

# Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

**Friday 25 April 2014**

**Volume 94, No WA4**



# Contents

Written Answers to Questions

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development ..... WA 441

Department for Employment and Learning..... WA 441

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment ..... WA 448

Department of the Environment..... WA 448

Department of Finance and Personnel ..... WA 450

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety..... WA 452

Department for Regional Development..... WA 453

Suggested amendments or corrections will be considered by the Editor.  
They should be sent to:

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

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

# Assembly Members

Agnew, Steven (North Down)  
Allister, Jim (North Antrim)  
Anderson, Sydney (Upper Bann)  
Attwood, Alex (West Belfast)  
Beggs, Roy (East Antrim)  
Bell, Jonathan (Strangford)  
Boylan, Cathal (Newry and Armagh)  
Boyle, Ms Michaela (West Tyrone)  
Bradley, Dominic (Newry and Armagh)  
Bradley, Ms Paula (North Belfast)  
Brady, Mickey (Newry and Armagh)  
Buchanan, Thomas (West Tyrone)  
Byrne, Joe (West Tyrone)  
Cameron, Mrs Pam (South Antrim)  
Campbell, Gregory (East Londonderry)  
Clarke, Trevor (South Antrim)  
Cochrane, Mrs Judith (East Belfast)  
Copeland, Michael (East Belfast)  
Craig, Jonathan (Lagan Valley)  
Cree, Leslie (North Down)  
Dallat, John (East Londonderry)  
Dickson, Stewart (East Antrim)  
Dobson, Mrs Jo-Anne (Upper Bann)  
Douglas, Sammy (East Belfast)  
Dunne, Gordon (North Down)  
Durkan, Mark (Foyle)  
Easton, Alex (North Down)  
Eastwood, Colum (Foyle)  
Elliott, Tom (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)  
Farry, Stephen (North Down)  
Fearon, Ms Megan (Newry and Armagh)  
Flanagan, Phil (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)  
Ford, David (South Antrim)  
Foster, Mrs Arlene (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)  
Frew, Paul (North Antrim)  
Gardiner, Samuel (Upper Bann)  
Girvan, Paul (South Antrim)  
Givan, Paul (Lagan Valley)  
Hale, Mrs Brenda (Lagan Valley)  
Hamilton, Simon (Strangford)  
Hay, William (Speaker)  
Hazzard, Chris (South Down)  
Hilditch, David (East Antrim)  
Humphrey, William (North Belfast)  
Hussey, Ross (West Tyrone)  
Irwin, William (Newry and Armagh)  
Kelly, Mrs Dolores (Upper Bann)  
Kelly, Gerry (North Belfast)  
Kennedy, Danny (Newry and Armagh)  
Kinahan, Danny (South Antrim)  
Lo, Ms Anna (South Belfast)  
Lunn, Trevor (Lagan Valley)  
Lynch, Seán (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)  
Lyttle, Chris (East Belfast)  
McAleer, Declan (West Tyrone)  
McCallister, John (South Down)  
McCann, Fra (West Belfast)  
McCann, Ms Jennifer (West Belfast)  
McCarthy, Kieran (Strangford)  
McCartney, Raymond (Foyle)  
McCausland, Nelson (North Belfast)  
McClarty, David (East Londonderry)  
McCorley, Ms Rosaleen (West Belfast)  
McCrea, Basil (Lagan Valley)  
McCrea, Ian (Mid Ulster)  
McDonnell, Alasdair (South Belfast)  
McElduff, Barry (West Tyrone)  
McGahan, Ms Bronwyn (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)  
McGimpsey, Michael (South Belfast)  
McGlone, Patsy (Mid Ulster)  
McGuinness, Martin (Mid Ulster)  
McIlveen, David (North Antrim)  
McIlveen, Miss Michelle (Strangford)  
McKay, Daithí (North Antrim)  
McKevitt, Mrs Karen (South Down)  
McKinney, Fearghal (South Belfast)  
McLaughlin, Ms Maeve (Foyle)  
McLaughlin, Mitchel (South Antrim)  
McMullan, Oliver (East Antrim)  
McNarry, David (Strangford)  
McQuillan, Adrian (East Londonderry)  
Maginness, Alban (North Belfast)  
Maskey, Alex (South Belfast)  
Milne, Ian (Mid Ulster)  
Morrow, The Lord (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)  
Moutray, Stephen (Upper Bann)  
Nesbitt, Mike (Strangford)  
Newton, Robin (East Belfast)  
Ní Chuilín, Ms Carál (North Belfast)  
Ó hOisín, Cathal (East Londonderry)  
O'Dowd, John (Upper Bann)  
O'Neill, Mrs Michelle (Mid Ulster)  
Overend, Mrs Sandra (Mid Ulster)  
Poots, Edwin (Lagan Valley)  
Ramsey, Pat (Foyle)  
Ramsey, Ms Sue (West Belfast)  
Robinson, George (East Londonderry)  
Robinson, Peter (East Belfast)  
Rogers, Sean (South Down)  
Ross, Alastair (East Antrim)  
Ruane, Ms Caitríona (South Down)  
Sheehan, Pat (West Belfast)  
Spratt, Jimmy (South Belfast)  
Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)  
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)  
Weir, Peter (North Down)  
Wells, Jim (South Down)  
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

---

# Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 25 April 2014

## Written Answers to Questions

### Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

#### Single Farm Payments

**Mr McAleer** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to Single Farm Payments, to detail (i) the regional mean, median and modal single entitlement value; and (ii) the mean, median, and modal single entitlement value in (a) Severely Disadvantaged Areas (b) Dissemination Areas; and (c) Lowland Areas.

