

## Assembly Section

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Mr Shane McAteer  
Clerk  
Committee for Finance and Personnel  
Room 419  
Parliament Buildings  
Stormont

19 December 2013

Dear Shane,

### Flexible Working Inquiry

1. Thank you for your letter of 6 December in relation to the Flexible Working Enquiry.
2. The Committee has asked for:
  - **Data on the breakdown of homeworkers/teleworkers in the NICS, including gender breakdown; and**
  - **Up-to- figures on usage of the 'satellite hubs' across Northern Ireland.**
3. There is no central record held of the number of homeworkers or teleworkers in the NICS. An indicator, however, is the number of laptops and remote access connections that have been provided.
4. Of the 18,000 NICS staff supported by IT Assist, around 4,000 have laptops, of which 431 have ADSL (a dedicated broadband line in a staff home connecting the user directly to the NICS network), while 1064 have SSL or VPN (staff use a cable to connect to their own home broadband router). 1173 staff members also have 3G (this enables staff to connect to the network while on the move), while there are 2,232 Blackberry users (which allow staff to receive emails while out of the office). A pilot is currently underway in relation to tablet type technologies, using the Blackberry Playbook and there are currently 59 participants. 41 staff are also using other forms of tablet as part of a separate pilot. This is not broken down by gender.
5. Please note that there are staff that have a combination of these devices, i.e. some have an ADSL connection in their home as well as a

3G card for when they are on the move. They may even have the SSL (home broadband connection) as a back up in case of the failure of the ADSL line.

6. There are currently two formal future@work Business Zones - Castle Buildings and Marlborough House (Craigavon) – which facilitate staff to work remotely as part of their job (although other less formal arrangements and facilities are also in existence). Two other Business Zones in Causeway Exchange and Clare House are no longer available, as they have been removed to facilitate various pressing accommodation needs within each of these buildings. Properties Division however is currently undertaking a review of existing DFP Belfast City Centre office accommodation, to assess the viability of providing Business Zone type facilities at more locations.
7. Business Zone visitor statistics are not held for Castle Buildings as many staff and visitors using the facilities, both formally and informally, were already in the building for other reasons.
8. The facility in Marlborough House was used a total of 1968 times between January 2013 and November 2013, an average of 179 times per month. The monthly average for comparison between May 2011 and December 2012, was 126 visits.

Yours sincerely,



**GEARÓID CASSIDY**  
**Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer**