irish language.

(AQO 5813/11-15)

Mr Cree (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission does not yet have an agreed Irish Language Policy. However, draft Language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission. The views of all Parties have been sought following a meeting of the Assembly Commission held on 27 February 2013 and will be considered at a future meeting of the Commission.

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