**(AQW 32819/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development):** The mean, median and modal entitlement values per hectare shown in the following table have been calculated from the analytical database constructed to assess the impact of the CAP reform proposals. These values reflect deductions to respect the 2015 budget ceiling and to provide for the Young Farmers' Scheme. The analysis is based on the current SFP claimant population and pattern of claims. Both of these factors will change markedly under CAP reform and these important caveats must be born in mind when considering the data presented.

#### EURO PER HECTARE

	Mean	Median	Modal
SDA	263	222	70
DA	374	264	70
Lowland	383	219	70
Regional	329	232	70

### Department for Employment and Learning

#### Youth Employment Scheme

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, since the inception of the Youth Employment Scheme, to detail the total number of young people that have participated in the scheme; and how this compares with any target set at the outset.

**(AQW 32669/11-15)**

**Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):** When the Youth Employment Scheme launched in July 2012 the Department set a target to secure 12,600 opportunities by 30 March 2015. These would be offered across a range of work experience, skills development placements and subsidised employment.

To ensure the overall target is met by March 2015 and that sufficient placements are made available, the Department's Employment Service has undertaken a number of actions as follows:

- increased the capacity of its Employer Engagement Team to engage with employers province wide to promote the Scheme;
- allocated placement targets for each Jobs and Benefits office/JobCentre;
- following a Post Implementation Review engaged Contracted Providers to work alongside frontline staff to deliver Skills Development and Work Experience placements from October 2013;
- the Youth Employment Scheme formed part of the recent Skills to Succeed media campaign, to encourage both young people and employers to participate. Advertisements ran on TV and Radio in February. The campaign also included extensive web advertising, as well as outdoor advertisements in most major towns.

The latest information available shows that at 28 February 2014 the Department had secured 7143 placements representing 115% of the scheme target at that point and 57% of the overall target.

### **Academic Underachievement**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for (i) his assessment of; and (ii) statistics relating to the academic underachievement amongst Protestant working class communities in North Down.

**(AQW 32846/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Population data from the Census indicate that Protestants and Catholics (aged over 16) in deprived areas in the North Down assembly area are less likely to have level 2 qualifications and above than those in affluent areas.

Deprivation has been measured on the official multiple measure which categorises areas into 'quintiles'. In deprived areas (quintiles 1 and 2), Protestants are less likely to have this level of qualification than Catholics – 52% of Protestants compared to 59% of Catholics in respect of quintile 1, and 53% of Protestants compared to 65% of Catholics in respect of quintile 2 (Annex A, Tables 1 and 2).

### **Further Education (FE) statistical analysis**

In North Down, the total number of further education enrolments for Protestants is much higher in a given year than for Catholics. In 2011/12 there were 2,203 Protestant enrolments compared to 291 Catholic. For 2012/13 there were 3,288 Protestant enrolments and 432 Catholic (Table 4).

During 2011/12, the proportion of Protestants enrolling in further education from deprived areas is higher at 18% of all Protestant enrolments, compared to 14% of all Catholic enrolments, although the number of Catholics is much lower. During 2012/13, however, the rates are similar to each other - 19% of Protestants and 19% of Catholics (Table 3).

In terms of attainment, 18% of all Protestants gaining qualifications in further education come from deprived areas – a similar proportion to those enrolling (Table 3).

### **Higher Education statistical analysis**

The total number of enrolments for Protestants is higher in a given year than for Catholics. In 2011/12 there were 1,040 Protestant enrolments compared to 236 Catholic enrolments. Figures are similar for 2012/13 (Table 6).

The proportion of Protestants enrolling in higher education from deprived areas is slightly higher at 9% of all Protestant enrolments, compared to 7.8% of all Catholic enrolments (albeit the number of Catholics is lower) (Table 5).

There is no evidence of underachievement by working class Protestants given that 9% of all Protestants gaining qualifications in higher education come from deprived areas – a similar proportion to those enrolling (8-10%) (Table 5).

### **Training for Success (TfS)**

The total number of Protestants and Catholics in North Down participating in TfS is very different (5 and 54 respectively at the end of October 2012, and 7 and 95 respectively at the end of October 2013) (Table 7)

The proportion of Catholics participating from deprived areas is higher at 40% of all Catholics participating, compared to 33% of all Protestants participating (at the end of October 2012)

Proportions at the end of October 2013 are 43% and 27% respectively.

The percentages quoted should be interpreted with caution due to the small numbers involved.

### **Role of FE**

As the main providers of adult education in Northern Ireland, further education colleges encourage access to course provision by delivering a wide and varied curriculum through their main campuses and network of community outreach centres. South Eastern Regional College offers a range of full-time and part-time courses, from Entry level to level 5, which are open to people of all abilities across the North Down constituency. FE colleges continue to have a strong record of engaging participants from the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. During the 2012/13 academic year, colleges across Northern Ireland had over 67,483 accredited enrolments from the 40% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland. This represented 44% of all such enrolments.

In addition, my Department has developed and implemented the Learner Access and Engagement Programme (LAE). This programme, which has been mainstreamed with effect from September 2013, allows FE colleges to contract with third party organisations for the provision of learner support. This support is directed at 'hard to reach' learners who are economically inactive, disengaged from the labour market and hold few or no qualifications, to encourage them to enrol on, and to complete, FE courses.

### **Higher Education.**

Access to Success, is my Department's regional strategy to widen participation in higher education among those groups which are currently under-represented. The strategy recognises an under-representation among young males from areas of high deprivation, which is particularly acute among young Protestant males.

The strategy has a strong focus on the creation of a more accessible sector in which the people who are most able but least likely to participate are given every encouragement and support to apply to, and to benefit from, higher education. The strategy sets out a programme which includes:

- a co-ordinated higher education awareness and aspiration raising campaign which was launched in March 2014 to better communicate the benefits of higher education to under-represented sections of the community;
- an expansion in the range of aspiration and educational attainment raising programmes at school, college, community and the workplace;
- the development of agreed regional programmes for a standardised route of exceptional application to higher education for the most disadvantaged applicants; and
- the development of additional support measures by higher education providers for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to sustain their participation.

Tables 1 and 2 show educational attainment (level 2 and above) by deprivation quintile for the North Down Parliamentary Constituency for those aged 16 and over. Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 detail enrolments/qualifications (at level 2 and above) in HE and FE respectively from North Down students, again by deprivation quintile for the 11/12 and 12/13 academic years.

I have attached the statistical information requested and referred to at Annex A in the Assembly Library and on the DEL website

## Academic Underachievement

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps his Department is taking to tackle under achievement among Protestant working class boys.

**(AQW 32861/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The key to addressing educational underachievement is to engage fully with young people while at school in order to raise their academic attainment levels. Although this is primarily a matter for the Department of Education and the school sector, my Department works in close partnership with others to try to address underachievement with an extensive range of initiatives. All provision is open to all irrespective of religion.

Addressing underachievement starts with the Careers Service. Advisers work with young people age 16 and 17 who do not move into employment or continue education or training or who drop out to assess their specific needs and signpost them to appropriate provision.

This can include provision funded through Pathways to Success for those who are not in education, employment or training. Programmes to test new approaches to address the general and employability barriers faced by such young people are funded through the Collaboration and Innovation fund. In addition the Community Family Support Programme supports families with a high level of need to develop their capacity to reach their full potential by addressing the health, social, economic, educational, employment and training issues that impact on their daily lives.

For those young people aged 16-17 school leavers who are unemployed and who aspire to work, my department offers a guarantee of training place through its Training for Success programme. The majority of young people on this programme have no or poor qualifications on leaving school. The programme is designed to enable participants to develop occupational and employability skills as well as address weaknesses in the essential skills of literacy and numeracy and, information and communication technology (ICT). Since the start of the Strategy, over 70% of the participants are between 16 and 25 years of age and 30% are from the most deprived quartile of 5 super output areas and 43% are Protestant.

In addition, further education colleges offer a wide and varied range of courses through their main campuses and network of community outreach centres. The Learner Access and Engagement programme enables colleges to contract with third party organisations, including community organisations, to provide personal support to learners who hold few or no qualifications or who are economically inactive and disengaged from the labour market to encourage them to enrol and to complete further education courses. A key plank to address underachievement is the Essential Skills Strategy for literacy, numeracy and, information and ICT.

I am very keen that the provision offered across all programmes enables all young people to achieve to their maximum potential, to make informed choices and provides clear progression pathways into apprenticeships, further education or into sustained employment. Consequently, I have commissioned a fundamental review of youth training to ensure that these objectives are met.

The work, so far, has drawn from evidence of best practice across the developed world, and taken the views of experts in vocational education and training, both through an Expert Panel and through engagement with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The emerging findings are that any offer at this level should include broad-based and robust vocational qualifications that enable progression to learning at a higher level, qualifications to help develop the essential skills of numeracy and literacy, the development of enterprise and employability skills and a well structured work placement that is linked to the young person's career aspirations.

Ensuring a high quality vocational training offer for young people at level 2, is a key step to ensure the future skill levels of the workforce in Northern Ireland. It is also of particular importance for groups of young people, such as Protestant working class boys, where high numbers leave school without the qualifications necessary to engage with the labour market. In addition to the emerging key elements of the offer, these young people will also need independent advice and guidance before they begin training to ensure they are signposted to provision that is appropriate to their needs and aspirations.



A review of the provision for careers in conjunction with the Department of Education is also ongoing. Young people will also need to receive high quality mentoring and have opportunities to undertake work tasters in order to help them to further realise their ambitions for a future career. The review presents an opportunity to ensure that the future youth training offer is relevant to the needs of young people, employers and the wider economy, and can help young people at risk of disengagement to realise their potential and make a successful start to their future career.

Recently, the Executive launched the strategy “Together Building a United Community” (TBUC). Significant emphasis is given to young people on the basis that early intervention can help prevent poor educational achievement; economic inactivity and social exclusion. My department agreed to assume the lead role in developing the United Youth programme. The vision is to provide well integrated, flexible, high quality, young person centred opportunities, so that they can learn new skills and take on new challenges. The design process focuses on young people as the main end beneficiaries of the United Youth Programme and results in a programme which is relevant to young people’s lives, is attractive to them and makes a difference to their lives. To inform the future development of the programme it is envisaged that a series of pilot initiatives will have commenced for up to 300 disengaged young people aged 16-24 by September 2014 with a view to a United Youth framework of provision in place by June 2015.

### **Training for Success Programme: Absence due to Illness**

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether trainees on the Training for Success programme should be subject to disciplinary procedures and the deduction of 8 weeks wages and training entitlement, as a result of absence due to genuine illness, as certified by a doctor or hospital (as per section 12.4 of the TFS 2013 Operational Guidelines).

**(AQW 32875/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Training for Success participants are unemployed and therefore unwaged. They receive a non-means tested Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), which can only be paid for a total of 15 working days of sickness absence in any year of training.

In relation to suspension from the programme for eight weeks without payment of EMA, this action is only taken in cases where a participant misses 15 or more (non consecutive) days due to illness (over a three month period).

Where a participant has missed between 10 and 14 days (over a three month period) they are issued with a written warning and advised of the consequences of further absence.

Any sickness absence related to pregnancy or a participant’s disability and evidenced by the participant’s GP must be disregarded when aggregating a participant’s sick record.

### **Skills Strategy**

**Mr Lyttle** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the Skills Strategy key aims of raising skill levels, raising productivity, increasing social inclusion by enhancing the employability of those currently excluded from the labour market and securing Northern Ireland in a global market place.

**(AQW 32893/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, known as ‘Success through Skills – Transforming Futures’, was published in May 2011 and articulates the overarching vision for the development of skills in Northern Ireland. Its aim is to enable people to access and progress up the skills ladder, in order to:

- raise the skills levels of the whole workforce;
- raise productivity;
- increase levels of social inclusion by enhancing the employability of those currently excluded from the labour market; and

- secure Northern Ireland's future in a global marketplace.

Since publication of our Skills Strategy the Department has made progress against its key strategic goals and its Programme for Government commitment to deliver over 200,000 qualifications, with the evidence showing that 151,000 qualifications (at level 2 and above) have been delivered over the period 2011/12 to 2012/13. Over the period 2010/11 to 2012/13 the Department has delivered over 217,000 qualifications.

My Department's Employment Service offers a range of services and programmes to help clients find and retain employment and to enhance the employability of those currently excluded from the labour market. One example is our 'Youth Employment Scheme', which I launched in July 2012. The programme has been responsible for assisting over 1,500 young people participate in work experience, 1,425 individuals have availed of skills development opportunities and 1,065 young people have moved into subsidised employment.

Our 'Pathways to Success Strategy', which was endorsed by the Northern Ireland Executive in May 2012, has been instrumental in addressing the needs of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The biggest single intervention is the Collaboration and Innovation Fund, which is a £9.2 million fund that has been made available to 24 organisations from the community, voluntary and educational sectors to address employability barriers facing over 6,000 NEET young people from December 2012 to March 2015. To date over 2,500 young people have engaged in innovative projects and 31% of those that completed their activity have progressed into training, 18% into education and 14% into employment.

The DETI Minister and I have recently launched 'Enabling to Success', a new joint Executive draft strategic framework to tackle economic inactivity in Northern Ireland. The strategy is currently subject to a 12 week public consultation and is seeking to reduce economic inactivity through skills, incentives and job creation. Subject to agreement by the Northern Ireland Executive, a final strategy will be published in 2014/15.

The Department, through the Disability Employment Service, delivers programmes and services aimed at helping and supporting people with health conditions and disabilities to consider their options for returning to work. Over the last year, over 2,000 disabled people have been offered assistance and been able to move into or remain in work through this provision.

My Department is also currently developing a 'United Youth Programme' which will provide opportunities for our young people to learn new skills and to participate in work placements and training opportunities. The Programme will also assist young people develop their personal skills so they can play their part in developing community relations. I anticipate launching a series of pilot initiatives in the latter half of 2014.

Another key element of our Skills Strategy is the need to increase our leadership and management skills as these are deemed essential to improving business performance and the competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy. Since publication of our Skills Strategy, over 2,100 individual managers have been trained through our Management and Leadership Development programme; 260 graduates have participated in our INTRO programme; and more than 2,100 managers have participated in our Management Analysis and Planning programme.

## Skills Strategy

**Mr Lyttle** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the key outcomes to be delivered by the Skills Strategy.

**(AQW 32894/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, known as 'Success through Skills – Transforming Futures', was published in May 2011 and articulates the overarching vision for the development of skills in Northern Ireland. Its aim is to enable people to access and progress up the skills ladder, in order to:

- raise the skills levels of the whole workforce;
- raise productivity;
- increase levels of social inclusion by enhancing the employability of those currently excluded from the labour market; and
- secure Northern Ireland's future in a global marketplace.

The work of the Department is varied and diverse and is connected by one common theme, equipping people with the qualifications or skills that they need to achieve their full potential and support businesses to grow our economy.

The Skills Strategy has four key goals which set the strategic direction for the Department and the overall skills profile for Northern Ireland. The Strategy provides, in detail, what needs to be done by 2020, if Northern Ireland is to compete successfully in a global market place. It advocates the need for higher level skills; the need to upskill; the need to address subject imbalances; the need to increase management and leadership skills; and the need to attract skilled labour.

Since publication of the strategy in 2011, and the associated Employer Engagement Plan in March 2012, significant progress has been made in terms of delivering against these objectives.

Key achievements include:

- upskilling of 7,500 people through our Customised Training programme;
- 6,400 individuals have received WorldHost customer service training;
- Our Bridge to Employment programme has assisted over 1,000 individuals to develop the skills they needed to secure jobs;
- the Assured Skills programme has assisted in securing an additional potential 2,186 Foreign Direct Investment jobs;
- almost 41,000 higher education qualifications have been delivered;
- 77,000 qualifications have been delivered through further education (level 2 and above);
- 22,000 qualifications have been achieved through training programmes (level 2 and above);
- 43,000 essential skills qualifications have been attained (level 2 and above); and
- almost 2,130 individual managers have been trained through our Management and Leadership Development programme, more than 2,100 managers have participated in our Management Analysis and Planning programme and 260 graduates have participated in our INTRO programme.

It is evident that much progress has been made in delivering the aims and objectives of our Skill Strategy, however we recognise that much more remains to be achieved if we are to attain our strategic goals.

### **Wearing of GAA Shirts by Students at Further Education Colleges**

**Mr Wells** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the wearing of GAA shirts by students at Further Education Colleges in South Down.

**(AQW 32962/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** South Down is covered by two further education colleges, South Eastern Regional College (SERC) and Southern Regional College (SRC). Each college has its own policies regarding the wearing of GAA shirts within their campuses.

SRC has a dress code within its student code of practice which states that students are not permitted to wear any clothing or emblems which show allegiance to football, rugby or GAA teams. SERC does not ban sports regalia of any kind from its campuses.

## Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

### Strategy for Unemployment in the North West

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 32134/11-15, why there is no specific strategy for unemployment in the North West, when Derry City Council has the highest percentage of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants across all 406 councils and local authorities in the United Kingdom.

**(AQW 32747/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):** I am committed to delivering all the actions set out in the Northern Ireland Executive's Economic Strategy and the more recent Economy and Jobs initiative in conjunction with my ministerial colleagues. The agreed actions set out in the Strategy are designed to deliver growth, prosperity, and jobs and to rebalance the economy across Northern Ireland.

I am also working with the Minister for Employment and Learning to develop a new Strategy to Tackle Economic Inactivity, a Strategy which we hope will reduce the proportion of the working age population classified as economically inactive, and create new employment and self employment opportunities. This Strategy will complement the work the Executive is already undertaking to deliver growth, prosperity, and jobs both in the North West and across Northern Ireland. Although the twin issues of unemployment and economic inactivity are particularly acute in the North West, it must be recognised that we need to continue to tackle these issues across all council areas and constituencies in Northern Ireland.

## Department of the Environment

### Air Pollution

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of the Environment what measures are being taken to combat air pollution.  
**(AQW 32738/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment):** The protection of both human health and ecosystems/vegetation from air pollution in Northern Ireland is addressed by EU legislation, which itself ensures compliance with international UNECE Protocols.

EU legislation includes: Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality; the Fourth Daughter Directive on Ambient Air Quality 2004/107/EC; and the National Emissions Ceiling Directive 2001/81/EC.

This EU legislation is implemented by a range of domestic legislation. NI regulations on air quality standards place a duty on NI government departments to ensure that relevant air quality objectives are adhered to, within relevant timeframes. Where problems are anticipated in complying with EU objectives, Member States submit Action Plans to the Commission, which set out the necessary measures to achieve compliance as soon as possible.

Delivery of EU obligations is further supported by the UK Air Quality Strategy, the latest version of which was published in 2007. The Strategy sets out analysis of air pollutant emissions and levels, and it contains a range of measures in relation to the following:

- International and transboundary aspects of air pollution;
- Road transport and associated emissions;
- Emissions from larger industrial sources;
- Emissions from domestic sources;
- Role of local authorities in relation to air quality;
- Local Air Quality Management;
- Planning and air quality.

In Northern Ireland, Local Air Quality Management is a statutory obligation under the Environment Order (NI) 2002, which places a duty on district councils to periodically review and assess air quality within their areas.

The Department provides financial support to councils for local air quality monitoring. For 2013/14, this is expected to be in the region of £446,000 across all district councils in Northern Ireland.

Under the provisions of the Order, where air quality is poor, councils must declare an Air Quality Management Area and develop an associated Action Plan. The Department appraises district councils' reports and Action Plans, and provides technical assistance, where required.

My Department also works with other Government Departments to raise awareness of air quality problems and explore ways in which they can tackle air pollution and contribute to good air quality. For example, my officials are engaging with DRD Roads Service to address air pollution from road vehicles, while they are also engaging with DARD to tackle air pollution from agricultural activities.

At the North-South Ministerial Council, I have discussed the issue of air pollution – in particular, that from domestic solid fuel burning – with Minister Hogan of the Department for the Environment, Community and Local Government. Our departments are now engaged in a joint exercise to examine policy options for tackling air pollution from the domestic heating sector, on an island-wide basis.

The Department also has in place a number of awareness raising measures - such as an annual report: 'Air Pollution in Northern Ireland' and a dedicated air quality website: [www.airqualityni.co.uk](http://www.airqualityni.co.uk) - which present air quality data that has been recorded in Northern Ireland, as well as information and advice in relation to air quality.

### **Interpretation Scheme at the Quoile, Downpatrick**

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of the Environment what future plans he has for a wider interpretation scheme at the Quoile, Downpatrick to highlight the areas natural beauty and the links to the Game of Thrones television series.

**(AQW 32750/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** The Quoile Pondage has its own visitor centre which provides detailed interpretation of the Nature Reserve. There is ongoing work to develop this even further.

With regard to the links with Game of Thrones, a panel has recently been erected at the Quoile Jetty to highlight how this site was used for the television series. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency is working with HBO to explore how we can further enhance the linkage with Game of Thrones.

### **Driver and Vehicle Agency Staff: Downpatrick**

**Mr Wells** asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made in finding alternative positions for Driver and Vehicle Agency staff based in Downpatrick.

**(AQW 32821/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** My officials are currently working with all other NICS Departments to identify suitable posts into which staff affected by the Department for Transport decision, to end vehicle registration and licensing services in DVA, can be redeployed at the earliest opportunity. Every effort is being made to absorb the affected staff either within DOE or in another Department in line with staff mobility obligations.

Vacancy control measures have been introduced across the NICS requiring Departments to offer vacancies to DVA affected staff before recruitment, promotion or the transfer of other staff. DVA affected staff will be given the opportunity to express an interest in vacancies across the NICS which arise within their grade.

To inform redeployment decisions, my officials are also conducting a Staff Assessment & Preference Exercise amongst the affected staff to establish if they have any special circumstances, for example disability or welfare reasons, which might restrict their mobility. The exercise will also identify locations

where staff would prefer to be redeployed should job opportunities arise. This information will be taken into account when considering redeployment opportunities for staff and every effort will be made to find suitable posts which meet the individual circumstances of staff although it may not always be possible to accommodate them. DVA staff in the Downpatrick Local Vehicle Licensing Office are included in this exercise.

### **Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Townscape Heritage Initiative**

**Mr McCarthy** asked the Minister of the Environment how many listed buildings have been restored with the aid of funding from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Townscape Heritage Initiative in each of the last five years; and to detail the funding provided in each case.

**(AQW 32834/11-15)**

**Mr Durkan:** The following table provides the detail of the number of listed buildings restored with the aid of funding from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency over the last five years. To provide a breakdown of funding for each case would generate in the region of 1,000 records, and it would not be practicable to include this information.

**TABLE A: NUMBER OF LISTED BUILDINGS GRANT FUNDED BY NIEA**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>No of Bldgs</b>	<b>£</b>
2009/10	c198	3,327k
2010/11	c200	3,781k
2011/12	c222	4,150k
2012/13	c197	3,201k
2013/14	c202	4,120k

The aim of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is to secure the long-term future of Northern Ireland's built heritage by contributing towards expenditure for the promotion, preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of a designated Conservation Area.

The listed status of a building is not a specific requirement for the eligibility of works. Applications for THI funding are considered on a case by case basis and include proposals relating to both listed and non listed buildings within a designated Conservation Area. Some projects may involve listed buildings, however, information relating to the number and amount of funding allocated to those projects would require a manual sift of all THI files over the last five years which would not be feasible within the timescale for this Assembly Question.

In 2013/14 my Department allocated £160k of budget for THI Grants. Work undertaken has however been significantly less than estimated, with completed work only allowing payment of approximated £30k for the year.

## **Department of Finance and Personnel**

### **Driver and Vehicle Agency Staff**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps he will take to co-ordinate and maximise endeavours of other Executive Departments and agencies to fill vacancies with Driver and Vehicle Agency staff who were based at Coleraine.

**(AQW 32343/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel):** On 7 April 2014 the NI Executive agreed the joint paper presented by the Minister of the Environment and I, which outlined the workforce and

financial implications of the centralisation of vehicle licensing services in Swansea and priority actions required by other departments to mitigate the adverse impacts of that decision here.

My Department is working closely with the Department of the Environment (DOE) to establish the details of staff affected by the Department for Transport decision. Corporate HR has already facilitated early engagement with DOE and other departmental HR colleagues across the NICS to ensure there is collaborative and effective operation of

NICS policy and procedures to manage staff surpluses, to redeploy staff to other duties and to avoid the need for compulsory redundancies.

### **Northern Ireland Law Commission's Report on Apartments**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Northern Ireland Law Commission's consultation on apartment management.

**(AQW 32704/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** The Northern Ireland Law Commission's Apartments Report contains a wide range of recommendations, some of which may require action at an administrative level and some of which may require legislative action. The recommendations are cross-cutting and the Executive has, therefore, established an Apartments Report Implementation Group, which is comprised of senior officials from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment; the Department of Finance and Personnel; the Department of the Environment; the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Development. The Group is currently focusing on the recommendations with regard to the regulation/licensing of managing agents and the provision of advisory services, as it is considered that those recommendations are likely to be of most interest to apartment owners. However, there are other recommendations which are being followed up with interested parties, including the recommendation in relation to the Law Society's Home Charter Scheme.

If a regulation/licensing scheme for managing agents is introduced it will have to stipulate which body will handle any resulting disputes. The Department of Justice is exploring the options for dispute resolution. It is also considering whether there are any services that could be put in place to assist apartment owners involved in a dispute.

It is envisaged that the outcomes from that additional work will be fed through to the Apartments Report Implementation Group to allow for the preparation of the final policy proposals with regard to the regulation/licensing scheme and advisory services. Thereafter, attention will turn to the broader recommendations in the report. However, at this stage, I should point out that an initial assessment has suggested that some of those broader recommendations could be more difficult to implement, particularly where they envisage the revision of existing property rights.

### **Northern Ireland Law Commission's Report on Apartments**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any consultation that has taken place with the Law Society regarding proposed changes to the law on apartment management.

**(AQW 32845/11-15)**

**Mr Hamilton:** On 9 January 2013 the Law Society of Northern Ireland's Working Group on Multi-Unit Developments and the Northern Ireland Law Commission jointly hosted a discussion seminar for all conveyancing practitioners as part of the apartments review project, and the Society itself responded to the proposals in the Commission's consultation paper.

The recommendations in the Commission's final Report are wide-ranging and some of those recommendations are of particular relevance to the Society. For example, the Commission has said the Society should stipulate the nature and extent of the information which is to be provided by solicitors on the purchase of an apartment or other property with elements of shared ownership. Those recommendations have been highlighted and they are the subject of ongoing liaison with the Society.

## Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

### Hospital Appointments

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any complaints have been logged in the past two years from hospital patients concerning a patient having a Did Not Attend registered on their file when they did not receive any notification of an appointment; and to list these complaints broken down by hospital.

**(AQW 32780/11-15)**

**Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** This information is not collected by my Department.

Although I have been advised that the coding structure in DATIX (Risk Management information system) is not set up in such a way as to identify complaints or incidents specifically of this nature, two Trusts were able to identify relevant complaints as follows:

Trust	Number	Hospital
NHSCT	1	Causeway
SHSCT	1	St Luke's Hospital
SHSCT	1	Bluestone Unit

### Domestic Violence

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will examine the possibility of locating support workers for victims of violence in Emergency Departments, similar to a pilot project currently under way in England.

**(AQW 32802/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** It is assumed this refers to the pilot scheme in Greater Manchester where Victim Support workers are working with emergency staff in accident and emergency units and urgent care centres to train them in identifying and referring victims of domestic violence and abuse.

My Department is working with the South Eastern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts to put in place a pilot to train doctors, nurses and radiographers in accident and emergency departments to recognise, respond to and report on incidents of domestic violence. Victims will be provided with appropriate care pathways, information and advice. My Department will consider any lessons to be learnt from the Greater Manchester pilot when this is finalised.

Where victims of violence of any kind attend emergency departments, they may be encouraged to contact the police service and be provided with information about Victim Support Northern Ireland or other support agencies. If the victim is a child, a referral can be made to hospital social services.

### Pregnancy Miscarriages

**Mr McCarthy** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what financial support is provided to community and voluntary sector organisations who provide support to women or parents who have lost a child through miscarriage by (i) each Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) his Department.

**(AQW 32807/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I have been advised by all HSC Trusts, with the exception of the Southern HSC Trust that financial support is not provided to community and voluntary sector organisations that provide support to women or parents who have lost a child through miscarriage.



The Southern HSC Trust has advised that its financial systems do not allow them to access the requested information without disproportionate cost.

While my Department does not provide financial support to community and voluntary organisations for this purpose we do, through the HSC in Northern Ireland, provide support and advice to women or parents who have lost a child through miscarriage. This includes the Care plan for women who experience a miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death, which is currently being revised. All Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland have bereavement coordinators who work within Trusts to develop bereavement care, standards and training for all types of bereavement, including miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death.

## Department for Regional Development

### **C665 Water and Wastewater Networks Services Project**

**Mr McAleer** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress of the C665 water and wastewater networks services project.

**(AQW 32477/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):** The C665 water and wastewater network services contract is undergoing final approval within Northern Ireland Water and will be awarded at the end of April 2014. The purpose of the contract is to supplement existing in-house resources in repair and maintenance activities on the water and sewer networks and the provision of new water and sewerage network services across all of Northern Ireland. The contract will start on 1st August 2014 and run for a period of 3 years.

### **Roads Service Policy**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the implementation of Roads Service Policy across the Eastern Division.

**(AQW 32733/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The most recent review of Winter Service policy was undertaken in June 2013, as part of a Winter Service Review. This was a very comprehensive review which examined every aspect of the winter service programme.

The review concluded that my Department has developed and implemented a robust, risk-based rationale for determining the extent of the road network that is subject to routine precautionary salting during the winter months.

The policy takes into account vehicular traffic numbers and topography with Roads Service salting the main through routes that carry more than 1,500 vehicles per day and, in exceptional circumstances, roads with difficult topography, carrying between 1,000 and 1,500 vehicles per day. While bus routes are not automatically included in the gritting schedule, buses in service, including school buses, receive special consideration when determining whether a road should be included in the salting schedule. For example, a 40 seat bus is now counted as 40 vehicles for the purpose of identifying qualifying routes.

The application of this policy ensures that 28% of the total road network, which carries around 80% of traffic, is salted, at an annual cost of approximately £5 million. An extension of the salting schedule to cover 90% or 100% of traffic volumes would increase the cost to approximately £10 million or £20 million per annum, respectively.

After all significant weather events, Roads Service examines the operational effectiveness of its response and takes on board any lessons learnt from here and other Road Authorities, to ensure our preparedness for winter weather. Following these exercises, Roads Service continuously updates and improves its winter service policy.

## A55 Knock Road

**Mr Lyttle** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the status of the proposed A55 Knock Road widening scheme.

**(AQW 32817/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** In September 2012, my Department published a Departmental Statement in response to the findings of the Public Inquiry into the proposed A55 Knock Road widening.

Currently, no funding is available to progress this scheme. Development work is continuing on a range of other major projects including the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven, the York Street Interchange, A1 Junction improvements and the A24 Ballynahinch Bypass. Timescales for the delivery all of these projects and the A55 Knock Road will be determined by future budget settlements.

## Car Parking: Penalty Charge Notices

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued in (i) Lurgan; (ii) Portadown; and (iii) Banbridge, in each of the last two years.

**(AQW 32827/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in Lurgan, Portadown and Banbridge, in each of the last two years, are provided in the table below:

Town	Lurgan	Portadown	Banbridge
2012	1,774	4,549	2,930
2013	2,012	4,248	1,746

## Street/Road Lighting: Spend

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department spent on lighting for (i) general street/road lighting; and (ii) environmental improvements/urban renewal schemes, in the last five years.

**(AQW 32946/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's expenditure on general street lighting in the last five years has been approximately £126 million, covering both capital and maintenance activities.

Environmental improvements or urban renewal schemes and enhanced elements of standard road lighting schemes have to date been funded through other parties, normally the Department for Social Development and/or the local Council.

## Tendering Process for Lighting Contracts

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how many companies have been contracted in the last five years to deliver lighting as part of a departmental environmental improvement/urban renewal scheme; and (ii) to detail the tender process by which these companies are awarded the contracts.

**(AQW 32947/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department does not directly employ any contractors to specifically deliver lighting works for environmental improvements or urban renewal schemes. It is common practice for the street lighting element of these schemes to be carried out by the current Transport NI Term Contractor for Street Lighting Works.

However, on one occasion, my Department procured and managed the contract for the Carrickfergus Public Realm scheme on behalf of the Department for Social Development. This contract included

street lighting works which were completed by a specialist sub-contractor on behalf of the main contractor.

All such main contracts, as let by my Department, are publicly advertised and procured through the Transport NI Centre of Procurement Expertise in accordance with the UK Public Contracts Regulations.

### **Lighting Contractors**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the competitiveness of lighting contractors who have delivered lighting for departmental environmental improvement/urban renewal schemes in the last five years; and whether any assessment has been made on whether the preferred contractors represent value for money.

**(AQW 32948/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** All Term Contracts for Street Lighting Works, as let by my Department, are publicly advertised and procured through the Roads Service Centre of Procurement Expertise, in accordance with the UK Public Contracts Regulations.

The procurement process utilised incorporated competitive tendering, based on a predetermined schedule of rates and prices, to ensure the most economically advantageous tender was selected. On this basis, delivery of the works by the Term Contractor represents value for money.

### **Procurement Process for Lighting Contracts**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the procurement process for lighting contracts as part of environmental improvement/urban renewal schemes.

**(AQW 32949/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I would refer the Member to my response to AQW 32947/11-15.

### **Portavoe Reservoir**

**Mr Dunne** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the draining of Portavoe reservoir by NI Water.

**(AQW 32980/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** NI Water manages the reservoirs under its control in line with standards set out in the Reservoirs Act 1975 (England and Wales).

The lowering of the water level in Portavoe Reservoir is required to facilitate essential health and safety work to refurbish valves and other maintenance work required to protect the structural integrity of the reservoir. It is expected the water in the reservoir will be lowered to the required level by the end of April 2014 and the maintenance work will be completed by the end of July 2014. These dates are however subject to favourable weather conditions as the low water level must be maintained to enable the maintenance work to progress.

NI Water has been liaising with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) on the planned works that have to be undertaken on a number of reservoirs, including Portavoe. This consultation has ensured that the agreed method of draining the reservoir will minimise the impact on the environment.

NIEA officials have confirmed they are content that there has been no breach of the wildlife legislation in relation to these works.

I accept that greater advance communication about the repair work at Portavoe would have been helpful. I have advised NI Water to review its approach in this area going forward. I have also asked NI Water to brief local councillors on the specifics of the work being undertaken and to set up an information day for the benefit of interested members of the public. I have asked that a date and time for this be arranged with North Down and Ards Councils as soon as possible.



# Written Answers Index

<b>Department for Regional Development</b>	WA 453	<b>Department of Finance and Personnel</b>	WA 450
A55 Knock Road	WA 454	Driver and Vehicle Agency Staff	WA 450
C665 Water and Wastewater Networks Services Project	WA 453	Northern Ireland Law Commission's Report on Apartments	WA 451
Car Parking: Penalty Charge Notices	WA 454	Northern Ireland Law Commission's Report on Apartments	WA 451
Lighting Contractors	WA 455		
Portavoe Reservoir	WA 455	<b>Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety</b>	WA 452
Procurement Process for Lighting Contracts	WA 455	Domestic Violence	WA 452
Roads Service Policy	WA 453	Hospital Appointments	WA 452
Street/Road Lighting: Spend	WA 454	Pregnancy Miscarriages	WA 452
Tendering Process for Lighting Contracts	WA 454		
		<b>Department of the Environment</b>	WA 448
<b>Department for Employment and Learning</b>	WA 441	Air Pollution	WA 448
Academic Underachievement	WA 442	Driver and Vehicle Agency Staff: Downpatrick	WA 449
Academic Underachievement	WA 444	Interpretation Scheme at the Quoile, Downpatrick	WA 449
Skills Strategy	WA 445	Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Townscape Heritage Initiative	WA 450
Skills Strategy	WA 446		
Training for Success Programme: Absence due to Illness	WA 445		
Wearing of GAA Shirts by Students at Further Education Colleges	WA 447		
Youth Employment Scheme	WA 441		
<b>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development</b>	WA 441		
Single Farm Payments	WA 441		
<b>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment</b>	WA 448		
Strategy for Unemployment in the North West	WA 448		







Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,  
Belfast: The Stationery Office

and available from:

**Online**

[www.tsoshop.co.uk](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk)

**Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail**

TSO

PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/General enquiries: 0870 600 5522

Fax orders: 0870 600 5533

E-mail: [customer.services@tso.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@tso.co.uk)

Textphone 0870 240 3701

**TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents**

ISSN 1463-7162

Daily Editions: Single copies £5, Annual subscriptions £325

Bound Volumes of Debates are issued periodically during the session: Single copies: £90

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited

© Copyright Northern Ireland Assembly Commission 2014

ISBN 978-0-339-70337-7

